

## **SPELLBOUND 451**

### Chapter 451 - Dilemma

As soon as Claudius left, Evie headed over to Queen Beatrice's room. Her guard, Alvion, bowed when he saw her and naturally allowed her to enter into the room. The three noble ladies that were part of the entourage and who accompanied Queen Beatrice were also there, watching her closely.

Evie now realized just how protected Queen Beatrice was. As she looked at her beautiful sleeping face, Evie smiled. She looked so peaceful and even more youthful in her sleep. No wonder King Belial loved her so. No hot-blooded male would be able to resist such gentle beauty. And more so, Queen Beatrice's personality was already a winner. Therefore, just those two factors alone were enough to understand why King Belial was head over heels in love with his wife.

Thinking along these lines, Evie was reminded of Claudius words where he said that this queen was King Belial's greatest weakness. Silently, Evie shook her head. She thought that that statement would never come from King Belial's mouth. Opposite to that in fact, Evie believes that the queen was not his weakness. In fact, it was the other way around where she believes this queen was the source of his strength. Because he loves her so much and wants to protect her so badly, that in itself was a mighty encouragement for him to grow stronger.

But she did not say anything about it and tried to explain her thoughts on this with Claudius earlier. First reason was, they truly did not have any more time to waste, and next was Evie understood why they would think that Queen Beatrice was the king's greatest weakness. She thought that it must be due to the fact where Queen Beatrice could weaken the king whenever she needed to drink his blood. Even because of this fact, Evie still thinks it was not right for them to think of her as the King's greatest weakness because she believes the queen was definitely not. And to top it all, Evie could clearly sense that Queen Beatrice was actually very powerful. Since she had just met Queen Beatrice, she was not sure how the queen portrayed herself to the people here. Perhaps she might be hiding her strength or maybe there was just no need for her to display her real power as King Belial was doing such a good job up till now to keep her safe. Whatever it was, Evie was pretty sure of her own sense where the queen had very deep reserves of power just held under great control by the queen herself.

And this was why Evie still decided to tell Queen Beatrice this secret when she wakes up. Evie was aware of the possible risks. But... for some reason, Evie just did not believe that Queen Beatrice was completely oblivious of the real purpose on why her husband allowed her to travel so far away from the capital and even without him. The queen was not a simple minded and straight lady. The fact that she could be a queen of a people of a totally different race and still remain as one beside King Belial for so long in this place just goes to proof that she was an able ruler. Moreover, she believed that in this place, Queen Beatrice would be her closest and greatest ally. And she believes that if they work together, they could do greater things and contribute to stopping this upcoming disaster.

When she left the room, Evie headed to the hall where the vampires were gathered and spent a short time mingling around and catching up with them before getting her own breakfast.

While waiting for Queen Beatrice to wake up, Evie decided to do something about Gideon. This troubled brother-in-law of hers was truly an enigma! She needed to figure him out while it is still early but... how?

She also thought of Gav and wondered where he was right now. Leon and Zanya supposed to have reached them last night. She wondered if Gav knew where she was at right now. Looking outside the window and staring at the dark city, Evie took a deep sigh. She was starting to miss Gav so bad.

But she smiled as she touched her still flat stomach. Somehow, she had a feeling that they will be reuniting together as a family of two plus one again soon and that feeling was enough to make her feel quite relieved. That thought brought a dazzling smile to grace her already beautiful features. Those who were looking at her, found her smile to be so beautiful that they were tongue tied and in a daze as their queen's stunning features were impressed upon their minds.

Her thoughts then returned to her current dilemma which was no other than Gideon. She still believed that he was going to be focal point of everything that will be unfolding in the future. If only he was willing to open up to her and stop fighting all on his own and start involving others to help. She could understand if it were others who did not know. But he already knew that she too knew about the upcoming disaster. So why was he still so reluctant to open up? She did not need him to tell her everything at one go, but at least a little would not hurt.

Somehow, Evie could not help but compare Gideon to how Gav was when he was Gavrael. Both of them were lone wolves who act as though they do not need anyone or any help at all. Suddenly, something came into Evie's thoughts. That was right, she had yet to mention to Gideon about Gav's situation, that his dark fae side seemed to have left his body for good now. Should she mention this to him?

Evie paced back and forth by the window. Thinking hard on what the best decision would be for her to come to. It was hard for her to decide as she still could not fully trust Gideon when it is related to her husband. She had already decided Gideon was not the villain she thought that he was but... what if he ends up doing something to Gav once he finds out Gav no longer has his dark magic? On the other hand, what if it could change Gideon's mind or might even help Gav to regain his dark magic and dark fae side if he found out about this matter?

For the first time in a long while, Evie found herself extremely indecisive as she kept vacillating between the options she had.

When time passed and she still could not decide, Evie went to visit Vera. She found her sitting there alone in her room and she was not sleeping. She was just seated beside the window, her unseeing eyes staring out in a daze.

Looking at her, Evie felt sad. Slowly, she approached her and sat on the bed.

"How are you?" Evie asked. Vera blinked before turning to look at Evie and she smiled.

"I still can't believe I'm seeing you in a place like this Ev..." Vera trailed off. She could tell with one glance that this was no longer the frail little young lady she had met before during those days long passed. Even the feeling she invoked within her was so different. This Evie was nothing like that little girl. And even before she had found out from the woman tending to her that Evie was now a queen, a very powerful queen, Vera had already somehow sensed that Evie was now someone so high, so powerful that she was no longer worthy to even call her 'Evie' anymore. "... Your Majesty.." Vera stood from her chair and gave a respectful bow to Evie.

Chapter 452 - I Will Be Fine

"You can still call me Evie when we're alone. We're still friends after all, right?" Evie smiled amiably at Vera.

Vera looked down and lowered herself slowly back to her chair. "I'm not sure if I'm still worthy to be your friend. I am... I am just a nameless lady now."

"You're not nameless. You are Vera... and you are still the most beautiful human I have ever seen." Evie grinned and Vera's lips trembled a bit.

