

SPELLBOUND 491

Chapter 491 - Complicated

"Evie!" she called out as she began to run towards her, but she immediately paused in her tracks when she realized that Evie was not alone.

Quickly, she bowed her head. "Your Majesty," she greeted, ashamed that she had called Evie using her nickname in an impulse.

"Vera," Evie approached her immediately.

Evie then grabbed Vera's hand before she looked behind her again. To her queen mother who was still standing there, still as a statue as her gaze was fixed only on Vera.

Queen Beatrice had not answered them when she and Gav asked her what was wrong. The Queen just looked at Vera with that one same expression. The one that look like she had just seen a ghost.

"Come Vera, I will introduce you to them." Evie smiled before she gently pulled Vera alongside her and then brought her before Queen Beatrice.

Evie was very suspicious now. It was obvious to her that there was something about Vera that made Queen Beatrice react like this. Did she already know Vera, or could it be that like Gideon, she was seeing Leah in Vera as well? But was it that simple?

For some reason, Evie thought that the queen's reaction right now was an obvious statement that it was not that simple. The Queen's expression right now was telling her there was something more to this. Something much more complicated. And she was dying to know what it was.

"Mother," Evie spoke. "This is Vera. She's the human girl I was telling you about. And Vera, this is Queen Beatrice, she's Prince Gideon's mother."

Vera's eyes widened and she quickly bowed deeply before the queen. "Greetings to you, Your Majesty." She said, a tinge of nervousness was evident in her voice.

Beatrice just blinked at Vera. It actually took her more than a few moments to snap out of her inner reverie and finally made a move.

"V-vera..." she echoed the name and then with deliberate slowness she took a step closer and held Vera's hand. And the queen's eyes seemed to become emotional again, before all of a sudden, she hugged her. That move surprised everyone, especially Vera.

Even Evie and Gavriel glanced at each other for a moment. Vera looked very shocked and confused as though she could not quite believe what was happening. Why was the queen suddenly hugging her tightly like this? While Beatrice looked like she was hugging someone very important to her, embracing so tight like she could not believe Vera was real.

Evie's observation only deepened her suspicion. Her curiosity was skyrocketing now!

"I am very pleased to meet you, young lady," Beatrice finally let go of the confused Vera. A wide smile was now gracing her gorgeous face as she lovingly looked at the young lady before her.

"Where is Gideon? I believe he's with you right?" she asked, smiling wider at the sight of Gideon's robe over her.

Upon realizing that everyone noticed the robe that was on her, Vera blushed hard, unable to speak immediately. She was not sure how to respond to this question.

"I... He's... he's still asleep." Vera's voice was so weak as she gave the most neutral and truthful answer. Beatrice only chuckled fondly at that statement and held her hands again.

"I see. It's very rare for Gideon to still be sleeping in until this time. That son of mine really hates sleeping... oh right, come with us for now, Vera dearest. You will be joining us while waiting for Gideon to wake up." Beatrice was suddenly energetic and all smiles again.

Vera glanced at Evie and then she shyly spoke. "I... forgive me, Your Majesty. But I... I need to go freshen myself up first." She clenched onto her robe tightly, and Beatrice finally noticed that she was not dressed properly.

"Oh, don't worry about that dearest," Beatrice immediately signalled for her attendants and two ladies approached. "I'm leaving this young lady in your care. Bring her back to us once she's ready." She commanded gently and the ladies nodded, quickly ushering Vera towards a room.

Vera's eyes were wide as she looked at Evie again, but when Evie smiled reassuringly at her she took the ladies' hands and she disappeared from the corridor.

Once Vera was gone, a heavy silence reigned between them. When Beatrice looked at Evie and Gavriel, she could already read the questions in their eyes, and she sighed shakily. "You are right, I do know her," Beatrice confessed but there was so much sadness in her eyes as she said that. "... but it's complicated. Don't worry, daughter dear," Beatrice smiled knowingly at Evie, "I will talk to you about this later on. For now, let's deal with this current matter. And... we still need to introduce Gavy to his older brother."

Gavriel's expression became a little serious at the mention of Gideon.

"Gideon..." Gavriel said and Beatrice nodded at her younger son.

