

SPELLBOUND 441

Chapter 441 - Million Times Better

Silence enveloped the dark room illuminated by a bluish light coming from a ball of magic that was placed on the small table. Gideon had yet to move at all. Not even for an inch. He just sat there, frozen as a statue as he hugged the woman in his arms, making sure she was fully enveloped within the circle of his embrace.

She was still burning hot, and he could still feel the heat coming off from her in waves. But the good news was that she had stopped crying and moaning. Her shivers had stopped as well and now he could hear nothing but her faint heartbeats and her slow and calmed breathing.

As he sat there holding her in his arms, he could feel her burning heat seeping through the layers of her clothes to him and he felt like he might actually melt as though he were made of wax if he kept on holding onto her like this. Even though he had thought of it that way, instead of pulling away, Gideon dropped his head, leaning it gently over the crown of her head and then held her even closer to himself. He held onto her as if he was craving for her heat, as if he had finally found the warmth he had been longing for after an eternity of time, all that time just embracing nothing but the cold and murky darkness in the depths of his own being. And now that he was holding her, he found that he had not the slightest intention of letting her go even if her heat ends up melting him away.

Hearing her pleas while she was still asleep made Gideon finally realise why he could not find it within himself to leave this person alone. She had never once screamed out for help even when she was frightened to death while being chased by that human predator. She had never even whispered out that one word 'help' when that man had harmed her, much less cried out for assistance from others around her. And yet, here she was, unconsciously pleading for help in her sleep, over and over.

Gideon could not help but see himself in her. Both of them were similarly tormented, utterly broken creatures who seemed to be beyond anyone's saving grace. Gideon had also experienced the same thing, where he had been talking in his sleep as well. And that was why he had never let anyone sleep next to him since a long time ago when he had found out he had this problem. He had always chosen the room which was isolated, and he always put up a soundproof barrier whenever he sleeps. It was all just so no one could hear and see what he was actually going through every single night.

To think this frail little human was going through the same thing as him... what had she done to deserve this? What kind of demons plagued her during her sleep? Gideon wondered to himself.

The corner of his lips lifted slightly. Of course, she had not done anything. Just like him, she must be just another creature with an unfortunate fate. Just another person who was born just to suffer and then die within the cycle of life.

As that thought played in his mind, Gideon's hold on her tightened a little. No, she was not like him. She had not reached the point of hopelessness yet. This person was not beyond saving. She still had a future. Unlike him.

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Vera could not believe her eyes the moment she awoke and opened her baby blues. She was utterly shocked at the sight displayed before her eyes. He... Gideon was next to her, hugging her and... he

was asleep. Her heart skipped a beat, and she became paralyzed. The feel of his heavy arm around her made her cheeks burn hotly as an itchy feeling crept around within her heart. And it was just shocking how she felt incredibly relieved the moment she realized it was him who was with her in bed.

But as she thought about it, a small smile bloomed over her face. This was the first time she had woken up with someone holding her like this. She had gone through many terrible fevers and other illnesses in the past and she had survived them – all by herself, alone and without the care of anyone. Even during those times when she had wished she would not wake up anymore, she still awakened the next day with no one around to even help bring her a cup of water to moisten her parched throat.

And yet, here she was, waking up comfortably wrapped up in someone's arm as if she was being cherished like a precious treasure. Her eyes were hot as she thought 'so this is how it feels like being taken care of'. Even though this might not be like what she was expecting – as perhaps he was here by accident or probably by force – Vera did not care. Right then, she just wanted to stay like this, being held in his strong arms as though she was a cherished maiden. Even though he would become cold to her again when he wakes up later on, Vera would still be happy and grateful. All because he had allowed her to experience this feeling of being treasured like this at least for once in her life.

With eyes blurring with tears, Vera moved and snuggled herself closer to him, gripping a handful of his shirt and bringing it close to her face. He was surprisingly warm and had a wonderful earthy fragrance that enchanted her. He was so much warmer than any pillow she had ever slept with. And why did he feel a million times better when he was not even as soft as her pillows?

While Vera was revelling in the feeling of him, Gideon finally opened his eyes. His electric blue eyes circled as he realized that he was still in bed and... still hugging her. He had slept?! How was that possible?!

He was so shocked that he could not move for a while until she began moving even closer to him. She even shifted her knees quite a few times, not caring where her knees were rubbing and touching.

Gideon abruptly held her shoulders when she suddenly kneed him right there. At the contact, both of them froze for a second.

Then their eyes met. Both eyes, one a vivid blue and the other a pale one, circled wide as they stared silently at each other.

Chapter 442 - Recklessly

The first to snap out of it was Gideon. He was about to rise when Vera suddenly lunged forward and clung onto him. Her large eyes twinkled as they were still moistened from her earlier thoughts.

But that look in her eyes only made Gideon freeze for a moment. He placed his palm over her forehead and when he felt that her temperature was no longer burning like the previous day, he sighed in relief. Somehow, he could not believe it. He was certain that his sly little sister-in-law was making a fool out of him. Or perhaps she was just joking around with him. Yet her suggestion had actually worked? What kind of sorcery was this?

Gideon then placed his hand over hers that was clinging onto him. "Let go now," he said but Vera did not loosen her grip on him.

"Uhm... Just a bit more... can you stay with me like this for a little while longer? Please?" she pleaded, causing Gideon to look at her, blinking. "It's..." her eyes wandered and stopped at the window. "It's still night."

"Not anymore. Our sun here are those crystals up there. When those crystals light up, it means it is already day." He replied hastily.

"But. Still, can we –" Vera tried to plead her case.

"No."

"Just a moment. Umm... until the count of ten. Please?" she begged him with those large dewy eyes.

He creased his brows. "Don't tell me this is another process of human healing."

Vera blinked, not understanding what he meant. But she took advantage of that statement he just threw out and nodded frantically. Gideon let himself fall back on the bed and his arms wrapped around her to hug her, his expression dark and stony. "Fine. In ten counts."