Evie moved forward and enveloped the trembling lady in a warm hug and the two embraced each other for a long time, not breaking the silence until Vera's trembling became a bit better.

"I'm not sure how you ended up here. But... if you want to go back to the surface, just let me know. I can help you." Evie told her carefully. But Vera shook her head, slowly but firmly.

"Thank you but I don't want to go back up there anymore. There is nothing left for me up there on the surface." She said decisively then she averted her eyes and looked up at the fascinating crystals above this dark paradise. "I don't want to see the sun anymore. I think... I want to spend the rest of my life here, in this beautiful... dark paradise."

For a long while, Evie just observed her expression. She could see the obvious hurt flashing within those baby blue eyes of hers.

"Is..." Evie hesitated for a moment, "Does this decision of yours have anything to do with Prince Gideon?"

Vera pressed her lips tightly together. "I... I was the one to ask him to bring me here. No, I... I forced him actually. So, I..." Vera was hesitating as she explained and finally trailed off when Evie began to smile at her.

"Have I mentioned to you that my husband is his brother?" Evie said, grinning sweetly and Vera's eyes widened, surprised. "You like my brother-in-law, right?"

The question made Vera nibble the inside of her lower lip. But then she looked away. "But he is in love with someone else."

Evie heard the wealth of hurt in her voice as Vera stared at her hands that were clutching at the blanket covering her legs, twisting them nervously as she did not know what to do with her hands. "He only took pity on me and... and took me along with him and want me to stay with him here because I... I apparently resemble the woman he loves." Vera added weakly, her voice strained and sounded to Evie as though she were at the edge of tears.

"He... he told you to stay with him?" Evie asked incredulously, eyes slightly widened. She had already talked to Kione about Gideon's late lover. Last night, while Gideon was with Vera, Evie had made Kione and Azrael tell her more about Leah. That was why Evie was not surprised at all about what Vera revealed about another woman that Gideon loves, because even Azrael and Kione mentioned that Vera's eyes made them remember the late Leah.

Of course, this made Evie feel sad for both her friend and brother-in-law too. It was obvious that it was true, that Gideon took interest of Vera because of her resemblance to Leah. That was why Evie asked her if she wanted to go back to the surface. And yet... Vera just told her that she wants to spend the rest of her life here... was it because she still wanted Gideon despite all this?

"You want him... Gideon?" Evie asked with a soft voice and Vera smiled at her bitterly as she raised her eyes glittering with unshed tears to look at Evie.

"Yes." She replied simply and then she let out a shaky sigh. "I never desired anyone as much as this in my entire life like I do now... to the point that I feel like it's fine if I suffer as long as I can be with him. I know I am being ridiculous, but I feel as though I am spellbound by him since the very moment that I saw him appear as an angel in front of me."

Vera's smile became utterly helpless Evie felt her heart breaking for her.

"You're going to stay with him like he told you...?" Evie uttered again, her voice very careful and when Vera nodded, Evie did not know what to say for a long while. "Are you... are you sure about this?"

Another shaky sigh left Vera's lips as though she too did not know what she wanted, but then she smiled and nodded firmly at Evie.

"I know this will be hurtful but... I realized that with my terrible luck, I somehow feel like I'll suffer anyway even if I give up on him now... I think that he's worth suffering for. At least... he's someone I willingly chose and really want." The gleaming wetness in her pale blue eyes were filled with sadness and a heart-breaking smile decorated her pale face. "I have suffered too much and too long for people I don't even care for, for people who don't even bother to give me even a cup of warm water to drink when I'm sick and dying. He... he saved me, Evie... he embraced me and didn't leave me until I woke up. Even if he did that all because of the woman I resemble..." she took a sharp breath and looked down at her hands that were now entwined, before she looked up again at Evie. "I will be fine, don't worry. I'm used to this already." Vera shrugged and her tone was light, as though being abused was nothing to her. Evie's heart broke to hear how Vera spoke of her mistreatment as something so natural.

"When I begged him to take me with him, I told him I only needed safe shelter... not his love." Her voice trailed off and sounded so small and pained as she denied wanting Gideon's love.

#### Chapter 453 - Cooperation

"Oh Vera," Evie could only hug her friend again, her heart breaking for this poor friend of hers. She wanted to say something and wanted to tell her she did not need to make herself suffer like this. But Evie could not speak. Maybe because she knew what Vera needed the most right now were not advices, but just the solid and silent support and understanding a friend could give her. And Evie was not going to deny her this one little thing. And she could see it that this decision Vera made was not something shallow and decided on in a split second that still could be changed over time or by some talks. Somehow, Evie could see it in her eyes, that she had already allowed herself to intentionally fall into the deep end on this matter. And she was clearer on this than anyone else on how futile it was to stop someone from wanting what her heart wants. She had realised it was already too late when Vera had decided to talk to her about it, and no one and no amount of words can change her decision anymore. Nobody could change her mind now, only she herself.

"Please don't be sad for me, Evie." Vera told her, as she started caressing Evie's back as if to soothe her. "Don't worry, I can handle this. I knew all along that it was going to be a gamble from the very start. I am not forcing myself to do this either. So please do not worry. I will do my best not to deliberately make myself suffer... I know all pain will subside and dull out eventually. I just need to get used to it and I think that as long as I don't expect anything more than what I can get from him, I

will be perfectly fine. Eventually." She even smiled as she said that, causing Evie to pull back and look at her with concern.

"But what if... the pain never actually fades off? What if it only grows and gets worse over time?" Evie asked her softly, aching for her.

"I think..." Vera shrugged and flashed her another helpless smile, "...I'll just cross that bridge when that day indeed comes, and if I can't handle it anymore. Right now, I am quite confident that I can handle the pain as I know I've developed quite a tolerance over the past years."

Her answer had silenced Evie for a long while. Then she reached out for Vera's cool and pale hands and held it within hers gently. "Alright, I will respect your decision Vera," Evie could only give in, "but please, promise me that you will put yourself first and... please don't hesitate to come to me if it becomes too hard and too heavy for you to bear it alone, okay? I will be there for you whenever you need someone to lean on or vent out to, I promise you that. There is no need to think twice to ask for help, okay?"