"Yes, he's the older brother you used to adore so much. Now come, you two... let's wait for Vera and Gideon inside." Beatrice said merrily as she dragged her son and daughter-in-law along with her.

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Meanwhile, inside Gideon's room.

The man who was still sleeping soundly on the bed suddenly rose as if something had jolted him awake. He sat there, heaving for a while before his blue eyes fell on the empty side of his bed.

He froze at the sight that it was already empty. He reached out his hands to touch the sheets and found them to be slightly cool with only a mild hint of body heat left. Then he withdrew his hand and pressed his palm hard on his forehead as if having a sudden headache. There was an intense storm in his eyes again, and then he shut them before a name came tumbling out of his lips, his voice shaky and raw. "Vera..." he uttered, fist clenching in his hair before he lifted his head and hastily rose from the bed.

Chapter 492 - Brothers

Gideon who had stormed out of his room as if to chase after something urgently was suddenly stopped by the sight of a man standing right before the door.

"You're finally awake!" Azrael immediately spoke. "Her Majesty wants to see you now, My Lord. Please follow me."

A heavy silence reigned for a moment as Gideon stared at Azrael, considering what he should say to him. Gideon's hand on the door frame clenched tightly and his fingers created some dents on the frame. "Tell mother... that I'll go see her later. There is something I need to do first."

"Are you perhaps... going to look for the young lady, My Lord? I mean, Vera?" Azrael's question instantly made Gideon who had just walked past him screech to a halt. And that reaction alone was enough to answer the question for the man. "She's currently in attendance with the queen, My Lord."

Gideon's head flew towards Azrael. His eyes slightly widened in surprise.

"What's with that reaction? You were not planning to hide her from the queen, I hope?" Azrael narrowed his eyes in curiosity.

But Gideon did not deign to answer, keeping his thoughts to himself as his face became neutral before turning his back to Azrael again and walking off.

"Where are they?" he asked, ignoring the question posed to him and Azrael quickly caught up to him with his long strides and lead him to the room where everyone was waiting. He could feel that the prince's emotions were fluctuating quite wildly as opposed to normal days. Though his face was blank right now, the aura surrounding him was heavy and exerting pressure on Azrael that even a dense person like him could feel the difference. And he wondered what was it that could affect him to this extent. His hunch told him that the little red head was a huge part of it, and it caused him to smile internally.

Their quick trip was as silent as the graveyard as Gideon started to put up his impenetrable mask again. Gideon was always like this around his mother. He would try his best to hide any negative emotions, his power and everything that he thought would make the queen suspicious or bothered. And Azrael could only sigh, wondering if the queen really could not see through his perfectly crafted mask. Though he had a strong feeling that the queen was not as innocent and in the dark as she seemed to be.

By the time they reached in front of the queen's room, Gideon paused. Azrael had already put his hand on the doorknob and pushed the door slightly open but... Gideon still did not move from his frozen spot in front of the door. Oh shoot, did he already sense his younger brother's presence? Damn, Azrael thought that since Gideon seemed currently caught in his own problems in his mind right now, he won't be able to notice the things that are out of the norm around him! But he was wrong.

Without wasting another second, Azrael pushed the door opened wide. His sudden movements in swinging the door open caused everyone inside to turn their attention towards them.

"Prince Gideon is here, Your Majesty." The man announced Gideon's arrival, not allowing him to change his mind and run off. Queen Beatrice stood at the sight of her son still standing outside the door as though he was unsure of wanting to come in or run off. However, upon seeing her, he unfroze and stepped inside. She walked towards Gideon and without any preamble, Beatrice wrapped her hands tight around his arm.

Then she dragged him inside the room as she smiled from ear to ear. She was truly over the moon in having both her sons in the same room.

"Guess who's here, son." Beatrice hummed happily as Gavriel and Evie stood. Her eyes were twinkling so brightly, so much so Gideon thought that he had never seen his queen mother this happy for such a long time.

Evie held onto Gavriel's arm as well before they both turned and faced the approaching mother and son. Though she had known this day would come sooner or later, somehow there was still a sense of anticipation, and her heart raced a little.

"Your younger brother is back!" Queen Beatrice exclaimed, her face shining with nothing but happiness. She looked like she was the happiest mother in the entire world right now. And Evie could only feel so happy for her. She could tell that this had been her greatest wish, to see both her sons again like this and in the same place as her. Her heart clenched in sympathy at the thought of how the queen must have been missing her sons so much.