Her eyes gleamed and the corner of her lips curved up ever so slightly as she delightedly hugged him back, taking the full opportunity to enjoy this short time that would never again come in her lifetime.

"Start counting now," his impatient voice echoed out above her head.

"Ten thousand and one..." Vera started, snuggling closer to him. When she settled in the spot that she felt most comfortable in, she quietly revelled in his arms again, listening to his heartbeats, feeling his warmth.

"Nine thousand and one..." she whispered after a long while and she felt him draw in a sharp breath.

"Your counting's too slow." He complained.

"But that's how you're supposed to count." Vera looked up and blinked innocently at Gideon.

"If you think I'm –"

"I'm not trying to take advantage of you, believe me." She cut him off and he was utterly speechless until she finally reached number two after what felt like hours.

When he did not hear number one being called out even after a long while, Gideon's patience seemed to have run out and he grabbed her hand to pull it off him.

"You agreed it'll be up to ten counts." Vera protested though knowing that she had purposely counted down ever so slowly and left the last number hanging.

"Ten counts were over long ago." Gideon growled out low.

"Not yet. I haven't counted out the last number yet." Vera stubbornly insisted, a small pout on her lips.

Gideon pinched the skin between his brows. How did he end up in this situation again? He bit down on his lower lip then released it slowly. After that, his blue eyes gleamed dangerously.

"Let me go or I won't be responsible for what will happen next." His deep voice echoed coldly. That was a warning, and Vera could tell that he was serious about it. But... if she did let go of him now, would this opportunity come again? After this, would he give her to Azrael since... since that man was the one who was the one who initially wanted to take her in as his bed warmer?

From his reaction and the tone of his voice, Vera could clearly tell that he was unhappy. It made her throat hurt a little even though she had already anticipated this. If she lets go of him now, would she be able to hug him again, or be with him again? Her mind told her, the answer was definitely no. It was already obvious as he could not wait to leave the bed already.

"I'm telling you nicely for the last time, let go of me." He said and she felt that it was his final warning. But somehow, Vera still could not make herself let him go. What was he going to do to her next?

Despite his aura being a little dark right now, she just did not believe that he would be willing to hurt her. Then what... she swallowed.

"What... what are you going to do to me next?" she asked bravely, meeting his gaze. "Are you going to... kiss me next?"

He blinked then the corner of his mouth lifted into a disbelieving smile. He shook his head slowly then his gaze became wicked.

"Oh... not just that, more than that, much... much... more than that. If you're a wise girl, listen to me now and save yourself." He played along with her.

"Will this... much, much more... hurts?"

Gideon's smile faded and his mouth dropped. The hesitation and slight flash of fear in her eyes gave him pause.

Then he did not know what had gotten into him at the sight of that look in her eyes and his voice suddenly softened. He lifted his hand and touched her face with the backs of his fingers.

"Oh no, little red. It won't hurt you... I'll make sure of that." His voice became hoarse as he said that last line. He snapped out of his daze and secretly gritted his teeth afterwards, asking himself what the hell had he just said to the lady.

"Then it's fine if you won't be responsible. All I want is to stay with you for a little while longer," after saying that the smile she threw at him was so dazzling that Gideon stilled.

Vera had already decided. This man, she wanted him. She wanted to be with him even for a short while. Not with Azrael or anyone else. If he was a living warning then he would be the kind she would love to ignore even if that decision would bring her to her demise. She would not mind. Because she had already been shattered into pieces. She had long since given up with life. There was no hope left inside her, until he appeared before her. He was her newfound hope and this time she was not going to play it safe. It was all just so she could hold onto it. She had played as safely as she could before, hoping that she would not get hurt, but she still suffered again and again for so much until she was broken to pieces. She would now gamble again for the very last time, and this time, recklessly.

Chapter 443 - As Long As

Gideon could not seem to react after hearing her statement. He could not believe what he had just heard. Did she even understand what he had been trying to say? This girl. How could she... how could she still smile like this at him?

It was clear as crystal to him that she was someone broken to the extreme. In fact, right now, she was still bleeding and in pain, filled with cuts and bruises on the inside. Yet she could still smile so dazzlingly and why... why was she looking at him like he was her newfound light? Her eyes that were dull and gloomy previously are now sparkling with some renewed vigour that seemed to have come out of nowhere.

Subconsciously, Gideon clenched a handful of the bedsheets tight in his fists. This cannot be... happening. He was no one's light. Never. In fact, it could be said that he was the exact opposite. What the hell was wrong with this lady? Are her eyes even working right? Was she blind?

Something so unsettling bloomed within his chest. No, this must not happen... he cannot allow this to go on. Not now... not her...

All of a sudden, the look in his eyes changed again. His fiery blue orbs hardened as if something suddenly quenched the flames and froze them all into cold hard glaciers. The burning flames had transformed into an endless eternal wintry scape.

And in a swift, almost as fluid as a wisp of air, he was looming over her. His strong hands had grabbed onto hers and pinned those frail limbs above her head.

"What a na?ve little red you are," that voice that sounded like the darkest song, echoed in Vera's ears, sending a zing into her heart and itching up a storm, causing Vera's heartbeat to pick up its pace. The blue ice in his eyes seemed to be shooting out icicles uncontrollably as he stared down at her. She was supposed to be scared out of her wits right now but... Vera did not even flinch. On the contrary, she found herself totally mesmerized by him. He was truly a breathtaking dark angel. Was she a twisted girl to desire a man who was clearly oozing with darkness just because he had saved her and embraced her once? Maybe she was... but she realized that she could not even bring herself to care any longer. She would not care. All she knew was that she wanted him. That was all that matters to her now.

"It seems that someone must teach you a lesson for you to learn how to heed serious warnings, little red." He continued in that low rumbling voice, his face moving ever closer to hers.

"As long as... that someone is you," she replied, "I wouldn't mind." Vera boldly declared while little shudders intermittently shook her petite frame.