Vera's eyes gleamed at Evie's words of comfort and encouragement and this time she was the one who moved to hug her. "I feel like some god sent me two angels, one angel of darkness and one angel of light. You've become like my personal angel of the light, Evie... thank you so, so much... you have no idea how thankful I am that I've met up with you again here, in this place..."

Evie rubbed Vera's back gently as she whispered in her mind. 'You're the angel of light Vera. I strongly believe that you are the angel of the light that will bring that damned dark angel down to his knees! I am putting my bet on it... wait...'

Suddenly, a thought popped in Evie's head. What if... Vera is the key to unlock all of Gideon's secret? What if she was the key to help him open up? What if... what if Vera was the one to be his salvation?

Her eyes widened and then a small smile curved on her lips. Something fierce and determined then bloomed in her eyes. It seems she had something very important to deal with for now. That was right, she must help Vera win over the closed off heart of that prince of blackmail! If that happens, Evie was certain that everything might change for the better. And she was thinking that it was not only for Vera but also for Gideon and the entire Under Lands as well!

Once Evie left Vera's room, she immediately sought Kione out. She had already heard quite a great deal about him and his infamous reputation. Evie decided not to speak with Vera about her plan as she thought it was not Vera who needed the push. This push was specially reserved for Gideon. Vera already loved him, but Gideon... she was not certain of how things were on his side yet. She needed to know if that man really only cared about Vera due to him being reminded of Leah every time he looks at Vera. She needed to know first if there was even a certain sign that it is possible for him to fall for Vera as herself and not because of her resemblance to his late lover.

Evie was trying to be careful as she did not want to cause any additional pain for Vera on top of what she was already dealing with. She wanted to help but she knew there was always that possibility that interference from others might cause an even bigger problem. Evie wanted to avoid that, so she was going to make sure of some things first.

"You were looking for me, Queen Evielyn?" Kione appeared before Evie and greeted her with a bow.

"Can you put up a sound barrier, Kione? I have something important to tell you."

Curiosity immediately gleamed in Kione's eyes and without further ado, he quickly called forth a soundproof barrier within seconds. Evie actually thought of Azrael first before Kione came to mind, but she then remembered that Leah was Azrael's little sister. Evie quickly realized that the man might end up seeing Vera as his little sister as well. However, if it was Kione... Gideon would probably react just by having him entering Vera's room.

"I need your cooperation Lord Kione." Evie told him after revealing her plan to him. "I already know your views about this and that you personally think that Gideon falling in love with Vera is going to be the cause of a disaster. But I strongly believe it might be the other way around."

Kione let out a soft sigh, obviously still unconvinced.

"May I ask you one thing, Lord Kione?" her gaze on him was serious but there was a warmth in those amber eyes that Kione could only nod. Not that he could say 'no' to this Queen anyway, he thought in his mind.

"Go ahead, Queen Evielyn."

"Have you ever fallen in love before?" Evie asked him as her eyes observed him closely, not wanting to miss his every reaction.

Kione fell awkwardly silent, then he slowly ran his fingers through his hair. "Well... I'm not sure if our understanding of the words 'falling in love' is the same, but all I know is that I've fallen in love with a lot of things and quite a number of ladies already during my lifetime. I'm not a one-woman man after all.." He shrugged as he answered Evie's question.

Chapter 454 - Hall

"But you do believe in love, do you not?" Evie stressed on that one point.

"Well, of course. I've seen others who would do anything and everything for it. Some even ended up trading their lives and everything they have just for it. Though I honestly think it is kind of a foolishness for anyone to do that, I do understand that someone like me who never had really went through such degrees of passion, really don't have the right to judge."

Evie could not help but smile at Kione's words. "At least, I'm glad you are trying to understand. Don't worry, one day I'm sure you will experience this foolishness as you have called it." Evie smiled knowingly and serenely at Kione. She thought to herself that one day, this man would eventually come to know the pains and joys of what true love would bring to his life.

"Oh, dear gods in heaven, spare me. I'm really not looking forward to that day at all. I will never be satisfied with just one woman and that is why I'm still unmarried until now and I never have the intention of planning to do so." Kione rejected Evie's statement vehemently as his head shook from side to side, full of vigorous denials.

"You, asshole..." Evie shot out and smiled at him, shaking her head and Kione just smirked, looking unapologetic. "You should know that sometimes you don't even have a choice. But well, back to our topic, I just need you to cooperate. I know you fully understand what I am trying to get at and I know you already saw the logic in it, even without me explaining in detail."

"Yeah," Kione sighed again, "you believe that love conquers all in the end. And you are convincing me to believe the same and cooperate with your plan."

"Gideon called you a smart-ass and now I can see why." Evie looked at Kione and chuckled lightly.

"A smart-ass is better than a foolish-ass I believe." Kione sniffed as he tried to brush off his embarrassment.

"So? We are set now, right?"

Kione ran his fingers through his hair again. "Fine," he gave in, "it's not like you'll actually let me get away if I still refuse. I can somehow tell that you're intending to involve and tell Queen Beatrice about your plan once she wakes up and I already know what will happen once you do that."

"Indeed, what a smart-ass you are." Evie smirked and Kione smirked back. "Well then, let's start with the details. I know you're definitely the best with this so feel free to throw out your ideas."

...

After waking up from a nap, Vera felt that her body had become a lot better now. Whatever medicine they had used on her wounds was just amazing. Even the cracks on her lips had dried and seemed to be healing very fast now. Could it be some magical medicine? But she kept hearing over and over that magic does not work on her. So what magic is this?

Vera let her feet land on the floor after dangling them over the bed for a while. Her feet were wrapped with bandages so she could not feel if the floor was cold or not. She tried pressing down on it and when she felt no stinging pressure on the soles of her feet, she tried to stand without holding onto something to lessen the pressure.