However, her two sons just stood there, staring at each other as though they were conducting a staring contest. Evie was not surprised that Gideon remained standing there, still as statue and looking at Gavriel with that same neutral unreadable face. But Evie did not expect her husband to be acting the same as his older brother. Oh no, this might not go down well... why? Why is Gav acting like this? Was he not supposed to have forgotten everything about the Under Lands and his brother too? And since this was the very first time that he was meeting Gideon as Gavriel, what was with this slight tinge of animosity and seemingly automatic cold treatment he was exuding towards his brother?

Not wanting to make Beatrice's smile fade, Evie tugged at her husband's arm and whispered secretly as Beatrice was still merrily speaking with Gideon.

"Come on, Gav... your mother is so happy right now. I'd hate to see her smile fade if she sees you brothers acting cold to each other like this." She whispered pleadingly, hoping that Gav would cooperate with her and Gavriel's eyes finally fell to his mother. He noticed how his mother was glowing and happiness literally radiated from her very pores. And that caused him to pull back on the cold aura he was emitting.

And after seeing her laughing brightly at something his brother said, Gavriel looked at Evie and nodded his assent. It would not do for him to sadden his mother on the very first time they were reuniting after such long years spent apart.

Evie let go of him and Gavriel approached Gideon. Though his movements were a little stiff, it only caused Beatrice's face to shine even more.

A forced smile curved on Gavriel's face as he spoke at Gideon. "Good to see you... my older brother..." he said and then he reached out and hugged Gideon.

Evie smothered a laugh that was threatening to burst out as she saw how wooden her beloved husband's movements were.

Chapter 493 - The Two Of You

Beatrice was smiling from ear to ear as she stepped away and walked closer to Evie as they both watch the brothers interact stiffly with each other. Not knowing that Gavriel's smile had faded as soon as Beatrice was behind him and could no longer see his face.

"Good to see you back... my little brother." Gideon said back, forcing a smile as well as Beatrice was looking at him with so much gladness. Both her sons were good boys as they were not willing to see their mother sad.

"So... you're the one who dared to kidnap my wife..." Gavriel whispered lowly to his brother in a threatening voice, and Gideon laughed darkly for a moment before faking another smile again.

"If I say yes, what will you do, huh? My dear little brother?" Gideon taunted back in retaliation and Gavriel had to take a deep breath in order to not elbow him in the stomach right there and then. His mother would get a shock if the brothers suddenly got into a fistfight.

Suddenly, Gavriel flashed an evil smile at Gideon and pulled away before looking over at Beatrice.

"Mother, did you know that this dear brother of mine kidnapped –" Gavriel mentioned in a sing-song voice.

Gavriel's statement was cut off as Gideon's arms suddenly descended and were draped around Gavriel's shoulders in an instant as he laughed loudly and awkwardly. "Of course, mother already knew that I had kidnapped a human and brought her back here." Gideon said, desperately changing the topic before he pulled at Gavriel as though he was light-heartedly playing around with him. He secretly whispered to Gavriel as he did that. "Mother will cry if you tell her that. Are you okay if her heart ends up breaking and she weeps right now?"

And just like that the two let go of each other and Gavriel secretly glared at him. Though he did not take it further, there was a dark promise in his eyes saying that 'they're not finished yet'. But in the next second, they both fake smiles at each other again.

"Oh my, I am so happy seeing the two of you in such good terms with each other like this again." Beatrice spread her arms wide, telling her two sons that she wanted them to hug her. Gavriel and Gideon could only give in and relent to what she wanted and the three embraced each other. And somehow, for that few moments, the atmosphere between Gavriel and Gideon warmed up, as if Beatrice's emotions were enough to overpower whatever heaviness that had hung over the two of them.

But when the hug was over, the two returned to their acting mode again.

"Now, now, let us all take a seat. We have a lot to discuss right now." Beatrice merrily sat down waving at her sons to follow after her.

Gavriel sat next to Evie while Gideon sat on the seat across the couple. Queen Beatrice sat on a single chair at the head of the small table between them.

