

SPELLBOUND 461

Chapter 461 - Impossibility

Meanwhile in Vera's room...

The duo had already materialized in there for a while now but neither of them have yet to say a word to each other. Gideon was still holding onto her wrist tightly as they stood there, he, facing forward and she just looking on at his back. The sight of that broad and powerful back just gives her the feeling of security. She was just holding herself back from jumping on him and plastering herself to his seductive back, taking in the comfort and protection that it presented.

Still remaining quiet as he had yet to talk, her gaze then travelled down his shoulder and arm to his hand. Her eyes then just locked onto his hand that was wrapped around her wrist. It was amazing how his presence alone, and his touch could just calm her down like this. The scene she saw brought awful memories back to her but hearing that they were just illusions made her feel a lot better. And as if it were just one of her nightmares, Vera managed to force it out of her mind. However, she knew that she was no longer trembling and puking her guts out in disgust was all because of Gideon. Him being there, letting her hug him, helped her stay fully in control of her own mind.

She did not know how he could be having this effect on her. It was as though he could make her very soul breath and exist in peace without him even trying. It was as if he was all that she needed to stay sane and in one whole piece. Somehow, she had that feeling that all she need was to only embrace him, and everything in her world would be just fine. Even if it was not, he would somehow be able to solve all the problems for her.

And now here she was, feeling so calm and contented just because he was merely standing here with her. Why? How? How could she have fallen for this man so easily, so quickly and irrevocably deep to this extent despite getting hurt by him over and over again during this short duration that they were together? What would happen to her heart... or worse, to her soul if he ended up giving her a rejection and then turning around and leaving her? Would she... no, could she live through it?

A small helpless smile curved on her lips even as her whole body trembled just thinking of that possibility. Because she could already feel it, the impossibility of what she is hoping and striving for things to happen between them. She was confident she could handle the pain of him not loving her but him leaving her... her, not being able to touch and embrace him ever again... she knew that she could not handle a possibility like that if it ever occurred.

It sounded ridiculous but it was like her soul had already been hopelessly entangled with him since that very moment her eyes stared into those fiery blue orbs. And there was absolutely no way out for her now. She had encountered her dead end that had no way to turn back out and get out of.

"How's your feet doing?" his voice finally echoed around her somewhat sparse room, pulling Vera back to reality. She was surprised to find that he had already turned around and was facing her, looking at her with those unsettling beautiful blue eyes of his.

"My feet? They're fine. They don't hurt anymore." she replied and he pulled her towards the bed. He pushed her seemingly fragile shoulders down until she was seated on the plush bed.

Gideon then quietly squatted down and held her feet in his large hands. Vera's eyes widened as he began lifting it and examining them for himself to see if what she had said was true.

When he began to remove the bandages that were wrapped around her feet, Vera bent over to stop him. But Gideon looked up and their faces nearly collided. Their noses were about an inch to touching each other's and Vera caught her breath at their nearness. She could not help but remember the kiss that happened between them last night.

"It's bleeding again." Gideon said, his brows furrowing and his expression hardening a little as he said that before he returned his gaze to her feet. When he pulled his face away, it caused Vera to press her lips tight together, feeling slightly disappointed that he did not move to take advantage of their nearness to kiss her. It disappointed her that it seemed that she was the only one who was thinking of that kiss.

"I'm fine... my lord. You shouldn't be doing that... I..." Vera trailed off from her protest as Gideon's gaze turned back to her and sharpened, clearly telling her to hush and stop with her protests.

He continued unwrapping the bandages and Vera could only watch, revelling from the touch of his hands on her feet. She could not help but feel her heart swell at the sight of him doing this for her. Never would she have imagined that one day, someone – a lord, a prince even – would be bending over right before her and holding her feet so gently like this.

"Tell me..." he started. His voice deep and low. "Did you take quite a fancy to Kione as well? Didn't you tell me that you choose Azrael just last night?" Gideon asked her without looking up at her face. His eyes still trained on her feet.

His question caused Vera to become stock-still. She finally remembered about that man. Why did he lie? The reason why she came back and gave him a hug and a kiss were because she knew he had saved her. She was truly thankful to him that he had helped her out of that hall. That sorry which she had said to him was actually her rejection to his confession. It appeared that his confession to her too, was just a lie. But she said sorry anyway since she felt bad for him being beaten up. However, she did wonder why he had spoken such a lie like that. And now that she had thought about it, Vera found herself in a dilemma. Should she tell Gideon the truth?

Chapter 462 - Flaming Goddess

Should she tell Gideon the truth?

Should she straight up tell him that she did not go touring around the castle with that man? Should she confess to him that she had actually gotten lost and accidentally ended up in that area? She should, right? So that he would stop misunderstanding her. But... what if he went running back there and beat that man up again?

Vera did not want that man called Kione to get beaten up all over again. She had the feeling that it was better for her not to speak about it and just keep it to herself for now. And thus, she remained quiet, just staring at him silently, until Gideon finally lifted his gaze to meet hers.

"Listen..." his voice became a little hard as he started talking, "not him. No, never him. He's not good for you." His gaze was unfathomable as he said that. He shook his head and his brows furrowed even more. But Vera just found his actions more endearing, and it filled her heart till it overflowed.

However, she blinked at his words.

"W-why?" that word was all she could managed as she tried to process and work through why he suddenly said a thing like that.

"He's not a one-woman man. He's a good man except that he can't commit himself to just one woman –" Gideon scowled as he said that.