Somehow, she did not feel anything too uncomfortable, so she continued walking. She grabbed at a robe that was placed neatly on the chair beside her bed and threw it over herself to cover up her white and delicate sleeping gown. As soon as she wore it, Vera inhaled the scent left on it and she realized that the black robe belonged to no one else but Gideon. His familiar masculine scent that she had recognised and filed away in her mind lingered on the garment and Vera's lips curved up for a while before the smile abruptly faded.

She then headed to the door and pushed it open. There was no one outside her room. Vera did not know where she wanted to go, but she just wanted to see more of this place. Her view from the window was limited and she wanted to get to know more about this wonderful and mysterious dark paradise. And besides, no one had said anything to her about her not being allowed to leave her room, right?

Wandering around aimlessly while being fascinated at the interior of the beautiful dark castle, Vera did not realize that she had already reached as far as the restricted left wing of the castle.

She did not know that the left wing of the castle was the location of a hall of pleasure Lord Kione had established since he first arrived in this city. Kione had complained about the hollowness of the castle and how boring it was. So, he proposed to Gideon to put up a fun spot – even if it were just a single one – and Gideon, being so unbothered about anything else other than whatever he was planning in his head, had just agreed to Kione's request. And thus, the hall of pleasure was created in the far corner of the left wing, inside the castle.

The dark faes were extremely sexual creatures. They love sex, and to them it was more than a necessity and pleasure just as how blood was to the vampires. It was common for them to seek sexual pleasure when they just want to forget about their worries, just like how humans indulge themselves in the consumption of alcohol when they were riddled with troubles. That was why houses of pleasure were very common in the entire land and entering one was not considered a shameful act at all. Though it was very rare for castles to have their own halls of pleasure, it was not frowned upon. Of course, there were only two known castles with their very own personal hall of pleasure within them and both were established by the shameless Lord Kione himself. He had his own hall of pleasure back in his castle in Goshen.

Standing before a large double door before her, Vera curiously stared at it. This door seemed to be the dead end and she wondered if this door would bring her to the outside. The castle was larger and more intricate than she had initially thought.

Stretching out her hands, Vera held onto the door handles and pushed it. She did not think it would budge with her meagre strength. But to her surprise, it opened voluntarily for her.

Her heartbeat strangely picked up its pace, not knowing why it had done so. But she stepped inside anyway, clutching tightly onto Gideon's robe as if it could help shield her from whatever dangers she would face.

When the door banged closed behind her, she jumped in fright. Something dark seemed to be dissolved and the dark, quiet and empty hall a while ago suddenly turned into a completely different place. And Vera just stood there unmoving with her blue eyes wide in utter disbelief.

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Chapter 455 - Chill

Kione and Evie were still busy discussing and ironing out the details on Evie's plan when a dark fae kept looking over their way. Evie had noticed the peculiar actions of the dark fae since a while ago but since she made no move to approach them, she thought it was just a matter of being curious and had ignored her presence. But it seems as though Kione was bothered about it, and he interrupted their conversation to comment about it.

"I think she might have something to say, Queen. Let's hear her out first." Kione suggested and as Evie nodded, he dissolved the sound barrier and motioned the dark fae to approach.

"What is it?" He asked and the dark fae bowed to the both of them.

"My lord I... I think you need to know about this." The dark fae said in hesitation. "About the human girl that Prince Gideon brought back."

Immediately, Evie and Kione straightened, alarm immediately blazed in their eyes. Did something happen to Vera?

"She's been wandering around in the castle for a while now." The dark fae quickly continued after seeing the both of them in high alert.

"What? And no one stopped her?" Evie exclaimed. She continued interrogating the dark fae. "Is someone accompanying her?"



The dark fae looked confused before shaking her head mutely, causing Evie to widen her eyes.

"We didn't receive any orders to... to stop her from leaving her room or going anywhere she wants to ..." the dark fae looked quite intimidated at Evie's progressively darkening expression and now her shoulders sunk as she spoke.

Evie's head snapped at Kione, and the lord quickly explained.

"I know this is weird, but Gideon had set a rule in this castle. And the first rule is for the servants to never do a thing out of their own volition unless it had been ordered for them to do so. Gideon hated being interrupted even if it's just by accident. That was why he had set such a rule. And these servants here will never dare to do something they're not told to do."

A sharp sigh escaped Evie's lips and she could only turn to the dark fae again. This brother-in-law of hers and his rules really were a pain.

"Where is she now? She's hurt, and she should not be walking too much and wandering around." Evie shot out quickly when the dark fae looked at Kione with a helpless gaze.

"My Lord, she was heading towards the hall of pleasure in the left wing section of the castle when I rushed over here. She might have already reached there as of now –" the dark fae timidly reported, hoping that the recipients of the message would remain reasonable and not kill of the messenger for the unfavourable report.

"What hall of pleasure?!" Evie cut her off before her eyes flew to Kione in panic. The words 'hall of pleasure' itself did not give a good connotation in Evie's mind and it only caused more worries for Vera.

The man who was looking back at Evie also had his eyes wide opened. He could literally feel his sweat pores open and the sweat roll down his skin.

"Shit!" he cursed and in a blink of an eye he disappeared. And Evie deduced he was going to the rumoured 'hall of pleasure'. Nothing had better happen to Vera.

...

Inside the hall, Vera just stood there, paralyzed. She could not believe her eyes. Men and women were everywhere, naked and undulating under colourful lights coming from the different coloured magical lamps being suspended at certain distances from each other over the ceiling, doing all kind of obscene things. She did not dare focus her gaze on any one of them, but she could tell clearly what kind of place she had unwittingly stepped into. The music was loud and yet she could hear the familiar sounds she used to...

Suddenly, a palm descended and covered her eyes and then everything suddenly became dark and utterly quiet.

When the palm that covered her view was finally removed, a handsome face appeared before her eyes. He was smiling, flashing those perfect and startling white teeth.

"What are you doing here, darling dearest?" he asked, his voice melodious and sweet. "Seems to me that you're lost, right?"

Vera forced herself to snap out of her shock. Her eyes looked around again and she blinked, as she could no longer see what her eyes were being assaulted before this man appeared.

"You shouldn't be here. This hall... it's not a nice place as it makes you see some unwanted scenes and... well... not so nice illusions." He grinned at her, his smile becoming as sweet as his voice.