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Meanwhile, Vera was finally coming out of the room after being pampered by the ladies the queen had sent to take good care of her. The treatment she had just experienced made her remember the luxurious life she had when she was younger. It was so unsettling just how fast she had lost all those things, everything... It was as though it all had happened within a dream.

"Oh goodness," a deep voice echoed, causing Vera to lift her face. The man they had called Lord Kione was before her. "You're a vision to behold, My Lady." He complimented her, looking a bit dazed and Vera blushed a little.

She was not used to being praised like this anymore. Unlike when she was younger.

"T-thank you... the dress and... jewelleries are the ones that are breathtaking," Vera replied shyly and awkwardly.

"They are... but you overshadow them by a long shot," he smiled, flashing that perfect startling teeth. "Now, please take my hand. I'm here to escort you back to the queen's room."

Vera did not think twice nor hesitated to accept his offer. This man, just like that huge man Azrael, even though she had just basically met them, she did not get the feeling of being repulsed around them at all. She didn't know why but she just has these good vibes that she would be safe with them, without a doubt.

"I am glad you're not wary of me, Lady Vera." Kione started up some small talk as they walked.

"J-just Vera. I don't have any title to be addressed that way." She responded shyly and Kione just nodded. "I... I think you're a good guy."

"Good guy, hmm...?" Kione tilted his head. "It's rare for any lady to tell me that I'm a good guy. You're actually just the second to comment this way." He chuckled with a tinge of irony in his chuckle.

"Really?" Vera cocked her head sideways as she wondered why that was so.

"Yes. The ladies always tell me that I am so bad. I do think they are right though."

Vera looked at him, blinking at him with innocent eyes. "I don't think you're bad." She commented as she shook her head in a very adorable manner that made Kione's heartbeat speed up.

"Don't look at me like that..." he looked away, the tips of his ears reddening.

"Yes? Are... are you okay?"

"Oh, we're he –" All of a sudden, Kione could not even finish what he was going to say because the door was suddenly pushed open. A blast of dark magic gushed out like a violent wind, blowing Vera's red hair and white dress back with a gust.

Kione and Vera's eyes fell inside towards the source of the magic that had literally slammed the door open. And they saw a man sitting there, his electric blue eyes blazing and shooting blue flames at them as his dark magic spilled uncontrollably out of his body.

Chapter 494 - Uncontrollable

A while ago, while everyone was attentively listening in to Gavriel's report as he was updating them on what their King father had ordered when a sudden blast of dark magic seemed to have exploded out from the silent older prince. Everyone immediately turned their attention to him, eyes filling with confusion and surprise as to what had caused Gideon's dark magic to have been triggered so strongly like that.

They saw how Gideon seemed to be oblivious about their presence now and perhaps, he has yet to realize the darkness gushing out of him. His eyes were glinting dangerously as he fixed it to the

door and before Beatrice could open her mouth to speak and ask her son on what was going on, the door was already forced open, slamming into the wall due to the impact of Gideon's seemingly uncontrollable magic. All of those who were in the room jumped a little as they were startled at that impact of the door smashing into the wall, creating little cracks on it. They could see how strong the magic that was used to wrench the doors open, as the doors were not ordinary ones but those that were reinforced with magic themselves to prevent the accidental damaging when those with powers got angry and decided to take it out on their room doors.

And as soon as the door was opened, the danger in his eyes became deadly. So deadly that Evie's body automatically began to glow with a golden hue, her protective aura shielding her and the little one inside her in case anything were to happen to her, while Beatrice and Gavriel's eyes turned red. Their heads turned to look towards the door, wondering what he had seen to react like... what?! Vera?!

Evie's eyes zoomed to focus on Vera's hand that was holding onto Kione's arm, and her jaw dropped open in shock. Oh, no! Do not tell me that... oh, goodness! Kione! What had that man done? Was he looking to get himself killed? Evie facepalmed herself mentally and wondered what had gotten into Kione.

"Gid –" Queen Beatrice could not even completely call his name out because Gideon was suddenly gone from his seat. It happened too fast it might even be faster than a blink of an eye. One moment, he was still sitting there and the other moment, he was already gone that those who were looking at him thought he just vanished into thin air.

"Gideon!" they heard Vera's yell and the next thing they knew, Gideon was by the door, his hand stretched forward, right before Vera.