Once again, Gideon looked at her as though he were looking at an odd creature that he had never seen or heard of before. Then he narrowed his eyes at her. "Tell me, red..." his voice came out low and gravelly. For some reason, there was a tinge of anger that coloured his voice. "You do know exactly what I am talking about, don't you?" his jaws clenched as his gaze became more and more intense. "Or are you still a little confused about how things roll from here?" Gideon's narrowed eyes glittered as he double checked with her, wanting to make sure that there was no misunderstanding arising from this.

Vera was no longer innocent regarding this kind of talk. Back home, she often secretly overheard her mother's conversations with her many lovers when she hid herself behind doors or small spaces to keep out of the way. Days before her mother had decided to sell her, her mother had locked her

inside her room and made her watch her in secret having sex. That nightmarish night, she had thought her mother was becoming more and more insane that she no longer knew what she was doing and tried to break them both to the extreme degree. She did not know that that was actually her trying to teach Vera on how to please a man. It was not until she found out that her mother was selling her to become a whore that she understood her mother's actions that night.

She had heard her mother's lover saying the words 'I'll teach you a lesson' and that was how Vera had finally understood and learnt what those words actually meant. Though Vera had never actually watched, as she had just sat there, staring at the floor like a lifeless doll, she certainly heard more than enough to know what went on during matters such as these.

Therefore, she nodded at Gideon's question – although a little hesitantly – because that was the truth. Vera had no intention to play the little pure and innocent virgin role – though she was still one – but to face it head on and admit that she knew the dynamics of what goes on between a man and a woman when they were together in bed. And his darkness seemed to blaze into an uncontrollable thing that seemed to be alive.

His one hand moved to her face, cupping her chin as his other hand clasped both her wrists hard. The tinge of anger now had grown very intense and morphed into a full-on flood.

"Tell me..." the sound of his voice seemed to become even darker, if that was possible, causing Vera to involuntarily hold her breath as goosebumps ran across her skin. "I need you to tell me everything. Every single one of those lessons those damnable men had taught you, little red." he almost growled as he demanded full compliance from Vera.

Vera blinked at what he had said. She was getting a little nervous because of what seems to be anger which was present in his eyes. But what he just said made her come to a complete halt for a moment. Those men? What did he...

Suddenly, Vera remembered her conversation with Azrael. Could it be because of that 'bed warmer' thing? Could it be that he had assumed she had... and was that the reason why he seemed so outraged?

Chapter 444 - Human Way

The shock was too much that Vera had a hard time believing it. Was this truly happening? Why would he be angry? No, that could not be... It was not like he... no, it must be because he was just disappointed that he thought someone else had...

"And what... what are you going to do if I tell you?" Vera asked in a soft voice, her gaze scrutinizing him. Her heart was flip flopping between wanting to hope for more and shooting herself down to not expect too much.

His jaws worked once again and for a long while, he just stared hard at her until he shut his eyes in exasperation. When he opened those blue orbs of his again, the anger in them seemed to have subsided. "If that is the case... I'll overwrite them all." His dark voice was low and rich now, husky and seductive in her ears. "All those fucking men must be terrible teachers. They freaking failed big time to teach you well enough." That tinge of anger was back as he viciously mentioned all those non-existent men. Vera could not wrap her head around the implications on what Gideon had just uttered and her heart rate spiked dangerously high.

And before a sound could leave her mouth and before she could even manage to formulate a response in her mind, his mouth had descended swiftly over hers and sealed it possessively. Vera's eyes widened at his dominating actions. He was... kissing her... voluntarily...?

Her mind seemed to have immediately suffered a great shock. This was definitely not her first kiss. She had been kissed by a few boys before the tragic death of her father. And the very last time she had been kissed before Gideon found her was another nightmarish experience. It had been by force and from one of her mother's filthy lovers. She had barely managed to escape the man's grasp before he could do anything more repulsive to her. But that experience alone was enough to be etched firmly in her mind since then like an awful scar, doomed to forever be there like an unsightly brand taunting her. It was so disgusting she had thrown up upon returning to her room, unable to keep it back in her throat any longer. That night, she was so mentally disturbed by that experience that she could not bring herself to sleep.

Vera had thought that she would not be able to kiss anyone ever again in her entire life without being reminded of that awful experience. But it seems that she was wrong. Because right now, her mind seemed to have forgotten about everything and anything else, there was no one else that existed other than him and her right now. All she could feel currently was the welcoming warmth of his mouth, his dextrous tongue exploring the insides of her mouth, sucking on her own with a kind of delicious and delicate greed.

It was inexplicable. Was this real? This was not some kind of magic or spell that he had placed on her, right? Were kisses supposed to be like this?

If this was not some kind of spell, if this was what kisses are supposed to feel like, then, this would be the very first time she is experiencing a real kiss. It was as though there was a kitten clawing away at her heart with its small and not quite sharp claws, resulting in an itchy, ticklish kind of feel on her insides.

She suddenly wanted to reach out her hands to touch him, but he still held her wrists captive. He, however, did not stop kissing her until Vera began to feel a slow, fiery warmth spreading all over her. His body over her was not even touching hers and yet she seemed to be feeling the heat he was exuding. Or was it hers? She could no longer tell. Her mind seemed to be encased in a thick layer of cotton that muted everything else except what he was making her feel.

Vera desperately kissed him back. She was not as skilled as he was, but she was not a total novice. And by gods, kissing him was like tasting the forbidden foods of the gods.

But all too soon, he pulled away. His now fiery blue eyes were wide as his breaths came out in warm puffs, caressing sensually across her face. "Your... lips," he uttered hoarsely, and Vera saw blood on his lips as well. "It's bleeding." He cursed and abruptly, he pulled her up into a sitting position.

Something dark was already coming from the tip of his forefinger in an undulating wisp and was headed for her lips. But he cursed again, gritted his teeth as his magic did not seem to work on the cut on her lip. He had completely forgotten that humans do not respond to magic.

"Tell me, what's the human way to stop the bleeding?" he asked in an urgent voice. What? Human... way?

"I'm fine." she brushed his concern off as she moved to wipe the blood off with her fingers when Gideon caught her hand again, stopping her. She looked at him and blinked in confusion. What was the big deal? It was just a crack in her lips that bled.