Illusions? Vera could only utter in her mind.

Then he gently but firmly held her shoulder and turned her around. "Now let's go, darling dear." He pushed on her back gently and Vera could only move forward, wordlessly.

Kione bit his lips and released his pent-up breath as quietly as he could, feeling ever so relieved he had found her first, before anything bad could have happened. He noticed her robe and he was so fucking relieved, knowing that the only reason no one had dared grabbed such a beauty like her yet was because of Gideon's robe on her. Seeing that almost all the males already noticed her and their eyes that were filled with lust made him feel a certain chill running through him. Damn, he had just barely managed to escape death, did he not?

When the door finally closed behind them, Kione took another quiet and deep breath, and he was about to let go of her small and frail shoulders when he felt a sudden and much stronger chill that seemingly slammed into him. Double shit! He cursed quietly, already knowing that no one would make him feel this kind of sensation but him alone.

He raised his eyes and as he had expected, Gideon was already standing ten steps away from them.. Gideon was looking at them with a face so dark that Kione's survival instincts actually kicked in speedily and without warning.

#### Chapter 456 - Nostalgic

The look in Gideon's eyes was so deadly that Kione almost immediately blurted out his explanations to keep Gideon's wrath from mistakenly falling upon him. But as he opened his mouth, his eyes caught the light fae queen arriving at the scene as well. Her body was glowing and only a shimmer of her wings was seen before it disappeared behind her. She stopped quite a bit of a distance from them, and it seems as though she had absolutely no plan on helping him out of his current sticky and problematic situation. This sly queen...

Kione could only ruthlessly bite down on his lip as he stared at the light fae queen. Even from this distance from him, he could tell that she was looking at him so fiercely and he knew exactly what that intense look she had on her face was and the unspoken instructions of what she wanted him to do.

Shit shit shit! He cursed within him over and over because he knew that it was a lost cause, and he could no longer escape this. He literally had gotten himself trapped in this situation that was not fully part of his own making. Also, earlier on, he had already given his word to the light fae queen that he would cooperate and go along with her plans! But must she be so strict and cruel to demand him to carry out the plan in such a precarious and dangerous situation like this? Could she not feel Gideon's intensity?

Would it kill her to be more chill and not push things to happen so quickly? Kione could only cry on the inside. Is she really planning to find out what Gideon felt towards the human girl or is she actually planning to have me dead?! This is so not the right time and setting to provoke...

Suddenly, Kione trailed off from the ramblings within his own mind and let out a slow breath. Somehow, he realized that this was actually the most perfect time to provoke him. Gideon was not someone even he could easily fool with his high class and perfect acting. Most of the time, Gideon

could easily recognize his motives and that was the reason why Kione had to make sure that the light fae queen understood that fact first and foremost. Now he regretted as it seemed that she too had realized that this was the perfect opportunity to get Gideon to be riled up.

Sighing again, Kione met Gideon's almost hellish gaze that was lighted up in anger.

"It's a surprise seeing you coming all the way here, my lord." Kione's naturally melodious voice echoed as he smiled meaningfully at Gideon. Outwardly, he still looked very relaxed despite the danger that was obviously looming over his head. However, inwardly, no one could tell that he was a wailing and sobbing mess, questioning the gods on why it was always him when trouble comes in the form of his prince, Gideon.

Gideon's face of course darkened even further after hearing how Kione's nonchalant tone floated over to him. Kione was not blind, and he could clearly see how Gideon's eyes stared malevolently at his hands which were lightly resting on the girl's narrow shoulders.

"What is she doing here? Why is she not resting in her own room?" Gideon finally spoke, his words clipped and tight, while his voice rumbled out in an incredibly dark and almost venomous quality.

"She had wanted to tour the castle. So I was accompanying her, right Vera darling?" Kione drawled out lazily as he craned his head to look at Vera, smiling at her. And though he could not see how Gideon's face was like right now, he unmistakably felt the sudden heavy blast of dark pressure coming from him, hitting only Kione and totally avoiding Vera. What caused that blast? The claim of him touring her around the castle grounds? Or was it him using the endearment darling on Vera? Whatever it was that had triggered him, things seemed to be going according to plan as of now.

All of a sudden, before Kione could return his gaze to Gideon, the red-haired young lady was forcefully being ripped from his hands and then a strong punch flew towards him and landed squarely in the middle of his face.

Kione was pushed back until the door as Gideon grabbed his collar and pinned him against it. "And you f\*\*king dared to bring her inside this filthy hall?" his eyes narrowed so darkly and dangerously, overflowing with deadly rage that Kione almost responded by lifting up his arms to raise and wave about his white flag. But somehow, he managed to keep up his acting mode, maybe due to this punch suddenly making him remember something. Kione licked his bleeding lip that was cut from the punch and looked up at Gideon. 'Ah, this is kind of nostalgic.' He thought, somewhat delightedly to himself. It was truly too long since he had seen such real and intense interest being displayed by his old time friend. When was the last time Gideon had punched him like this? Years... so many years... since Leah died.

He remembered how back then, the three of them – him, Gideon and Azrael often fight amongst each other and every time they fought against each other, they never use their magic. Just their fists and raw strength and Kione remembered how the three of them always ended up laughing heartily together once their brawl was over. They had laughed at each other's bloodied and swollen face before healing themselves, so their families would not question them on what the hell had happened while they were together.

Somehow, experiencing a punch from Gideon again made him realize how he missed those times in the past. He chuckled to himself as he thought how crazy he must be to be able to reminisce on those earlier days just because he was being punched in the face by Gideon.. However, all these was only when Gideon was still really alive back then, and not just passing his days as a living dead.

Does this mean that he would be finally coming back to life again? Because... just because of this small and human lady?

#### Chapter 457 - Knight In Shining Armour

Out of the blue, that thought suddenly fired Kione up. It seemed as though his desire in pulling Gideon out of his very own abyss of darkness now had overtaken his worry about what might – or even might not – happen in the future. After all, it had always been his wish for a long time now. He had always wanted to help get Gideon out of that psychological slump he seemed to be forever trapped in and he would always be willing to do anything for him. As how Gideon had done everything and anything for him back when they were still young brats who did not know much about suffering, just so he could save his hopeless little ass.