The world seemed to suddenly screech to a halt. Evie just stood there as well, watching with shock still reflected in her eyes.

Gideon had halted as if he had been turned into a statue. And... Gav? When did he get there?!

Gavriel was right before Gideon. It was obvious he had jumped right into the fray there to stop his older brother from committing any actions that might be too late to regret if he was late in stopping it. His hand was draped over Gideon's front, holding his shoulder so tightly to stop him from advancing any further. He did not know who the other man was, but he could sort of guess that the red headed girl must be his older brother's woman. His eyes were also quick in noticing the way how the red headed woman's hand was hooked around the man's arm. Aah... he understood why his brother was losing his cool like this. If it were Evie, he was also not sure if he would be able to keep his cool either. However, his brother should not be allowed to kill the man off even if he was territorial about his woman. At least until he could understand more about the situation at hand.

The queen was also right there already, grabbing at Gideon's hand that was stretched out, wrapping her fingers tightly around his wrist. She too was trying to keep him from doing something that he might regret later on.

Azrael on the other hand had grabbed onto Kione and pulled him away in the short moment that Prince Gideon had been restrained by his brother and mother. This friend of his was truly looking to get himself killed! He had acted quickly as the situation had allowed and the two lords were already a few steps away behind Vera when everything had stilled from the flurry of activity earlier.

And Vera... she had just stood there, staring at the hand that was right before her face. At the fingers... the sharp and elongated blackened nails that were less than an inch away from her eyeballs. She was nearly pierced by those menacing nails.

The shield that Evie had casted at the very last moment was turning golden as Gideon's sharp nail touched it. That golden hue was not only shimmering around herself but also been casted around Vera to protect her as well. Thankfully, Evie's responses were fast, and her senses were sharp as she had suspected Vera might be in danger as she was the only human here amongst them.

No one seemed to be able to even take a breath at that extreme moment. Until Vera spoke again. "Gideon..." she called out softly, she did not take a step back nor flinch the least. Evie was even quite certain that she had moved forward to block Kione. Did she even realize that Gideon was going to attack?

When Evie saw that Vera was lifting her hand, she dissolved the shimmery golden barrier between them. She knew it was a risky move, but she understood what Vera was trying to do. And if all else fails, Gav and Queen Beatrice were right there. She trusted their reflexes to intervene again if something does go wrong.

Vera slowly lifted her hand to Gideon's. Her eyes were fixed on Gideon's blackened orbs and without fear she gently touched his fingers. Those fingers that looked as though they belonged to a demon. And she tenderly entwined her fingers with his, slowly bringing her digits to meet his, until their palms were finally flushed against each other's.

That instant, the darkness in Gideon suddenly disappeared, his eyes turned back to their fiery blue orbs and slowly, his eyes widened as he looked down at Vera from his towering height. His nails were returning to normal now.

Everyone finally took the breaths they were holding in as Gideon stepped back, pulling his hand from Vera's as he stumbled backward. Gav and his mother had long since let go of their hold on him. His eyes were still glued on Vera, but he looked like he realized what he had just did and he could hardly believe it. There was nothing but shock shining from his eyes now.

Then all of a sudden, Gavriel grabbed at him again. But this time, it was as though Gav made a move to catch him, so Gideon would not fall to the ground.. And everyone could only look on, speechless, as Gideon held onto Gav, even lowering his head onto Gavriel's shoulder as if to hide his face.

Chapter 495 - Fatal

Gavriel could feel his brother's body shaking so terribly as his head was heavy on his shoulder. Gideon was gripping his arm so tight, as if he was desperately holding onto some lifesaving trunk while dangling off a cliff, refusing to fall.

And not just that, Gideon's body was also so hot, Gavriel could feel the abnormal waves of heat oozing out. It was as though there was a furnace burning within him.

Gavriel had noticed that the moment Gideon's dark magic settled down, his body seemed to have lost all his strength. And that was why he went forward to catch him, knowing that he was definitely going to fall on the ground.

As he listened to Gideon's shaky breaths, as if he was desperately trying to get his breathing to stabilise again, Gav could only stand there, utterly puzzled. He did not expect this at all.