"Stop touching it so recklessly like that. You're making it worse." He warned irritably and Vera continued blinking at him.

"No, it's... It will eventually heal. Don't worry." She brushed her tongue over her lower lip and that only caused Gideon to crease his brows.

"Don't tell me licking it is the human way... ?" Gideon murmured to himself. But due to their close proximity, Vera heard what he said.

What? Vera was still processing what he had said when he suddenly sighed and moved closer.

"Leave it and let me. I know males could heal you humans better." Then he began licking her lip. W-what? Where did he even hear of such a thing? Wait... was there such a thing in the first place that she did not know about? But his confident statements and actions did not seem to be fake. She was suddenly confused.

But Vera did not speak anymore. She just could not. The tip of his warm tongue had started licking across her lips and rendered her utterly speechless that she even shut her eyes to just enjoy the feel of it. What is going on? Why... why is he doing this? However, she was not going to deny herself the pleasure of it even though she was baffled at his actions.

When he finally pulled away, Vera opened her eyes as well and stared hard at him.

"Gideon..." she called his name in that sweet tone of hers and he stilled, his gaze on her lips slowly travelled back to her eyes. "Are you... worried about me?"

Chapter 445 - More Of Him

When Gideon could not respond and just regarded her with an unblinking stare, the corner of Vera's lips lifted up ever so slightly.

"You are... aren't you?" she said, looking at him in wonder, "I know you are." Her eyes twinkled, glimmering so breathtakingly like millions of tiny pale blue crystals. Her hand slowly reached out and she reverently ran her fingers down his face, the slight smile widening into a full blown one when he did not grab at her hand to stop her from establishing more physical contact with him.

Vera felt as though she were floating in a wonderful dream. She still could not believe he had slept next to her, embracing her tightly throughout the whole night, making sure that she was being warmed by his body heat. He had even kissed her, and worried about her, and now he was letting her touch him and looking at her like he was in a daze.

If this was a dream, she wished with her whole heart to never wake up again. If this was a dream, she would pray to all the gods in existence not to let anyone wake her up. Because all she wanted was to stay in this dream now and forever, nowhere else would do anymore for her. Forever and ever would still not be long enough, even until her very last breath.

Her chest felt like it was swelling due to so much happiness. Vera knew all these feelings might be a little too exaggerated because this was the first time that she is experiencing all these blissful things

after being in a hellish place for so long. But she just did not care anymore. She would not care. Even if this was just a fleeting dream, she would no longer deny herself the opportunity to feel as happy as she could. While she can, while he lets her experience these feelings, she would not hold back. She would give her all to this man as well. She would give as good as she gets, maybe even better.

She leaned closer to him, lifting her other hand to touch the other side of his perfect face. She could not imagine that a man's face could be so smooth and flawless. Still, he did not move. His eyes remained glued to hers, looking like he was heavily under her spell. The way he looked at her, the heart stopping blue fire in his eyes... Vera just wanted to kiss him again. The temptation was so real, and she could literally feel the pull of it. Even if her lips start bleeding again, she knew no cuts or bleed were enough to stop her.

Gods... she had never desired anyone or anything like this in her life ever before. Was this already love? Could it have happened so quickly? She was uncertain but what could it be? Or was it just pure unadulterated desire? After thinking about it for a while, Vera decided that it might be both. She had never experienced such emotions as intense as this before. So, she could only deduce that this must be love. Intense, inexplicable... almost unbelievable, just like him, in fact.

If it was true that love is the greatest thing that ever existed in this world, then Vera would fully be willing to believe it now. Because no matter how ridiculous it sounded, that she was already claiming it is love when she literally just met him yesterday, Vera knew what she was feeling. The fact that her heart was able to beat like this, despite the fact it was supposed to not work normally anymore due to all the heartbreaking things that had happened to her was enough of a proof to her. So she was not going to mull over it anymore and waste more time. She knew her own heart, she knew herself better than anyone else. Because for so long, she only had herself and no one else to rely on. Thus, Vera was going to believe that this was truly love at first sight. That she had fallen for him, head over heels since the very moment she had laid eyes on him when he had come to her rescue – as her very own knight in shining armour.

Gently and also a little cautiously, Vera pressed her lips against his. There was a slight apprehension that he might push her away. But when seconds passed and nothing of the sort happened, she threw caution to the winds. She felt as though sparks were flying at the touch of her lips on his. It was sending a delicious heat raging its way through her heart. She wanted more of him... more.

Finally pulling away, Vera gazed into the blue hellfire of his eyes. "Gideon..." she uttered his name and she realized how she just loved the sound of his name rolling off her lips. "Gideon..." she repeated, loving at how his name just evokes sparks that ignite into large intense flames within her. "Gideon," she said his name again and a giggle was about to burst from her ruby red lips when he abruptly moved.

His mouth suddenly came crashing down on hers and kissed her hard. His attack was so passionate and hard that Vera could not help but widen her eyes in shock. But soon, she too got caught up and closed her eyes and kissed him back as fervently as he gave. She tried to use her tongue as well to keep up with his delicious intensity. Gods... she was starting to feel very hot. His kiss was just... it was literally melting her, her very bones, even down to her very soul. And it was so... so good that she did not want it to stop despite the iron taste of blood that she knew was coming from her own bleeding lip.

When their lips parted from the mind-blowing kiss, Gideon suddenly grabbed her and wrapped his arms around her in a tight grip as if he was scared to let go of her even for a second. Vera was surprised once again at his outburst of emotions and his shocking actions did not stop there. He even started shaking a little as he hugged her even tighter, almost crushing her smaller frame in his arms.

Then the darkest song which was his voice echoed out beside her ear. "Leah... Leah..."

Chapter 446 - This Gamble

"Leah... Leah..." he continued calling that name while his body shook like a leaf in the wind and his deep voice sounded as though it was drenched in so much sorrow that Vera could feel her own heart break without knowing why.