So now that he was indeed seeing a sign that the old Gideon they had known during their younger years seemed to be making himself known once again, he would willingly toss aside his personal beliefs as long as this could help him come back to the land of the living and enjoy life once again.

With a mocking smile, Kione stared hard at Gideon, challenging his authority right in his face. The slight fear and hesitation in his eyes were completely wiped away now as in its place, determination bloomed within them.

"What did I do wrong, my prince? Was it wrong of me to offer my services and be a gentleman to escort such a very beautiful young lady around? And besides, why do you even care, huh, My Lord? This is very unlike you..." Kione's voice lowered into a whisper as he continued, "have you forgotten that for so many years you didn't even bat an eyelid whenever I escorted your girls out of your room and brought them over to mine and do them next? You used to not care about such inconsequential matters at all as long as I do not force them to come to me, right? So what's with this behaviour of yours now? Don't tell me... don't tell me you've fallen in love with this human girl –" Kione continued to egg Gideon on, his voice flippant and grating to Gideon's ears alone.

Another punch came flying in as Gideon growled the words "shut up!"

Kione was then sent soaring before being slammed against the door yet again. Still, he let out a short laugh as he licked the corner of his lips. "So she's indeed off limits, huh. I had wondered, though... tell me Gideon," Kione's gaze became incredibly serious as he stared into Gideon's stony eyes. "Is all this hoo-ha all because you've fallen for her, or is it because you're actually seeing Leah in her?" Kione's question was like a lance, sharp and piercing in its aim, hitting the spot in Gideon where it hurt the most.

"I said shut your damned mouth –" Gideon growled even louder. And this time, with a darker tone as he attempted to hit Kione for the third time. But before his fist could reach him, he suddenly halted, as if a certain powerful magic had held him immobile and frozen to the spot. Did the bloody queen finally made a move and is going to jump in to save his wretched ass? Of course not!

Peeking quickly to the side, his eyes could make out that the queen was still standing right where she was the whole time, seemingly not moving even a single step forward. She did not even seem to have the slightest bit of compassion for his current state. And it was clear that she was not planning to even make a move. Was she really going to just stand there and watch? Oh, what a wicked little lady she is! For some reason, Kione was starting to get the very same feeling he had felt towards Gavrael when he looks at the light fae queen right now. It must be due to the both of them being

actual devil sprouts. Only that this queen has a deceiving exterior of an angel! These devil sprout couple really do go hand in hand!

So who was it that had stepped in to save him? Who had dared to...

Silence reigned as Kione stared at the frail and pale arms that were now wrapped tightly around Gideon's waist. Of course, it had to be her... Damn... Vera, you go, girl!

Kione almost laughed out loud at the sight of Gideon's tall and muscular form, stiffening up like he had turned into a marble statue just by her touch. To think that the young lady did not even need to speak to stop this brute from going crazy.

But Kione was not done yet as he found that this was another opportunity while the young human lady was still chaining Gideon down well with her two little frail arms. Kione wanted to burst out laughing as he looked at her thin arms holding Gideon back. They literally were like two strands of threads trying to restrain a fierce and violent lion.

"Don't get me wrong, My Lord. But if you're acting over protective of Vera like this only because she reminds you of Leah, then forgive me... But I won't back off and let you have her for yourself." Kione played his role of acting out the knight in shining armour, wanting to save Vera from the big bad wolf.

"What?!!" Gideon roared as he snapped out of his trance, his eyes widening with renewed fury. It was obvious that he could not believe what he had just heard coming from Kione's mouth itself.

"What did you just say?"

"

"Yeah, I know it sounds unbelievable, but I guess it shouldn't be that surprising. Any man can fall for such a beautiful lady like her. Though for me, I believe that this must be what they call love at first sight, no?" Kione daringly replied and was seemingly talking to himself a little.

Listening to his friend rattling off, Gideon smiled, open mouthed, as he looked at Kione in utter disbelief.

Kione ignored Gideon and continued. "Besides, don't you think she would be a thousand times better off with me instead? At least, I really like her as she is, and not because she reminds me of someone else. She's breath taking and so maddeningly beautiful. Don't you think such a beautiful creature like her deserves to be with someone who really likes and appreciates her as herself? Compared to someone who cares for her only because he's seeing someone else that he loves in her?"

Chapter 458 - Wait

The silence around them thickened until it felt as though they were enclosed in a thick viscous soup. It was so unsettling and heavy that no one dared to even make a single move nor speak up for the whole time. Anyone present at the scene could clearly feel that something big was going to explode very soon. And it would be a blast so powerful that it could make the entire castle tremble, if not the entire city.

But just as the explosion was about to be set off, a loud sound echoed out from the side, breaking the deafening silence and deflating the tense atmosphere.

"Damn! I can't believe the two of you went on ahead and are having fun without me!" Azrael landed right behind Gideon, his loud and booming voice filled with excitement, like a child who had finally found his best friends in the middle of an exciting game, and he had jump right into the middle of it.

Kione could only avert his gaze from Gideon and look at this damned air-headed friend of his who was now cracking his knuckles and neck as if he was getting warmed up and ready to join a brawl. What the hell, Azrael! If my hard work goes to waste because of this, I'll bury you alive, along with all the mess that you have dragged in with you as well! Kione could not help but roll his eyes seeing how dense and thick this friend of his was. He just stopped short of running over to the big oaf and curling his fingers around the guy's neck and strangling him! Urgh! His feet were itching to deliver a well-aimed and nicely angled kick to the man's behind.

And just as Kione was thinking of that, Gideon's grip on his collar loosened. No, shit!

When he returned his gaze to Gideon, the man had already put on his impenetrable and blank faced mask and Kione cursed up a storm again – all within the safe confines of his mind of course. All that hard work of his, now negated and back to square one, all thanks to that big lug! The darkness that was earlier swirling around him had immediately calmed and his hand fell to his sides.