Since the moment he saw this person, he had felt a tremendous and dangerous power within him. No matter how he made himself appear like a normal dark fae, it was obvious to Gav that he was not the same as the rest of the folks here. There was just something different about him. When he was still on the surface, Gav had already sensed his trails. His dark magic was just too dark and too strong, for him not to notice. When he went over to Evie's castle, he had sensed this same abnormal presence that had lingered on there even though the owner was already long gone. And Gavriel thought that this person had purposely left his trail for him to follow after he had kidnapped Evie.

Though Gav was relieved when he received Evie's message, the dread had actually remained in his heart. And the reason was because of this person. Or more accurately, his darkness. This person's darkness was so deep and intense that it had bothered him very much. And now that he had found the source of that darkness and this man was actually his very own older brother, his interest in him just grew even larger.

Since the first moment he had met his brother, his instincts had been acting on their own. No, it was more apt to say that Gideon had unknowingly or knowingly made him raise his guard up to the highest level in his presence.

And it was not even that long that he had been here, and he had already seen what kind of danger Gideon was possessing. Gavriel thought that Gideon was going to hide it well and it would take him a long time for him to get any glimpses of what he was hiding. But... oh boy, was he wrong about that. He had blasted his powers out just like that... and Gav deduced that it was fully because of that lady. He had noticed how Gideon just halted when the red-headed girl had yelled out his name.

Now this man who had literally forced him, Evie and even their mother to react like that a while ago, was now trembling and as weak as a kitten left in the middle of a blizzard. It was something just incredibly shocking and Gavriel did not know how to react but just to stand there and act like the tree his brother was holding onto so as not to fall over.

He could tell he was not feigning this weakness at all. He was definitely not acting this time. What kind of man would reduce themselves into this state just for the sake of acting? Gavriel could not see this man doing that. He knew he was powerful and arrogant. His ego would never allow himself to fake something like this.

And his greatest question was... what had made him suddenly become this weak? Does he always turn like this after letting his magic out? No, that should not be the case. That would be one hell of a fatal weakness! Then what was the reason?

Gavriel wanted to speak but he held his tongue. He could not help but sympathize with him especially as he was hearing the way he breathes right now. It was as if he was trying to learn how to breathe the right way again. It was truly unsettling, and Gav just felt that there was something terribly wrong with this person.

"You... what are you doing? What happened to your anger and hate? Don't tell me you've already forgotten about them too," Gideon finally spoke in a very low voice when his trembling settled down.

"Shut up," Gav said, "an unwell little furry black cat shouldn't be talking that way. Also, nobody's hating you. I just wanted to beat you into pulp until I'm satisfied. But I am not some idiot who takes advantage of a person when they are at their weakest." Gav retorted with a jab at his current weakened state.

Gideon chuckled. "You might have just let your only chance of beating me into said pulp slip away my dear little brother."

"Stop with your damned arrogance. What the hell is wrong with you? Suddenly becoming weak like this?" Gavriel asked with seriousness, but Gideon fell silent and did not reply to that.

And he finally lifted his face. Looking straight towards Vera.

"Are you okay, my dear?" Beatrice and Evie hovered over Vera, worried to death about her. They both saw how close it was for her. It was literally just a little more before Gideon's nails would have pierced her eyeballs.

"I am totally fine, thank you," Vera smiled brightly, causing Evie and Beatrice to glance at each other. They were awed that she did not even seem to be that shocked, at all.

Vera truly did not feel any fear. Maybe because in her heart, she knew that she would be alright. She believed he would never have hurt her, no matter how it seemed as though he would.

When she looked at Gideon again, her eyes met his. And her heart skipped a few beats. She wanted to go to him and... hug him, and to ask him if he was feeling alright. But... she could not help but root herself to her spot at the sight of those burning and intense blue eyes that were boring into hers now. Something was strange in that gaze of his on her. It was as though he was using magic to immobilize her through his eyes. Was this just her imagination?

Vera watched Gideon open his mouth saying something to his brother without taking his eyes off her. Then after seeing him pat his brother's shoulder, the next thing she knew, Gideon was right before her, and everything suddenly turned dark as the two of them disappeared inside the room.