Vera felt like she was breaking down as well since the moment he called that name out with his broken voice. And as he continued calling that name out, her heart kept on breaking like glass being hammered on again and again.

She stayed very still, letting him hug her so tight as he called out someone else's name. Then a small, pained smile curved slightly on her face. Why? Why must you end my dream this soon? She knew that with her luck, all that had happened was just too good to be true. Just as she wanted to throw herself fully into this dream come true, it all came crashing down like a house made of glass.

Now she understood why. Why he was treating her so carefully and delicately like this. All his too good to be true actions towards her... it came as a crystal-clear flash to her now... it was all because he was seeing the image of someone else superimposed over her. It was now that she finally realized that he had never called her name even though he already knew what it was. And it just ... hurts so very bad.

Of course... how naïve of her to think someone she had just met would truly care for her... would even fall in love with her. Now that she was rudely awakened, it was laughable how she had indulged in her own wild fantasies. A sad and very soft chuckle escaped her red lips, unnoticed by Gideon who was currently lost in his own memories.

It was unbelievable how he had made her feel like she was in heaven and then made her feel like she had fell into a burning hell the very next moment.

Vera let out a shaky sigh and her hands moved to his back. She started patting and stroking his broad back so gently as though she was trying to soothe his pain. It was obvious to her that he was in so much pain just like her and with all his trembling right now, she could tell that his pain must be much worse compared to hers. He felt so broken in her arms. Who would have thought that this man would suddenly shiver and tremble in her arms like this? She did not need to ask who this Leah was to understand his pain. For a man like him to be reduced to a state like this... Vera could already tell who Leah was in his life.

Silently, Vera continued caressing Gideon's back absentmindedly. Her baby blues had long since turned back to their previous doll-like emotionless eyes as her gaze fell straight to the window, looking at the crystals gleaming up there until Gideon's trembling stopped. Her heart felt as chilled as the cool and icy crystals that worked as the sky in the Under Lands – bright as though it was the Sun, but in actual fact, without an iota of warmth. It could be said that her heart had lost all warmth and felt as though it were made of lead, exerting a heavy weight in the cavity of her chest.

She eventually felt him become very still for a long while. Then he pulled away, carefully.

Their eyes met. The blue fire in his eyes were much calmer now. As calm as the eye of a storm.

He abruptly averted his gaze from hers and looked at her lips. She scoffed in her mind, feeling contempt for herself after seeing his actions and could only accept that she was only a body that resembled that Leah he was obviously pining for. She saw his brows creased slightly before he held her face, resting his hand below her ear as his thumb settled near her lip.

"Stay put," he said then he began licking the blood on her lips again.

Vera let out another shaky breath as she shut her eyes. She viciously told herself not to overthink things. It was unbelievable how even breathing seemed to hurt so much, the pain from her wounds could not even hold a candle to it. Ah... this gamble... it was just the beginning, but she was already fading away, knowing that there was no way for her to win this man over as hers. He was already someone else's. At that thought, there was a pain like a thousand needles pricking her heart.

The heat from his erotic tongue no longer brought her pure pleasure. There was a flavour of pain along with it now and yet she did not want to push him or pull herself away.

It seems she was trapped now. She had willingly walked towards a trap that was himself despite his earlier warnings. This pain was not his fault... he had warned her.

Still, she would not allow herself to regret it. She will never regret. This pain... Vera told herself it will dull as well eventually, just like how all her other wounds healed over time. She just needed to hold on for a little while longer like she always does for as long as she could bear. And after that, the pain would just slowly become numb.

When he was done, Vera did not rush to open her eyes, even when she felt his gaze on her. Until she felt him climb off the bed, only then did she allow her body to relax a little.

Opening her eyes, Vera took another quiet breath before she turned her eyes to look at him, standing there, his back facing her.

"You are..." Vera's voice echoed softly in the room, sounding defeated and tired, "... going to give me over to Azrael today, right?" Her eyes then lowered a little at the end of her question.

He stiffened at her question. Then she saw his hands turned into tight fists.

"He... Azrael was the one who agreed to have me as his bed warmer after all." She added with a nonchalant tone as she informed him and then he was suddenly before her, eyes blazing violently as he bent over her.

"I was the one who brought you over here!" he told her in a controlled voice. However, his body was so tightly coiled up and tense that Vera could clearly sense it. "So you stay here. With me. You're my bed warmer now." His voice hardened as he almost snarled the last line out.

"But... what if I choose to be Azrael's bed warmer?" Vera retorted, her eyes that were lifeless and doll-like, looked into his. Her voice dull and sounded tired.

Chapter 447 - Trouble

Vera felt the atmosphere inside the room became extremely heavy, so heavy that it was becoming hard to breath. She could see there was something dark which seemed to be leaking out of his body

and his eyes dilating. What was wrong with him? What had provoked him to behave this way? Did what she said incited something dangerous to blow up within him?

She held her breath, waiting for what he would say next, never averting her gaze from those beautiful vibrant blue but coldly dangerous eyes. A thought just speared through her mind as she was looking at him. Why was it that she had to fall for this kind of dangerous man that had so much baggage it was more than enough to drown not just him but also her in it?

But before either of them could speak again, a knock echoed through the room. However, he stayed very still and only when another knock echoed again, he looked as though he finally snapped out of whatever muddle headedness he was currently caught up in and he swiftly pulled himself up to see who it was outside the door.

The heavy and suffocating air seemed to be cleared in an instant as he faced the door. "Get in." he said darkly, feeling a slight trail of irritability still running within himself though he was not sure why he was feeling that way.

A dark fae emerged from the door and bowed her head, greeting the prince. "Lord Kione sent me to fetch you, Your Highness. He said you need to come to the light fae Queen's room immediately. He said that it's urgent." The messenger was quick in delivering her missive and bowed respectfully to Gideon after completing her task. Once she was done, she saluted and waited patiently at the side for Gideon's permission to leave or other further commands.

The report made Gideon's eyes narrow. Now what was it this time? Why was it that there was just so many things coming up daily lately?