Then without another word, he reached out and grabbed Vera's hand that was still wrapped snugly around his waist. He peeled her off him and wordlessly dragged her along with him as he turned and walked past Azrael who was now looking very confused. He was just getting all excited about the commotion that was kicked up and now it had died out, he was like a kite whose string was suddenly snapped and sent into a tizzy.

"Wait, why are you all leaving already? This is not fair..." Azrael complained but Gideon totally ignored him as though he did not hear a thing at all. The big man was huge, and his presence was difficult to ignore, but Gideon made an art out of it in how he treated Azrael just like air and did not even seem to acknowledge that there was a huge mountain of a man standing right there in his way.

The huge man returned his gaze to Kione, his eyes questioning on what the hell was going on. The look on his face did not give others a single doubt on how aggrieved he was feeling as one of his good friends had just ignored him and walked off as though he was not even there. Was that how it is now? He remembered the colloquial saying of the normal people that were used in their daily language "bros before hoes". In Azrael's mind, Gideon's actions were the perfect example of the exact opposite!

Kione drew in a deep calming breath and closed his eyes. He really wanted to beat this huge air-head to a pulp now! Azrael really knew how to choose his moments. How could he appear right at that most crucial moment? Now there goes the perfect chance, goddammit!

Utterly frustrated, he could only glare at him. Kione really wanted to beat him. But he knew that if he does that, this air-head would only get more fired up. He would only get more excited if they both end up fighting. And there was no way in hell that he was going to give him just what he wanted. Kione was going to make him suffer the lack of it for now. That would at least even out the frustration that he was feeling about his perfectly laid plans being thrown into the garbage .

So he breathed out and calmed down. He returned his gaze to the two retreating figures and totally ignored Azrael. He could not be bothered to give Azrael more attention at this moment as his eyes were carefully and critically observing the duo that were moving further away.

Seeing how Gideon held the human girl's wrist, Kione could only lean back against the door as he wiped his bleeding lip with his sleeve. 'Oh well, I guess that should be enough for now', he thought and when he finally realized how far he had taken it to, a short chuckle left him. 'I can't believe I've gone that far. To think I didn't even realize it until now. Seems like I owe him a 'thank you' after all. It seems that this air-head might have actually saved me. But still, I wondered what he'd have done if Azrael had not interrupted when he did. Now there's no way to find out....' he sighed, running his fingers through his hair as he shook his head.

He was about to look at the light fae queen and mouth it to her 'are you happy now?' but he heard the human girl's voice speaking out.

"W-wait." She had said as they were about to ascend the staircase. "Just... a moment please."

Gideon halted but he did not turn around to look at her. Everyone who were still there just watched and waited, wanting to know why the human girl had asked Prince Gideon to wait.. But of course, Kione was more interested in seeing if Gideon would listen to her request.

#### Chapter 459 - God Save Me

"Can you let go of me for a moment, please?" she asked again, her voice, Kione thought that it sounds very sweet, a soft lovely music to one's ears.

Seeing how possessively Gideon was holding onto her, not to mention his current foul mood, Kione thought that Gideon would definitely not listen to the girl. He would be willing to bet that Gideon would just use his magic to suspend her in the air again as he did before and drag her out or he would just as probably disappear along with her.

But to his shocked surprise, he actually let Vera's hand go. 'What?! Now, now... aren't you supposed to be extremely possessive of her right now? Good grief, this is giving me headache...' Kione's monolog trailed off at the sight of Vera suddenly walking back as soon as Gideon let go of her wrist. 'Now where is she running off to? Wait... Why she's coming back?'

Blinking in curiosity, Kione could only watch her walk in haste, slowly approaching him. 'Whoa!! Hold up... Wait... she's coming over to me? Why? Don't tell me she's going to slap me for lying –'

His internal ramblings were cut off and his eyes circled so wide when she suddenly threw herself onto him and hugged him tight.

"I'm sorry," she whispered, her soft voice tickling him. After that she then pulled away and looked up at him. "Thank you," she added simply, before she tiptoed and landed a chaste kiss on his cheek. She then abruptly turned and ran away, leaving Kione completely immobile and frozen in shock as he tried to register what had just happened within his very confused mind.

And as soon as Vera reached Gideon, the man whose expression had darkened again like a lightning storm that was about to erupt, and he immediately grabbed her by the waist and they both disappeared from the scene.

A long silence reigned in the area after, even after Gideon and Vera were long gone until Evie broke it. She clapped her hands sharply a couple of times, smiling, as she approached Kione.

"I didn't know you were a lord of acting too, Lord Kione." Evie commented slyly, her expression looking very pleased. "I honestly didn't expect you to go that far. I was actually a bit worried for your well-being for a moment there. And to think that you still looked very confident even after

saying all those things like you were prepared to die or you don't care even if he kills you." Evie could not help but chuckle as she shook her head at the still somewhat frozen Kione. "You really need to thank god that Lord Azrael unknowingly stepped in just at the right time and saved your lucky ass by accident." Evie snickered as she commented.

"What? Who save who, My Queen?" Azrael, who was still not aware of matters that had happened, butted in, unable to contain his curiosity anymore.

Evie faced the big man and she could not help but smile at the confusion that was flashing across his face. "Kione had provoked Gideon to the core. And Gideon came just about an inch from killing him right off. The two of them weren't actually having fun as you have thought though. Kione here just volunteered himself to be the prince's punching bag." Evie good naturedly explained it in easy-to-understand terms to the blurry friend so that he could catch up on what was happening.

Azrael blinked a few times before jumping up agitatedly on the spot. "What?!" the big man shouted out and looked at his friend in disbelief. "You provoked him? Now that's funny. Weren't you always the one trying to stop everything and everyone that could provoke him to go into that frenzied state?" He questioned his friend, eyebrows raised.

"Well, for now, that's enough." Evie spoke when Kione remained strangely quiet. "I am quite satisfied at what I've seen already. But maybe we might need to push a little further the next time we try it again in the near future. For now, let's give him some time to think and stew about all the things you had said..." Evie trailed off, raising one of her brows at Kione.