Chapter 496 - Comfort

"What the hell is wrong with you?!" Azrael exclaimed at Kione once Gideon and Vera disappeared from the room. "Dear lord, that was god damned close, Kione! I can't believe..." he trailed off and sighed as he finally took a step away from his friend, shaking his head in disbelief. "Are you trying to get yourself killed?!"

And Kione just chuckled. There was an ironic tinge in his laughter as he shook his head. He had not done that deliberately just to make Gideon jealous. He did not have any plans to provoke him at all. In fact, he had not thought about it at all when he asked for Vera to hold onto his arms. All he was trying was to take advantage of the situation to get her to hold him, that was all. He had also planned to let go of Vera once he moved to open the door for her. But who knew that his plan could not even be carried out before he was found out?

Of course, he knew Gideon would certainly have noticed his presence along with Vera's, but Kione never would have thought Gideon would actually gone batshit crazy due to him having contact with her and launched an attack like that despite the queen being there! It was unbelievable how Gideon had just burst out like that after all these years he had spent to hide his darkness from his mother.

But then again, Kione could only laugh helplessly at the thought how dangerous this thing called love truly was. He realized now how much he had been underestimating it. The things it could do to a person was just insane. And to think that he, of all creatures, had been reduced to becoming a stupid lovestruck fool as well just made him utterly speechless. He should have known better that this would happen since that moment Gideon had hit him – back when they were in the left wing section of the castle where the hall of pleasure is – because of what he had said about Vera. He had been with Gideon for so long ever since they were children, for him not to be able to predict this was definitely coming. And yet, his feelings for Vera had made him stupidly make those reckless moves, ignoring the dire consequences that would befall him.

Remembering how he had been so damned strict towards Azrael and everyone for years just so no one would provoke Gideon's dark magic to blast uncontrollably like that made him smile cynically. It was ironic that the one who ended up triggering it was the one and same person trying to keep everyone else from provoking it. He had even inadvertently put Vera in grave danger with his stupid carelessness. If... if the queen and their two guests were not there...

Kione's jaws clenched. He could not imagine the extent of the damage that would have occurred...

"Yeah, I've become as stupid as you overnight, you know that Azrael? Are you happy now?" Kione said, sagging against the wall as though he had lost all his strength. "What... shouldn't you be congratulating me?"

Azrael was speechless. Just blinking at his friend, not comprehending what he was trying to do.

"It seems intelligence and love can't co-exist." Kione sighed. "And you know I'm not a fan of stupidity. I prefer being wise than being in love and stupid." He sighed once again, shutting his eyes close as he threw his head back against the wall before a whisper echoed from his lips. "Bloody shit... I feel like my life was a hell lot better before I met her."

A short silence passed, and Azrael patted his friend comfortingly on his shoulder, causing Kione to look at him with an eyebrow raised.

"Well, isn't this a new knowledge to you? Maybe, this will make you even wiser than you already are. At least, you finally understood this one thing you were always looking down on before. So yeah, even if you did end up being heartbroken, you still learned something, that love is not as simple as you had thought. Also, you have finally experienced it yourself so you're no longer ignorant about it." Azrael stated with a serious tone. "That's why..."

Suddenly, he trailed off at the sight of Kione craning his head forward and looking at Azrael with a disbelieving look in his eyes.

"What...??" Azrael raised his brow.

"When did Lord Azrael learn to talk like this? Bloody shit, Azrael... you sounded like the lord of wisdom right now."

"Huh? What? The f**k are you saying now?"

"You just gave me goosebumps you idio..." Kione laughed. "Fine, I'm the idiot right now. But yeah," he exhaled heavily and smiled. "I think you're right. Maybe, she had just really came to teach me this lesson and so that 'love' can slap me hard in the face. Though I'm afraid this won't just be ending with just a simple slap. Ah... I can already see my bloody heart being hammered."

"I believe you will survive this, my dear friend." Azrael thumped him on his back, comforting Kione the only way he knew how.

"So... you are as sure as I am that I and my pursuit is already hopeless." Kione shrugged his shoulders helplessly.

"I thought it's obvious enough." Azrael stated blandly with a straight face and Kione's mouth twitched as he held back the sourness in his heart from spilling forth. Then he cursed again, pinching the area between his brows.