Gideon shut his eyes close for a moment as if to gather his perfect composure once again. When he opened his eyes again, there was not a single trace of the look he had showed to Vera just a while ago. He was back to the cool, calm, and composed Prince Gideon he usually was. Nothing could be read from his face that was as blank as a piece of unmarked paper.

"Go get something for her to eat." He ordered when the dark fae waiting at the side for further instructions blinked at him.

"For the Light Fae Queen, my lord?" She was not sure who the prince meant her to prepare the food for.

"No, for her." He nodded his head towards Vera and the dark fae understood his gesture. Gideon glanced at Vera and their eyes met.

He looked like he had something to say but after a few moments of not saying anything, he pressed his lips together instead of opening them. Then a dark smoke swallowed him, and he silently disappeared before her eyes.

When he materialized just outside Evie's room in the next second, Kione and Azrael were already standing there like they were guards. Well, Gideon did assign them to guard the light fae queen.

As soon as Gideon's gaze fell on Azrael, his eyes darkened, causing Azrael to lift one of his brows at him in question. Now what was with that level of animosity? He could only question himself as Gideon's gaze turned to the side and faced Kione.

"What is it this time?" he asked in an impatient voice.

"I think something is going on with your sister-in-law." Kione said with a serious face. "She's not waking up and she's been making some sounds for a while now."

"Sounds...??"

"I believe it's probably a nightmare." Kione's matter-of-fact tone explained his thoughts.

Gideon creased his brows as he looked at Kione with an 'are you kidding me' look. "You summoned me here just because you think my little sister-in-law is having a nightmare?"

"Well, since you ordered that no one was to enter her room, I can only call on you to come check on her." Kione replied and Gideon's calm seemed to crack again. "She had made a mention last night that she was not feeling too good and the fact that she's yet to wake up at this hour, I think you should check on her. We can't afford to have anything happen to her while Queen Beatrice is asleep. She'd probably skin us alive when she wakes up if..." Kione trailed off as Gideon was already rushing to open the door and entered the room.

However, the moment he stepped in, Evie made a small yelp and she sprung up from the bed as if being jolted awake.

Gideon stilled by the still opened door, looking at Evie. Her eyes wide and her silvery hair looked dampened from sweat. She was breathing so heavily as well, and she looked somewhat terrified as though she had just seen something awful. Seeing this powerful queen looking like this made Gideon's irritation immediately subside. What had she seen in her dream for her to be looking like she had seen something so horrific?

Quietly, Gideon walked straight to the table by the bed and poured water into the glass sitting there. He then picked it up and gave the glass of water to Evie as he sat down at the edge of the bed, looking at her with concern. Evie wordlessly accepted the proffered glass as she nodded her thanks to Gideon.

As Evie was drinking the water and calming herself, Gideon asked, "You were such a feisty and sly queen this whole time. It just I never would have thought you could actually get scared of nightmares." He commented lightly and a little teasingly as he took the empty glass from her and placed it back on the table.

But Evie did not seem to hear Gideon's attempt to lighten up the mood.

She suddenly grabbed onto Gideon's arm. "Listen." She said urgently. "Trouble... a very big trouble is coming." Her eyes were large and there was a severe light within their depths as she uttered those words that Gideon could not help but frown hard. Knowing that she was not the kind of person to fool around, he could not just laugh it off.

"Trouble..." he echoed, "calm down and elaborate on what you are trying to say Queen."

Chapter 448 - Queen Of Bargain

Evie swallowed then she straightened and took another deep sigh. When she felt a little calmer, she looked at Gideon again.

"I saw something like a huge well," she started. "Hundreds... no... thousands of monsters I have never seen before were coming out of it. Then I..." her voice faltered a little. "I saw destruction. An

immense destruction such as none have ever seen before... great wars... deaths... and then they – those monsters... they also reached the surface." Her voice choked and broke off at this point.

It was Gideon's turn to look at her with widened eyes. Disbelief and shock filling his blue eyes. It was obvious he could not quite believe what she was saying.

"Listen," Evie breathed out again before she continued, "my dreams and nightmares aren't normal ones like what others have. Whatever I see in my dreams... they actually do end up happening."

Gideon did not speak. He just stared at her with an unfathomable look in his eyes.

"You do believe me, right?" Evie questioned him, her eyes wide as she trained her gaze on him. She needed him to believe her! "This... we need to tell this to King Belial. He needs to know this nightmare is approaching us very soon. The Under Land is going to be embroiled in big trouble! We need to find a way to stop this from happening!"

Evie felt a rush of urgency surging up from within her. The scenes she saw in her dream... it was nothing close to anything she had ever seen or even imagined before. That was... that was the most horrific nightmare she had ever had. Not only did those monsters look as though they were very strong, but there were also just too many of them. A word like 'many' or even 'numerous' would not even come close to describing their numbers. The death and destruction that these monsters had wrecked in her dream that she saw was too extreme that she felt like throwing up. In her dream, this place, this beautiful dark paradise of the Under Lands had turned into nothing else but hell and ruin. Even she could not help but feel mind numbing and debilitating fear consume her as never before. The fact that she saw these monsters reaching the surface only meant one thing. It could only mean that the dark faes had failed to stop them and they lost the war. The whole race of the dark faes must have been completely wiped out for the enemies to proceed to the surface.

To think that King Belial and all these powerful dark faes, and probably including her would actually lose the war... Evie bit down on her lip. This was bad. Really bad. She could already feel it. They must do something before it was really too late. They must do something now to stop that disaster from happening! And she hoped that they were still in time to get something done. She fervently prayed to whatever gods that there was in existence that it was not already too late for them.

As her mind was still caught in utter turmoil, Evie felt a large and warm hand gently landing on her head, causing her to blink and raise her head. She saw Gideon standing there with his hand outstretched, looking at her quietly but calmly.

To her surprise, a small smile curved on Gideon's face as he then patted her head lightly. "Calm down, Queen." He said in a deep and reassuring voice. "It's not good for you to worry too much. Don't forget you're carrying my niece or nephew inside you now." He then cracked a grin at her, obviously trying to get her to calm down and distract her from her flustered condition earlier.