"I do not care," she cut him off and Gideon's eyes darkened with controlled anger, thinking that she would jump into this relationship with Kione anyway despite his warning. "because he's –"

Before she could even say the continuation of her sentence which was 'not the man I want', Vera was cut off and the next thing she knew, she was pinned on the bed. Her eyes widened a little as she looked up at him, his large body hovering over hers and his eyes gleaming like blue fire as he looked down at her, his face pinched as he struggled to understand why this woman would still want a man like Kione even after his warning that he would have other women and not just her alone.

"So, you are this type of woman, huh. You really love to play with fire it seems... fine..." his breathing came out harsh and raspy. "I'll play along with you then..." his fingers began to rub along her lips, parting them, and she could see how he swallowed hard, the look in his eyes seemed to be gleaming with desire, bewitching her, causing her power of speech to simply disappear. She was just a bundle of nerves and excitement in his hands.

"Tell me, Red..." his deep voice became husky as he bent over and whispered in her ear, his warm breath fanning across her skin, sending warmth and electricity shooting through her. "Did you let Kione touch you while you both were inside that hall?" he began to lick her ear seductively as he said that, and Vera nearly shivered from the intense effect of it.

"G-gid..." she croaked out.

"Tell me... how far did you both go within that short time that I left you? Did he do this to you? Huh? Red?" he began to lick the inside of her ear and Vera whimpered and subconsciously pushed against him as she was unable to withstand the ticklish and strange sensation that his warm tongue evoked within her.

"No! No, he did no such thing," Vera's body was already hot. Her mind could hardly maintain its rationality and she was no longer thinking straight. It was as though steam was rising from the top of her head.

"Then tell me... what did he do to you?" he continued probing her as he kept licking the rims of her ear and kissing down below. Vera could not endure the physical stimulation from him and also the interrogation about her supposed fling with Kione. Her overheated mind could not take it.

She could hardly register what was going on with her body now, much less about what he was even saying. She just felt as though she was back to having a fever now. A fever she for once, had not complaints about and liked so much that her mind had gone into a frenzy. What was this? Is this magic? Did he cast a spell on her to fall into this state?

Then she felt his mouth moving downwards, trailing scorching kisses along her jawline until he suddenly flicked his searing tongue across the sensitive skin of her throat. "Tell me... did he kiss you here?"

A mixture of a moan and groan escaped from Vera's lips as he sucked on her skin. She could hear his words at the back of her mind. Why? Why was he asking all these questions right now? Vera knew she should answer him. But a part of her refused to speak because she had the thought that if she told him no, he would stop. And he would leave her hanging and alone again in this room. She did not want him to go away. To leave her. To stop. She did not want this fever to ever stop. She wanted him to do more to her if that could make him stay longer with her.

She then felt his large scalding hand on her chest. "How about here? Did that bastard touch you here too?" he continued and a high pitch moan escaped her mouth the instant he gently kneaded her soft mound. Her body jumped a little in surprise. She had not anticipated that Gideon would go this far with her.

Gideon suddenly stilled. His gaze on her was puzzled now. Why did she react as though that was the first time someone had kneaded her breast?

The moment he looked down at her small and flushed face, Gideon swallowed. Her face... was delicately blushing red, her blue eyes in a smoky daze, and there were little beads of sweat like crystal droplets all over her temples. Her flaming red hair was spread out on the bed so gloriously in a sharp contrast with the dark coloured bedsheets. She was... f*cking so beautiful that Gideon just stayed there, looking at her.. She was a vision of a flaming goddess with icy pale blue eyes staring at him.

Chapter 463 - Possessive

Seeing him not moving anymore after he had slowly retracted his hand from her chest, Vera began to feel somewhat worried that her earlier reaction when he kneaded her breasts had discouraged him to continue further. She honestly did not want him to stop. She did not react like that because she did not like what he was doing to her. It was just that he had caused her to be surprised, that was all.

Afraid that he would climb off her and leave, Vera tried to think hard on what she should do to make him resume their activities and continue touching her again.

And the first thing that came to her mind was the last question he had asked her. What should she say? What type of answer would make him stay? She was antsy and wanted to just blurt something out, but the thought that it might make him run off was keeping her lips sealed and the words just hanging just behind her teeth.

"What..." she finally found her voice, "what will you do if I say 'yes'?" her voice came out hesitating, clear that she was worried about his reaction to her answer.

Her words then seemed to jolt him awake and his dazed eyes gleamed with a tinge of fury. Then all of a sudden, her hands were grabbed and pinned above her head. Her heart jumped at his closeness again and instead of alarm, excitement rose within her. Could that answer be the right one to get their activities to resume? She hoped that she gave the 'right' answer.

"So, you really let him? Huh, Red? You truly allowed him such liberties to your person?!" his voice came out so gravelly, coated with anger and Vera found herself unable to respond. Could it be that this was not the right thing to say? Her heart sank looking at the fierce look on his face. For some reason, she just felt like her answer would make him stop and leave. So she kept her mouth shut and just looked up at him with an indecisive and fearful expression until a smirk curved across his gorgeous face.

The tinge of fury in his eyes burned even wilder and his other hand reached out and cupped her face. "You little..." he hissed out heatedly and swooped down to catch her lips for an aggressive kiss, devouring her mouth hungrily and with not just a small amount of anger. There was nothing in his mind but the strong desire to punish her, to teach her a lesson, and to show her with his actions that she belonged only to him! How could she... how could she allow someone else to touch her so freely and without consideration? No one is allowed to touch her but him!

'No one!' That thought reverberated within his mind with a loud gong as the flames within his eyes flared even more wildly.

"I have already told you, woman! You are my personal bed warmer now. Mine!" he snarled out with a dangerous voice the moment he pulled away from their kiss. Vera felt her whole body jerk in shock listening to the extreme possessive tone within that statement.