"Lord Kione..." she called out, raising her hand and waving it across his still blank face, "are you even listening?"

He did not respond. Evie and Azrael looked at each other. Their eyes both held the question, 'now what had happened to him?'

"Lord Kione?" Evie called again and he finally snapped out of his daze, blinking at them now.

"Yes? Queen?" he looked a bit flustered as if something had shocked him awake.

"What's wrong? Is there something wrong?" Evie asked, a little worried at why he had just drifted off that way. "Could it be that Gideon used magic on you?"

"No!" he suddenly exclaimed before bursting out in laughter. "Of course not. I am totally fine. Give me a moment, queen. I just need to heal myself." He said in haste and entered the door behind him like he wanted to escape. And Evie and Azrael looked at each other again before they both stared at the closed door.

The moment Kione entered the hall, he let his back fall back and slam against the door as his hands clutched over his chest. 'Shit, shit, shit, shit, shit! What the hell was that?!' he cursed out over and over, his eyes wide with disbelief as he began to pace by the door. 'F\*ck! What the hell is going on?'

His heart was drumming up a crazy beat in his ears. When Vera hugged him earlier, he found himself suddenly not able to breathe. And when she kissed him, those petal soft lips had seemed to jolt his heart and now it could not calm itself down. No one... no one had ever been able to make his heart flutter this hard. He could not believe someone could actually make him fall in a daze and look like an idiot until that moment. And that someone was that particular human woman of all people! 'Don't tell me I am... shit, f\*ck, no! God save me! Damn it! This can't be! All she did was



hug you and what's that? That's not even a freaking kiss. That's just a peck filled with gratitude and nothing more and you... shit!

## Chapter 460 - Nothing Else

Kione was unable to accept what he was feeling for Vera that he did not even realize he was currently pressing his forehead against the door like some problematic old man in utter denial. He was so out of it that even when some beautiful and smoking hot ladies had surrounded him and had been throwing themselves all over him, he still did not realise that.

"My lord..." they whispered as they already began reaching out to him, touching him, like how they used to do. "You looked quite troubled, my lord... Come, my lord. Allow us to comfort you." they all called and cajoled him. Kione only took in a sharp breath as he finally opened his eyes to the scene playing right in front of him. He faced the naked, erotic, and bold ladies that he had always loved.

"It has been so long since the last time you visited. We had thought that you might have forgotten about us and are no longer interested in us anymore." These ladies of pleasure were pleasing to the eyes, with gentle and suggestive voices but yet their looks and body were those of a seductive minx, with the intentions of drawing men to their bed.

His gaze swept across them and their nakedness and he caught his lower lips between his teeth before a forced smile bloomed on his handsome face. "Right..." he nodded as he whispered to himself, "all I need are... all you gorgeous ladies here. All I need is for you to please me." He spontaneously vocalised those words. But it sounded as though he was just trying to talk and convince himself on the matter. Loving one woman was the last thing he would ever want to commit himself to. He had no intention of becoming a one-woman man. And he would be damned to the deepest pits of hell if he would allow himself to set his eyes and heart on that lady of all people. No way! He did not even have a choice in this. Because his only choice was to kill whatever feelings it was that she roused within him as soon as possible. In fact, he should do it NOW.

He was not the type of man who would fight to the end of the world for a woman's love. He never was and he never will be, nor did he ever intend to change to be one now. He just loves seducing the ladies, making them fall into his arms, front, back, left, right and centre. But he never did anything more than just that – seducing. He had met quite a few ladies he had tried to seduce but they had rejected his advancements because their hearts had already belonged to some other special person in their lives. He had always respected those ladies who made their stand and did not push them into something that they did not want. In fact, he had always complimented them and then sent them away like the proper gentleman that he was. He never tried making any attempts to win their hearts. Because he simply believed that someone's heart was the last thing he ever needed and wanted. All he was interested in was the seducing and the romancing. Nothing more, nothing less.

And most of all, he would never fight his best friend and lord of all people for something like this. For him, the saying of 'bros before hoes' will always ring true. So, there was no way in hell he would fight his best friend for this!

Pulling in a really deep breath of air into his lungs, Kione's gaze gleamed a little wickedly as he tried to empty his mind and find his balance once again. To erase the red-haired girl's image in his head, he took to filling his mind with the erotic images of these curvaceous and naked ladies who were willingly throwing themselves all over him. An indolent and sensual laugh spilled out of his

thin and wickedly curved lips, causing those ladies to titter and blush in excitement and anticipation of what is to come. Then he spread his arms a little wider and ordered them, "Undress me... and no using of hands, ladies." His voice was low and raspy, increasing the heat that was already ignited within the ladies present.

The ladies giggled in excitement as they hovered around him, undressing him using only their petal soft lips and at times gingerly peeling off some articles of clothing with their pearly white teeth. "It's been a while since you came here to visit us, my lord. We thought your vigour had calmed down and you were avoiding the hall now." one of them breathlessly teased Kione and he only replied by grabbing her and kissing her hard instead of answering, ruthlessly stabbing his tongue inside her mouth, emulating the moves that he would like to show her.

When all his clothes were removed, Kione pushed the woman he was kissing back so wildly and cupped her face. "Kneel, let me f\*ck that hot mouth of yours," he growled out a little breathlessly and the woman smiled, licking her lips that were already wet with saliva as she lowered herself. Her eyes were gleaming with utter lust and excitement and absolute submission – everything that turned on Kione's primal desire to its peak.

"Oh yes, my lord. F\*ck my mouth all you want." She replied right at tip of her lord's hardness. Her lips touching the head of his tool as she spoke before she enthusiastically opened her mouth and wrapped those luscious lips around him, skilfully taking him down into her throat.

Kione threw his head back as he grabbed her head and pushing himself deeper inside her warm mouth.. 'Yeah... This... this is all I need... all I want... nothing else... yes... nothing else...' he whispered just under his breath as he grabbed the other woman who was busy licking his nipple and sucked on her breast hard as the lady kneeling before him continued with her erotic ministrations.