Evie creased her brows, as suspicion bloomed in her heart at the sight of him being so calm. It did not seem as though he does not believe her claims. But if that was the case, then he should accept what she said as the truth. Then why was he not even showing the slightest bit of worry or agitation at her premonition, especially when it might involve the genocide of the whole dark fae race?

"Don't worry, your nightmare will not come true. I can promise you that." He added and with one last soft pat on Evie's head, he retracted his hand and placed it inside his pocket.

"You... don't tell me you already know about this?" Evie narrowed her eyes. "Do you actually know more about this matter?"

He looked away and stared out the window. "That's right, queen. I've actually known about this matter for quite a long while now."

Evie's mouth dropped open in disbelief. So this was why he did not look shocked at all. No wonder he did not look at her as though she were crazy when she first rattled off what she saw in her dream to him. He was just shocked that she knew about it as well!

"So can I ask you to keep it as a secret for now, Queen Evielyn?" He looked at her with those calm eyes again, his eyes shining with confidence that she would agree to his request.

"Why? Why would you want me to keep it a secret?" she questioned. "If you don't give me a satisfying answer, I can't promise I won't talk. This matter is really too massive. It involves the matter of the life and death of a whole race of people!" Evie wanted to know what else he was keeping from her and probably everybody else.

"I'm really convinced now that you're the queen of bargain my dearest sister-in-law." He sighed as he quirked a helpless smile and shook his head. But a moment later, his eyes turned steely blue as though it were heated titanium. "Because I have already thought of a plan. And if you do something unnecessary, this plan I had formulated for many years might get ruined and all the stages I have meticulously set up will fall into nothing but useless trash. And when that happens, everything you saw in your nightmare would actually happen."

A short silence reigned between them.

"I am now convinced you're the prince of blackmail my dearest brother-in-law," Evie glared at him, returning his earlier jab at her in the same manner and he just smiled mildly at her. "Stop smiling like you have already won this, you damned cheap prince. This talk is not over yet." Evie grumbled with an eye roll.

But Gideon only chuckled at her words as he knew she did not truly mean what she said and then sighed. "I wonder how my brother handled such a feisty lady like you. That devil sprout really is amazing to marry a woman of your calibre." He gave a little shake of his head as a lopsided smile spread across his lips.

"Stop changing the topic. Tell me, what the hell are you planning to do? Is kidnapping me here one of the stages you have been talking about that you've been setting up?" Evie questioned, her gaze at him was fierce now. "And Gav, my husband, is a big part of this plan of yours, is he not?" Evie's eyes narrowed as she trained it sharply on him, landing all the scorching power of her gaze fully on him, hoping that it would be able to push him to reveal his plans to her.

Chapter 449 - Terrible Plan

When Gideon just returned her stare at her with his own placid and perfectly blank face, Evie rose, never averting her firm gaze from him. She was resolute on wanting to wrestle whatever details she could get from this dearest brother-in-law of hers.

"Tell me..." Evie hesitated for a moment but then she lifted her chin and held his gaze with an even firmer intensity. She was giving him the full force of the eyes of a queen who did not know how to give up. "Is the plan you are talking about the one where you were planning to force your brother to

kill you?" she finally asked. She had her suspicions and threw them out at him, questioning his plans at point blank range in the hopes that he would be flustered enough to divulge more. However...

Another long moment of silence reigned between them. Only this time, the silence was definitely much heavier.

Evie waited after throwing her suspicion out to him. Hoping that he will not avoid this question and disappear as he usually does when he did not want to face certain issues. His expression however, surprisingly remained very calm, and he did not even blink.

"Just how much did that smart ass friend of mine tell you, Queen Evielyn?" his voice was now shrouded with unsettling darkness.

But Evie managed to stay completely unfazed, ignoring his questioning of her. She narrowed her eyes at him. "So I was right? Your plan does somehow involve having yourself being killed off at some point in time?"

When not a single word left his lips in agreement or denial, Evie scoffed. "You know what? If that's really your great plan, then I'm telling you now. That. Is. One. Terrible. Plan. In fact, I believe that your death alone might be the sole reason which caused the disaster that I saw in my dream to happen!" Evie shot out at Gideon.

Still, Gideon did not speak, and his expression now became absolutely unreadable.

With urgency and a tinge of anger in her voice, Evie took a step closer towards him. "If you still stubbornly keep your mouth shut like this, I won't." she told him decisively. "I'm going to find King Belial right now and I'm telling him all I know about this matter. Everything that I had seen in my nightmare, every detail, I will tell him. Not a single tiny point will be left out." Evie spelled it out lowly, the threat very real in her tone.

Evie unleashed her fiercest, unwavering gaze to tell him how serious she was. It was all in the hopes that he would give in and tell her everything to stop her from speaking out. But he did not move, nor said a thing, even when Evie walked past him and headed towards the door.

She bit down hard on her lip when she had already reached the entrance and her fingers had grabbed onto the doorknob because he did not shout out the word 'wait'. Why? Why was he not stopping her despite her warning actions? Does this mean he truly did not care if she actually told all these things to King Belial? Really? Evie questioned silently within herself as she paused for a couple more seconds, giving him the final chance to take action or to say something. However, nothing happened.

With a heavy sigh, Evie turned her head over her shoulder and looked at him. Gideon remained standing there, unmoving. It angered her at how stubborn he was being in regard to this matter. What the hell was going on in his mind? Does he not care at all at the immensity of the implications if her nightmare actually did come true?

She finally pushed the door open after giving him sufficient time and then shut it hard behind her, wanting to jolt the stubborn tough nut. Walking with much haste along the spacious corridor, Evie could only shake her head when she did not sense even a shadow of him following her. It seemed that it was impossible to make him talk right now and reveal what his plan really was. She could not

help but find his reactions suspicious when she said those words to him. Could it be that Kione's theory was wrong? That's why he didn't show any reaction at all?