And while Vera was still trying to catch her breath and make sense of his claim over her, he had already lowered his head to hers again and began kissing her neck, his hand began crawling back to her breast again and when he kneaded her this time around, her body did not jump in shock anymore. Maybe because her senses were too focused on his scorching mouth that was roaming all over her skin, hungrily kissing her from the neck down to her slender and perfectly curved collarbones, sucking her there like he was trying to leave marks all over her skin, branding her with his very own personal marks.

Her mind and heart, body and soul were all immediately suspended in the clouds and then she felt as though time had ticked by so slowly, the higher her fever, the higher he was lifting her. The next thing she knew, his mouth was on her chest, kissing her taut bud through her nightgown. His saliva wetting through the fabric and turning her white nightgown almost sheer, looking so provocative, as though she was trying to seduce him.

A combination of moans and gasps escaped from Vera's lips, and she realized he had already released her hands. With her hands freed, they flew to his head. But she did not know whether to push or pull on him. His other hand played with her other bud as he licked and suck on her other one. Oh god... what is this? Vera could only moan and gasp at what he was doing to her. All these sensations were utterly alien to her. But despite the fact that it was her very first time being flooded with these physical marvels, she was not playing the role of the shy maiden and drawing back in embarrassment. In fact, she was doing the exact opposite. She welcomed his ministrations and revelled in the whirlwind of emotions that he was putting her through.

She could already feel her gown was already so wet in that spot. He had drenched it with his mouth and that was not the only place that felt wet right now. Her sex was tingling like crazy, and something seemed to be building low in her belly that promised to be a flaming inferno once it exploded. The fever within her was so high that she felt like she was about to ignite in flames.

And when he suddenly changed to use his teeth, she made a keening, high-pitched sound as she made to grabbed onto his hair, subconsciously tugging on them. Gideon released her bud and his mouth then released that current one and latched hungrily onto her other one, causing Vera to make more sounds of pleasure and surprise.

"Gid... Gideon..." she kept calling his name out as she moaned until Gideon's hand travelled downwards and slipped under her gown.

Vera could feel his seemingly fiery hand crawling up her inner thigh and she felt her sex responding to his touch, clenching and unclenching as if it was anticipating something more. Something like his hand to touching her there. And the moment those fingers indeed reached her there, Vera could only gasp aloud again.

His fingers began to play with her curls, sliding his long and strong fingers between her sopping wet folds in slow tantalising strokes as he continued sucking on her breast again.

"Gideon..." she moaned his name again but the moment his finger probed her entrance, Vera jerked. A small and sharp shriek came out of her mouth from that sudden action and her heartbeat raced like never before.

And once again, her reaction made him halt. He pulled away and looked at her quizzically.

Chapter 464 - Fools

The look on her face made his eyes gleam in confusion now. But immediately, Vera reached out and clung to his broad and assuring shoulders, not giving him any chance to back off. "Don't... don't go," she whispered into his ears breathlessly, making Gideon's body stiffen for a moment. And the next second, as if her whisper had pressed a button, he grabbed her and made her kneel between his legs as she was still clinging to his neck.

Vera just softened her body and did not resist, allowing him to position her whatever way he wanted. Because all she asked for was for him to not leave her. Not to stop.

His hands then removed her robes and threw it to the floor in a messy heap. But when he reached at the hem of her nightgown and started pulling it up, Vera suddenly gasped and instinctively held onto her clothes.

Gideon had just creased his brows again as he looked at her, the quizzical look in his eyes intensifying. However, Vera spoke quickly, stammering out her reasoning, afraid he'd misunderstood her action. "My... my body is... it's ugly..." she said weakly as she clutched hard onto the fabric of her night gown.

Gideon's eyes slitted but his expression immediately changed again as a realization came to him. That she wasn't acting like this because this was her first time being naked before a man... it must be because of the awful fresh scars on her body.

He moved his face closer and then whispered into her ears as his hand moved over hers. "Oh, it's not Red. If you're talking about your scars... I don't care about them." His voice was low and seductive, and that was all it took for Vera to let go of her doubts.

However, just as Gideon lifted her gown up to her upper abdomen, he saw something that made his body freeze into a halt. His body became still as his gaze was glued on her lower left abdomen. An ugly scar as big as his palm was etched on her fair and delicate skin.

Gideon could tell that this was a scar that had been burned into her skin using a very hot material – most likely a metal brand.

The scar looked the same as the permanent mark being etched by a high-level fire magic at the back of the most ferocious dark fae criminals. Why? Why would a frail lady receive such an awful mark like this?! Who could have done this to her? He could feel his rage boiling and churning up a storm within him.

Seeing the change in his reaction, Vera pulled away from him and covered herself. Crestfallen at the thought that he was obviously bothered by the scar on her body, she looked down and did not dare lift her head to see what was the expression that was currently on his face. She was afraid that it would cause more scarring of her heart if there was censure on his perfect face.

"Who did that to you?" his voice came out low and heavy, and her eyes flew upwards to meet with his. "Why would someone like you have a mark like that?"

Vera was unable to respond immediately. Was he angry? Why?

"This... it's... my mother," she finally decided to answer him truthfully and Gideon's eyes widened, "because I tried to run away from home. I stole a horse to escape but... but I was caught and out of anger, my mother saw some men branding horses nearby as we were in the stables that time and... and this happened." Vera explained as if reporting something unimportant, as though she did not particularly care about what had happened to her.

What she said made him utterly speechless for a long while. Then fury blazed within him. The anger was so strong he had to jump from the bed and pace back and forth to calm himself. He could not believe this. What? Her mother? How dare... how dare she! He was going to f**king kill her!

Bloodlust suddenly oozed out of him in great waves that even Vera could feel the effects of it.

"My... my lord?" Vera called out and Gideon snapped out of that haze of anger he was caught up in. Seeing the darkness seeping out from him and enveloping the room, his eyes fell on her as her large pale blue eyes stared at him with worry, not fear.

He cursed under his breath and without another word he disappeared from her view. He needed to calm himself down. He must contain himself. He can't let her see the power she had on him, that she could make him feel like he's about to lose his mind just by seeing one awful scar on her!

Meanwhile, just outside the castle, Azrael was absentmindedly swinging his sword, practicing unenthusiastically by himself when he sensed something. Someone was coming towards him. Fast! He turned around and faced the castle's door and saw dark smoke appearing within seconds.

Gideon... he thought, recognizing that familiar dark magic. And his guess was proven right when Gideon did materialize by the door. However, he was not the only one that appeared. Kione materialized next to him and in the very same moment.

And to Azrael's confusion and surprise, the two had a very strange atmosphere which surrounded them. Gideon looked like an old man trying his very best to calm down and not to bursting out in a dangerous fit of anger, while Kione was another old man in utter turmoil, looking like he no longer knew what to even do.

Azrael's eyeballs moved left and right, looking at his two friends in utter confusion. Now what the freaking hell is going on between these two at this time?

Relying on past experiences, he did not rush to speak but just crossed his arms across his chest, fixing his gaze on them. He was fully contented to just sit aside and wait, looking at the two of them as two fools who were lost in their own worlds.

After a long while, the two fools seemed to have calmed themselves down a little and finally noticed the presence of the other.. Slowly, their heads moved in unison, and they looked at each other.

Chapter 465 - Bewitched

Bloody shit! Kione almost cursed out aloud the moment his gaze fell on Gideon who was apparently just a couple of steps next to him. What the hell!? What was he doing here as well?!

Kione had actually escaped from the hall of pleasure, leaving the ladies in there without a word. It was because in the middle of his heated session with the girls, he had started to see Vera's face superimposed over theirs. And he nearly got shocked to death when one of them asked him, 'who's Vera, My Lord? It's so unlike you to utter a woman's name in bed.' His blood ran cold when he heard that comment coming from one of them.

And when it had finally dawned on him that he had actually began calling one of them 'Vera', Kione started to become so distracted he had to force himself so hard just so he could erase her image from continuously popping up in his head and to focus his full attention on the ladies who were before him. But it was all a futile effort as he tried but yet failed incessantly until he could only give up and hurriedly left them. He was so frustrated, angered even. How did he end up being so pathetic like this? Why the hell was this happening to him?! This was plain ridiculous! Were the heavens trying to mess with him? Was his suffering the subject of humour for some gods out there? Though he does not believe in gods, what is happening to him right now is really testing his resolve.

He kept scolding himself, cursing himself in his mind as he squatted in front of the castle's door, as though something foolish was driving him mad. And just as he finally managed to calm down, Gideon, of all creatures, was the first to appear before him. Oh Lord, please spare me... he muttered under his breath as he stood slowly and greeted his lord – though the greeting was done very unwillingly and with a slightly awkward look on his face.

"You're leaving, My Lord?" Kione spoke first, trying his best to act normally as how it usually was between them. He could see the deep frowning lines between his brows, and it seemed as though he had just battled within to stop himself from charging straight into a dangerous fit of rage. Now what had happened to cause him to be angered to this state? And now that Gideon had seen him, his gaze gleamed with a new wave of anger again. Now, now... can trouble not come and stop this nonsense already? He honestly was getting tired of all this drama! It should be the ladies who loves entangling themselves in daily dramas, not him!

"You're leaving her again? I hope you had warned her this time not to wander around all by herself." Kione did not know why there were those words that had just flew out of his mouth. Why would he care in the first place? Why could he not think of other topics other than her? Had he become dumb now? "You know even the castle isn't safe for a powerless girl like her –"

"Because of the predators lurking there, headed by you." Gideon cut him off and Kione barked out a short laugh.

"Well..." Kione shrugged, "I know I can't deny that. But isn't it your fault too for leaving such an inviting prey unattended, not even leaving an order for the servants to watch over her and protect her? You can't just put all the blame to the predators especially when you yourself are guilty of negligence." His words were true and sharp, not giving anyone any second chances.

Gideon's aura blazed at Kione's piercing words, and his eyes grew intense as he threw him a vicious glare. And for goodness' sake, Kione did not even feel regret nor a single bit of hesitation despite the deadly glare Gideon was already throwing at him.

"What made you think that you can fool me with your acting? And this more so doing it twice? Stop trying to provoke me, Kione. You should know me better than that. You know I can only tolerate anyone... ONCE." There was a heavy warning of danger in Gideon's dark voice as he said that and Kione could not help but let out a quick chuckle as he shook his head at his very outraged friend.

"I'm not trying to provoke you at all, Gideon, believe it or not." He said that somewhat wearily as he threw his head up and helplessly looked at the clear blue sky. A disbelieving smile slowly curved across and graced that aristocratic and fine-looking face of his. Somehow, a logical explanation finally came to him. He was always that type of man who never hides his feelings and desires. If he wanted something, he would go ahead and take it if it was available for the taking. Also, he was always very vocal about his actions. He always believed that hiding his feelings and emotions were pure idiocy. Why would he want to hide his feelings in the first place? He always believed that letting it all out was a million times better than hiding them. Hiding what you feel and burying them inside would only cause yourself to be so emotionally constipated and more often than not, ends up causing an even bigger trouble. And he could not afford more trouble than this. It was better for him to address this issue right here and now, facing it head on than trying to run away from it. Or else, it will just continue to haunt him. And he refused to play the fool drowning himself in torturous silence, all because of the confusing bit of feelings he could not spill out.