"Good Lord, that guy's going to be the source of my headaches at the rate we're going!" she grumbled as she headed to Queen Beatrice's room. Evie hoped that maybe the queen can make him spill out the details of his plan. But she halted when she remembered the queen would still be asleep until tomorrow. Still tomorrow... she could not be wasting any more time! A single day could be a crucial moment for actions to be taken or for the king to prepare for what was coming.

As she stood there contemplating and thinking hard over what might be the best move she could attempt, Evie felt a presence approaching her quickly. She knew it would not be Gideon, so she immediately raised her guard up. Who could it be? This person's movement was really quick!

Soon, a person in a purple cloak stood before her, silent and not speaking for now. After she observed for a moment, she realised that it was one of Queen Beatrice's journey companion?

Slowly, the person raised his hand and pulled down the hood and Evie blinked, her eyes slowly widening as a familiar face was revealed beneath that heavy hood.

"Claudius!" she exclaimed. "It's you!"

A kind smile curved on the dark fae's face and then he respectfully bowed his head to Evie, acknowledging her identity as the queen of the light faes. "I am so pleased to finally meet you in person, Queen Evielyn." He said and Evie smiled back as she too, nodded at him in greetings.

"Pleased to meet you too.. I can't believe you're with Queen Beatrice! Did you deliberately hide yourself from me since arriving with the entourage yesterday?" Evie asked, raising her brow at him as she said her last line.

Chapter 450 - Greatest Weakness

Claudius scratched his head as he laughed a little sheepishly. "Of course not, Queen. I just thought that it wasn't quite the right time for me to show up and introduce myself to you at that time." His smile widened. "After all, you needed to meet with Queen Beatrice first, right? How could I jump the queue?"

"And you think that this is now the right time for you to finally show up?"

"Yes, since I saw you looking quite a bit troubled. May I know what's causing you to be so vexed, Young Queen?" Claudius asked in a calm and unhurried manner.

Suddenly, Evie looked at Claudius like she had found the answer to her dilemma. She looked around and her expression became serious. "I have something very important to tell you. I believe King Belial needs to know about this as well, as soon as possible." She lowered her voice and spoke to Claudius gravely, her face and tone immediately alerting Claudius to the fact that Evie was not joking and was extremely serious about this matter.

The expression on Claudius face quickly changed as well, immediately understanding the severity of what she was going to say next. He could sense and see it in her intense amber eyes.

"Do you need me to put up a sound barrier, my queen?" Claudius asked and Evie gave a quick nod.

When the barrier was finally set up around them, Evie began to speak. "I had a terrible nightmare..." She told him everything that she saw in her dream. She knew from experience that

this man was someone she could fully trust. And she also knew King Belial trusted him. As such, he could act as the messenger to deliver this pressing matter directly to the king.

Unlike Gideon, Claudius was clearly shocked and extremely disturbed at the things she had said. His reaction was normal. Anyone, except Gideon of course, who would have heard of such a thing would react like this. In fact, many others would react much worse than how Claudius did.

A long silence passed by as Evie let Claudius process everything he had just heard. Evie had also thought of telling him about Gideon, but for some reason, Evie felt incredibly hesitant in mentioning him and the things that she had heard about him. It was as if something was telling her that mentioning anything about Gideon to Claudius or King Belial was going to be a bad idea. So in the end she listened to her instincts and only told Claudius about the nightmare she had.

With a troubled look, Claudius finally spoke. "I don't know how to thank you enough for revealing this, Queen Evielyn," Claudius said. "This definitely needs to reach the king's ear as soon as possible. I need to go back now and report this to His Majesty."

"Can't you use that same magic which you used to communicate with me back then?"

"I can't as my king isn't using his magic right now, and this is definitely not something just anyone else should be listening in to. So there is no choice but for me to go back as fast as I can." Claudius's tone was urgent now, as if he was now more than ready to bolt away as soon as Evie allowed him to go.

"I see... I believe that's the best way too." Evie agreed and nodded her assent.

Claudius nodded at her. "I am going to leave immediately. If I am not able to return here in time and Queen Beatrice comes looking for me, don't answer for me. I'll have Alvion to cook up an alibi for me." Claudius did not forget to remind Evie of this matter. The queen must absolutely not be allowed to know this as of now.

Evie creased her brows. "Wait, you don't want me to tell this to Queen Beatrice?"

The dark fae nodded.

"Why? Don't tell me I must avoid mentioning my nightmare to her too." Evie was puzzled at why this should be kept a secret.

"That's right Queen Evielyn."

Evie's eyes widened as she looked at him questioningly.

"The truth is, King Belial had finally agreed to let the queen travel here so he could send her away from the Great City for a period of time. The king had sensed an unrest stirring up and he believes that whatever is coming would be something huge. This city where we are right now is the farthest one from the Great City and the Great City is one of the nearest cities to the Abyss of Darkness." Claudius explained.

"So he actually sent the queen here because he wanted to protect her, under the guise of visiting her eldest son?" Evie said and when Claudius nodded in confirmation, Evie smirked. "Like father like son, indeed." She muttered, shaking her head as she remembered how Gav always does the same to her even back then.

"So please don't let the queen know about this matter for now. Of course, I know we would not be able to hide this forever. But please just for now, keep it a secret. I'm afraid that if she over worries and tries to do something on her own to help the king, the king might get distracted. He is trying to focus on this problem so as much as possible, we want to help him maintain his focus. I know I shouldn't be telling you this but... Queen Beatrice is our King's greatest weakness. She is his only weakness. Therefore, I am hoping that you will understand my stand on this, Queen Evielyn." Claudius smiled apologetically to Evie.

A small smile curved across those luscious red lips of hers. Of course, she understood! In fact, she understood it very well! She knew just how much they loved each other as well as that special bond between them.

"I understand, Claudius. I will do my best not to say anything to her." Evie said and Claudius flashed a relieved smile before bowing low to her.

"Thank you, Queen. Now I need to make a move and return to my king. We don't have much time to waste."

Evie nodded at him and as soon as the barrier was dissolved, Claudius disappeared before her.