Letting out a tired and long-suffering sigh, Kione's face looked a little better and more relaxed now as he had finally found a way to solve his current dilemma.

"You can laugh at me... but..." he continued then turned and look at Gideon, a forced smile on his face. "I think I'm already bewitched by her."

Chapter 466 - Congratulations

A thick and heavy silence reigned for a long while between them. Gideon was so still, staring back at Kione with an even more dangerous aura, where its intensity could be even said to be bordering on murderous.

"I know this sounds very unlike the normal person that I usually am. But I'd like to tell you now. I think it's not possible for me to just back off quietly and ignore this thing that is happening. To tell you honestly, I have already tried getting her out of my mind, just a while ago, but it's not as easy as I thought it would be. So I think I'll just go with the flow for now and see where this will lead to. You know as well that I'm not good at hiding what I feel and what I think. For me, it's pure idiocy to do that. Why should we suffer and hurt ourselves, denying something that obviously is happening within?" Kione added and Gideon furrowed hard, his eyes looking as though they belonged to a wild beast's now. Though Kione's rationalisations made sense, however, when Gideon thought of how all that had reference to Vera somehow or another, his anger boiled over to an even higher point.

But Kione was unbothered by his gaze as he continued. "And since as far as I know, you and Vera aren't in a relationship yet, nor I suspect that you ever might be in one. Therefore, I believe it's not too late for me to pursue her." He justified his points out.

Their gazes clashed and held each other's. And it was as if lightning were sparking and colliding between them.

"I'm not going to let you have her." Gideon said darkly. But with this man's temper, Kione found it surprising that he did not even move to grab his collar yet. It seems that Gideon could tell he was not bluffing this time and was finally taking his words seriously.

"I don't think that you can be the one to be deciding that at all, Gideon. You and I should let her choose who she really wants to be with, without trying to force her choice." A small smile curved on Kione's face as he said that, and Gideon's eyes twitched a little.

The storm-like intensity in his eyes swirled in dangerous waves as he kept his eyes locked onto Kione's. Then without a word, he turned his back from Kione and disappeared.

A long and deep sigh left Kione's lips the moment Gideon's figure was no longer in sight. And he shook his head when he realized how relieved his sigh sounded even to his own ears that Gideon chose to leave without throwing another punch first.

In that moment, Azrael finally approached where Kione was standing at. The big man began slowly circling Kione for quite a long while, continuously rubbing his chin in a contemplative manner, not saying anything at all but just letting out little hums from time to time.

"Stop doing that Azrael, damn it," Kione snapped impatiently, and Azrael finally halted in his tracks and exhaled forcefully.

"Don't put all the blame on me when it's you who are suddenly acting out of character. Are you sure you're not an imposter?" Azrael still was looking at him funny and rubbing his smooth shaven chin.

Kione scoffed and ran his fingers through his hair. "I wish I was! Damn it!" he spat out loudly then sighed again. "This will be a major headache... but I refuse to go down a crazy spiral by trying pointlessly to hide or stop whatever these feelings that are surfacing within me." Kione threw his hands in the air in exasperation.

"So you've really fallen in love with Vera?" Azrael asked in shock.

"I believe so." Kione nodded and shrugged helplessly.

"Now that's very interesting." Azrael began to laugh out loud until Kione got irritated and elbowed him. Hard.

"Stop laughing, you idiot!" he muttered unhappily.

"Well, I believe this might be what people call karma, Kione." Azrael continued laughing, wheezing through the pain of his elbowed ribs. "You've hurt one too many women. Therefore, the gods have now decided that it's your turn. The tables have been turned on you!"

"When did I hurt any woman, you dumb-ass? Aren't I the most gentlemanly and gracious dark fae in the entire Under Lands? All I did was to give them the pleasure they were craving for."

"I don't think you even realized how many hearts you had broken, you idiot." Azrael tut-tutted and shook his head at Kione.

"Who the hell are you calling idiot, idiot?"

"Now I can't wait to see how all this will pan out." Azrael side-glanced at his friend. His smile was now looking like he was starting to feel sorry for Kione. This buddy of his is going to be in for the ride of his life.

"Stop looking at me like that, you big oaf! I haven't even started yet. You can't be biased and root only for Gideon. Don't forget I'm your friend too!"

"Well, if Gideon won't move on from Leah and keep seeing Vera as some kind of substitute or whatever it's called, I guess you'd definitely have a fighting chance there, my friend. Though I won't root for you yet unless I make sure that you really are capable of becoming a one-woman man." Azrael replied seriously and Kione silently shut his eyes as he leaned his head back against the door.

"Even I don't know of that as I've never tried it before." An ironic smile curved across Kione's lips. "I, myself, believe that I can't do that as I don't even have an idea on how the hell could someone be loyal to only one woman for his entire life. But I guess it's actually not as impossible as I thought it would be. Though for now, I shouldn't be thinking of that yet."

"And what are you supposed to be thinking about for now, if not this issue?" Azrael looked confused and scratched his head.

Kione just glanced at his friend and sighed again. "It just dawned upon me that I have never tried pursuing a woman... not even once in my entire lifetime. I just know it's definitely not the same as seducing. Therefore, right now, I have no idea how or where to start."

Azrael clapped down on Kione's back hard. "Congratulations.. That's indeed a problem the so-called lord of the rakes definitely deserves."

Chapter 467 - Angel Like Her

A pained smirk curved across Gideon's face the moment he realized he was back and standing in front of Vera's door. As he stood there staring at her door again, he thought that it was funny how his body just seemed to move to where she was like this without him even realizing.

He had to disappear from Kione's view because he could feel himself getting crazily provoked by him again. Thinking of how Kione was fighting with him for Vera was enough to get him riled up and he could not believe he actually felt an intense bloodlust towards his friend. Therefore, all he could do was to only leave, afraid that he would do something that he regrets later on as his mind was a complete mess right now. He could feel himself wavering so badly.

Leaning his back against the door and lightly slamming his head back, Gideon shut his eyes tiredly and then he slid down to sit on the floor. He could not believe all these things were happening now, especially during this crucial moment. He should not have... brought her back here with him... he should have listened to his inner voice that had been clanging non-stop in its warning to him. Why? Why did he have to meet with her that night?

Now he understood what was behind the crazy warning bells that had rung so ferociously within him the moment he had laid eyes on her. Now he realized why his mind, his darkness seemed hellbent in making him believe that taking her with him was a very bad idea. If things were to continue like this, she... she was going to ruin everything... everything he had been working so hard for so many years. All his intricate plans and sweat and blood invested in it, it might all come crashing down in shambles due to her influence in his life right now.

He shook his head and then bumped the back of his head against the door again in agitation. No... he must not allow anyone to ruin his well made plans, not even her. He had tightly shut his heart closed to almost everyone for such a long time, even going to the extent of cutting himself off from all those that he cared for. For years, his heart had been as dead as driftwood and as cold as ice. And

he did not mind it one bit at all, comforting himself in the knowledge that for him to succeed with his plans, he must remove all the distractions in his life, even if that involves his very own heart and emotions, he was fully willing to kill them all off for the success of his plan being carried out.

Everything was originally going perfectly according to his plan, smoothly and without hiccups, until... until she appeared out of nowhere. Why? Why did he have to set his eyes on her that fateful night? Why did he ever allowed her to touch him in the first place? Thinking back now, he had never allowed any women to touch him before this. So why did he allow her to? He did not know how she had done it, but before he had realized it, he found himself being clutched by those little frail fingers.

Shaking his head again, Gideon tugged at his hair in frustration. No, he could not allow this lady to hold any more control over him. He must not allow this madness to continue on any longer. This madness, it must stop now. Before... before everything unravels, and it was too late for regrets and turning back.

And besides, as he further thought on it, he realised that what Kione said was right. No, it was right to say that he knew it all along. She would be much better off with someone else rather than him. Someone like her... an angel like her... she should not be subjected to fly through hell with him. She had already suffered enough in the short duration of her young life. Her being with him would only bring on more pain to herself and invite on more suffering. And that was one thing that he was sure of – she must not be allowed to suffer anymore. Not now after being rescued by him, and definitely not because of him. She is one woman who deserves someone better, someone who does not have such massive baggage to carry, and someone who can stay with her, loving her, forever until the end of their lives together.

Staring at the floor, Gideon tugged at his hair harder, a little absentmindedly. A shaky breath escaped from his lips and when he finally opened his eyes from his deep contemplation, they were once again calm. The wisp of darkness that was quietly swirling around him like they were trying to comfort or protect him also settled down and silently entered his body again, disappearing as though it was never there in the first place.

He stood up from his slumped over position on the floor, his fists unclenched now as he reached out for the door handle.

The sight that greeted him when she swung the door open was one of Vera, who was still sitting on the bed, hugging her knees tightly to herself. Curled up in that position, she looked so small and so alone.

Seeing her always disorient him no matter how strong his resolve was. She could be described as a wildfire coming at him with full force, with the intention of melting all the walls he had erected and built for so long. But Gideon now no longer plan to just stand there and allow her to do as she wished to him. He had a stronger grasp on himself now. No matter how devastating her effect was on him, he was going to try his best to withstand it. Because this was all for her sake as well. He knew that if she were to get entangled with him, it would spell nothing but trouble and more heartache for her. And for him as well, but that was not the point here.

When she turned her face to look at him, Gideon caught his breath at the way those eyes stared at him. He had left her again without a word, so realistically, she should be furious with him right now. She should be telling, or even yelling at him that she no longer wanted to see him again. She should be shouting at him how much she hated him right at this moment. However... her eyes seemed to be glittering as though she was just so glad he had come back to her. Her initially dulled and lifeless eyes looked so much more alive now instead at the sight of him. It was as if her ultimate wish had just come true.

His jaws worked and his fists clenched for a moment when he saw such raw emotions flowing out from those expressive blue eyes of hers. He could not deny he was crazily flattered at her welcome of him no matter what he did. But he shook himself out of that state and composed himself before silently letting out the breath he did not realise he was holding and approached her with measured steps.

"Your back... are you alright now?" her sweet voice echoed out and floated into his ears, a sweet and honeyed melody that soothed his troubled soul. He just felt as though he had heard a mystical music that had given him instant goosebumps.

"Don't move." He gave her the order when she attempted to leave the bed. "I came back to replace the bandages I removed."

Gideon squatted down, not meeting her gaze as he took her feet in his hand. Though this was not the first time he was doing this, he still could not help but marvel at how small and dainty her foot looked to be when held in his own large hands.

Vera just stared at him without saying anything. But it was as though she had somehow already felt that he came back this time to tell her some bad news, and her eyes became incredibly sad and a wealth of hurt shone out of those blue orbs as she fixed her gaze onto his perfect face.

"After this..." Gideon started as he continued wrapping her feet ever so gently. "I'll be sending you away. You can go wherever you want and with whoever you want... with the exception of myself." He finally lifted his face and met her gaze head on. The sight of her expression made his heart skip a beat and paused but he gathered his resolve and swallowed before he continued speaking, reaching out to touch her face.

And Vera just teared up, so silently, just staring at him longingly while her quiet tears flowed down her cheeks as twin streams before dampening the front of her nightgown.

"W-why?" she choked out. She could feel her throat tightening as it burned due to her holding back her tears. She should not cry before this man over this issue. She had known that there was someone important to him that he kept within his heart. So why was she behaving this way? But she could not help herself from wanting to find out more about it. "Is it because... of her? It is her... right? Because you can't bring yourself to forget her?" Vera's choked voice cracked at the end.

Gideon's eyes widened at her words and Vera's heart shuddered as her mind just registered what she had just said. Was he going to get angry at her again? Would he storm out in a fit of suppressed anger again? Did she accidentally signed her own death warrant now that she had inadvertently mentioned his love in this situation?

But contrary to what she had feared, he did not blaze out in anger. His brows just creased for a moment before smoothening out again and his darkened visage cleared off as if a storm had just

been blown off by a strong westerly wind. He opened his mouth as if to retort but for some reason, something made him hold back and stay his tongue from spouting those words. Then he looked away from Vera without saying anything, just shaking his head lightly.

Seeing that he was not planning to say anything further on the matter and that what she had just uttered did not ignite his rage, Vera tentatively reached out her pale hands to him and he stiffened the moment her delicate fingers brushed against his taut jaw.

"I..." Vera stammered. "It's okay even if you can't bring yourself to love me. I am not asking for much... I just want to... I mean, just let me... let me stay with you. I am not asking you to forget her. I never will ask that of you. I can promise you that." She looked at him with an earnest stare as she picked up her hand and laid it over her heart as a solemn oath that she is swearing her promise to him.

Again, Gideon's electric blue orbs stretched even wider as his gaze flew back to her face. He looked at her in disbelief now, his mouth hanging slightly open, utterly speechless at the extent this lady with the fiery hair would go to. He went silent for a moment, thinking if he should consider her proposal. But the very next second, he internally jerked and chided himself on even allowing the thought to cross his mind at all. Did he not swear to himself earlier that he would not involve her in his plans any longer? Did he not say he needed to stay away from her as she would be detrimental to the success of his plans being carried out?

From this, he could see how easily he was being swayed by her words and thoughts. Even when he was shielding himself so hard, he still got swayed by her momentarily. Thus, he stood and turned his back from her for a moment.

From this one experience, he could see how 'dangerous' this little lady was to him. Just some words here and there, and he was already wavering even when he had put up his ultimate guard.

Chapter 469 - Hopelessly Damned

Vera saw him take a sharp and deep breath. Then abruptly, he turned back to face her, swiftly bending over and slamming his big hands onto the bed, effectively trapping her petite frame between them. His eyes were radiating a fierce intensity that beamed down at her.

"No... don't!" He was shaking his head so ferociously. "Do not do this, little Red." His voice came out in a tight whisper. "Don't do this."

"Why?! Why can't I? If you let me... I can..." Vera frowned a little before questioning his response to her. She did not understand why it was so hard for him to accept what she had said. In her mind, she did not think she was asking for much.

His jaws hardened, his hands on the bed clenched the sheets so hard that if he were to exert a little more pressure, they would surely rip under his handling. "You'll only hurt yourself, Red. You won't... you will never be able to find that happiness you longed for with me. So, don't go and invite yourself anymore suffering –" Gideon tried his best to reason it out with her, using words that she would understand – hopefully.

"Nothing will hurt me more or make me suffer more... than having you sending me away from yourself, cutting me off and not allowing me to be next to you." She broke off, her tears starting to drop before they turned into a clear river that tracked twin paths flowing down her gently sloping and silky cheeks. "Nothing on this earth's surface and under it can ever make me happy... but you

–" Vera claimed with an impassioned whisper. However, Gideon heard it loud and clear as a bell tolling right next to his ears.

"No, don't say that! Damn it!" he hissed out in exasperation. Not knowing what kind of words he could say to Vera that could make her understand where he was coming from or what he wanted her to do. "You're only saying that because you're just infatuated with me. Because you think I'm the kindest creature you have ever met. You are seeing me as your savior, just because I jumped in front of you to stop you from killing someone. I'm not. I'm nowhere near that kind as you think I am, Red. I'm not anyone's savior. In fact, I'm the exact opposite of what you think I am. Believe that. I am not worth you suffering for." He kept trying to convince her.

A sharp breath left his mouth and then his eyes gentled a bit as he tried to control his emotion that was starting to spin out of control again. "Do not worry. Your feelings... they will eventually subside over time, believe me... hearts are ever so deceiving and ever changing. You will be fine without me, eventually... I'm sure you will. Just give it some time." A cynical smile curled at the edges of his lips as he said that.

Vera shook her head stubbornly as her eyes never left his face, wiping away at her own tears now. "If what you said is true, then those words... they also apply to you, right? Am I right? It is either you believe your own words... If not, you are trying to lie to me. Isn't that right?" Vera challenged him.

Gideon was rendered speechless at her clever retort to his reasoning before he bit down on his lips and drew in another round of deep breaths. He was now looking as though he was struggling so hard to keep his ground. But in the end, his will seemed to have prevailed.

"Listen..." his voice seemed breathless now as he cupped her small face in his large hand. "I'm a seriously f**ked up creature. I know myself and I am telling you this. I am damaged and hopelessly damned to the core."

Vera's eyes widened at his ferociously dark words, and she responded with a frantic shake of her head. She could not think of him that way.

"It's the truth, Red." He said as he wiped her tears away with the ball of his thumb, a small smile flashed on his face. "So don't waste your time on someone who does not even have any future. You can't..." his voice died down.

"What... what do you mean you don't have a future?" Vera's eyes looked alarmed now as she clutched and held onto his wrist, causing Gideon to press his lips into a tight line. She could see how he looked like he had regretted what he had just told her. Her nervousness increased as he did not say anything. "Tell... tell me, what do you mean..."

"Shh..." Gideon's thumb pressed on her lips ever so gently. "I mean there's nothing in my future but darkness." Something incredibly heartbreaking gleamed in his eyes as he looked at her. "Nothing at all. And no one... and nothing can change that. Because I am the one who chose that kind of future for myself. And no matter what happens, I have no plan to change its course... no one can make me change my mind too. No one, Red, not even you." And he smiled at her, one that held a wealth of care and concern for her.

Their eyes held each other's for what seemed like a long time. Those words, coupled with that look in his eyes in that moment... it hurt so badly. But Vera knew right then that he did not need to say anything more to shut her down, completely.

And Vera just reached out and just hugged him tightly to her. It was like she was trying so hard to cling onto something that was bound to slip from her arms forever.

She wished he only said those words to discourage her, to force her to give up on him. But she knew that he was not telling her lies. She could sense that every word he had told her was beyond serious and it breaks her heart over and over that she can no longer do anything about it. This man was firm in his decision.

Chapter 470 - Tonight

He was truly going to cut her off from him now. Why? That was what she did not quite understand. Why would he willingly choose such a dark and depressing future, and one that did not have hope whatsoever? And why did he not want to change course at all? Was there really nothing she could do to make him change his mind? Could she not really do anything for him?

Vera knew now this man was so much like her. He was in the dark too, suffering all by himself and she knew whatever he was going through, whatever burden he was carrying, was something she might not even be able to imagine at all. All she knew right now was that there was really a huge difference between them. She had found her hope in him, and he was now the sole reason she wanted to keep going in this journey called life. But this man did not find his hope. Or rather, he did not want to find his hope, and it hurts her so much that she could not be his hope just like how he was to her.

She just wished that she could be someone who means so much to him, or even just enough for him to at least have second thoughts. She would be so happy if she was just enough to make him at least hope for a brighter future. Just enough to make him change his mind. But it seems that she could not even become someone like that for him. And that was what hurts her the most, knowing that it was futile for anyone to force someone to change their mind. Because she herself was like that. No matter how painful it was, still, nothing can ever force or make her stop wanting him.

This was why she understood what he was going through and if her, backing off will at least lessen his burden and suffering, then she would back off. She wanted to do anything and everything for him. And if that includes sending her away from him was something that he truly wished to do, then she would respect that, no matter how painful it will be. Even if it ends up killing her inside all over again.

Vera's grip on him was so tight but he held himself still and did not move to return the hug. She could almost feel the vibration of his unwavering resolve and she could only smile to herself bitterly.

She sighed out, slow and deep. And they both just stayed still, until Vera opened her mouth again.

"Before I..." Vera's weak voice echoed in his ear, still not letting go of him. "Before I let you go, could you grant me one last request?" Vera pleaded and there was something in her voice that caused him to look at her face.

Gideon's body stilled he seemed to even stop breathing for a few moments as he stared into her blue eyes that seemed to be so vivid and brighter than ever.

"May I have you... all of you tonight?" Vera whispered, hugging him even tighter, as her voice shook. "Just for tonight. Tomorrow... I... I won't bother you anymore. I promise..."

A long silence reigned between them, and Vera's heartbeat began to thump so loudly, praying that he would not reject this one last request from her.

"Please?" her voice echoed out again, as soft as a kitten's mew and Gideon shut his eyes closed. She is doing it again. And the warning bells were ringing damned loud again.

But as everything inside him was still in turmoil, his treacherous lips opened and answered her. "Fine, just for tonight." His voice nearly shook as he said that as his insides screamed at him. F*ck it all to hell. He knew this will only complicate things. He could already see himself battling himself to the very extreme again once the night is over. But he knew he would willingly go through that again to grant her wish one last time.

He felt her pull away from him and when he saw a soft smile on her face, Gideon suddenly felt his knees weakened and he fell back on the floor. And since Vera did not let go at all even as he stumbled back, she ended up straddling him as he sat on the floor.

"Thank you..." she whispered, thanking all the gods above that he did not reject her this time and she could at least have this one wonderful memory with him.

And Gideon shut his eyes again, inhaling her unique scent, and reveled in the feeling of her soft body that was pressed against him. "This means... you're all mine tonight, right?" She whispered out a little shyly.

"Yes. Have all of me, all you want." He answered, helplessly. "Just for tonight."

"Mm. Just for tonight." She echoed and in the next few seconds that passed, they remained in that position, just listening to each other's breath and each other's heartbeats, feeling each other's warmth shared between them.

Vera's heart finally calmed down a little. The pain was still there but he was still here with her and whatever time she had left with him, she wanted to make the most out of it.

"Do you want to go out somewhere?" he asked but Vera shook her head immediately. She did not want to go anywhere else but just remain here. Knowing that if they go out, someone or something might take his attention or the person himself away from her. Even if it was only for a moment, she was not willing to share him or his time with any others tonight. He is finally going to be all hers – even though it was only one night – tonight. Therefore, she was going to jealously keep him in here, guarding him in this room, with her.

"I want to..." Vera swallowed as she paused. There was a slight hesitation in her actions, but her eyes looked decisive as she swallowed hard. Tonight, she was going to give her all to him. Everything she had left – all were going to him. She was not holding anything back and would offer it all to him. Since he did not want her heart, there was only one thing left that she could give to him, her body. It might not mean much to him. But to her, this was all she had left of herself. She had already given him her heart and soul... her body, she will also give this to him too and she knew in her heart that she would never regret this. Because she knew that this man was all she wanted and craved for in her entire life.

When she pulled away, her eyes were sparkling with an intense gleam the next time she met his gaze. "I want to make love with you, Gideon..."