"I think I'm friends with the wrong people." Kione complained, shaking his head before he suddenly hit Azrael's stomach with one hard punch. "You're supposed to at the very least comfort me you bumbling idiot!" He swung another punch out but this time, Azrael caught his fist single handedly, a wide grin now flashing on his face.

"Oh ho... so you wanted comfort, eh...??? Sure, my friend. I'm sure this is what you needed the most right now anyway. I'll comfort you with these fists of mine." Azrael's eyes gleamed with excitement and Kione smirked back at him, knowing what was coming next.

"Try it if you can, Azrael." Kione challenged and the next moment, the duo disappeared from the corridor. As soon as they materialized outside the castle, they immediately clashed, causing the vampires and dark faes outside to look towards them and watch the intense fist fight between the two lords.

Chapter 497 - Tragic Story

Back inside the room, Beatrice, Evie and Gavriel were once again seated on their chairs. Their faces a little grave as their minds were all busy thinking back about Gideon and everything that had just happened. They were silent for a while until Beatrice let out a deep sigh and broke the silence.

"Gideon... I've been worrying about what was going on with him." Beatrice started as she stared out the window before her eyes turned back and fell on Gavriel. "He had always been such a... a very good child. I know you cannot remember anything from your past. But Gideon... he had really taken good care of you back when you were younger."

A sweet, nostalgic smile curved on Beatrice's face. "He even cried the first time he saw you after you were born, his baby brother. And... he promised he was going to protect you. It was so touching and adorable how he had vowed that through all his tears and snot." her eyes moistened as she smiled and remembered the image of Gideon carrying the baby Gavy in his arms, his smile so wide as he held him like he was a treasure so dear to him. She remembered how Gideon adored Gavy and Gavy having the same level of adoration or even more as he grew up. "You might not believe it now, but you were so obsessed with your older brother when you were younger that you practically followed him everywhere. We even teased that you were his shadow." Beatrice chuckled as she said that Gavriel.

But her smile eventually faded as she remembered how everything started to fall apart one day without knowing why.

"But Gideon suddenly changed. He began to distance himself from us and most especially you. It had been so long since then and he drifted farther and farther away to the point that I can't even reach out to him anymore. He has been reluctant to listen to me, much less talk to me." Queen Beatrice could not hide the little snuffle that escaped after she mentioned this.

"Does his change..." Gavriel began to speak in a careful manner, "has something to do with his dark magic? I might be wrong... but I can feel how his dark magic is not something normal when compared to the rest of the dark faes in this realm. His gives off a totally different vibe altogether."

Beatrice nodded, sadness shining in her eyes. "Could you cast a sound barrier for us, Evie dear?" she requested tearily and Evie quickly obeyed.

When the barrier was up and strongly established, it was then that Beatrice dared to continue speaking. "Belial and I are actually not Gideon's birth parents," she revealed to Gavriel, causing Gavriel's eyes to widen in shock, not expecting to hear that piece of information. "He's actually your older cousin by blood as he's the son of Belial's brother, King Sarion and his queen. Gideon was a baby when the great war against King Sarion had happened. After Belial killed his older brother who had descended into madness due to losing control of his own dark magic, we took Gideon in as our own son. Belial and I suspected that Gideon somehow found out the truth somewhere, that he's not a child birthed by the both of us. For years we had thought that this was the reason why he suddenly turned cold to us and alienated you as well.

"But as time went by, your father and I realized that that was not the only reason why he began to isolate himself from us, his family. We believe there is a bigger reasoning behind this. And we suspect that it has a lot to do with the Abyss of Darkness."

"A greater reason..." Gavriel echoed softly, and Beatrice nodded.

"Gideon had been hiding his dark magic so deep and so well, but we had long found out about his peculiar ability to make the monsters bow to him. Or more like the monsters just fall to their knees at the sight of him. Belial and I had already found out about that when Gideon was still a baby. Belial deduced that it must be because Gideon was conceived by the late queen Ellia when King Sarion was already consumed by his dark magic. And... the fact that queen Ellia had been someone who was revived by a forbidden magic must have played a large role in it as well."

Evie creased her brows. This was a whole new information to her!

"Revived? As in resurrected from the dead?" Evie asked this time, quite urgently.

"Yes. Queen Ellia died once before and King Sarion did everything he could to bring her back to life again, using the ultimate forbidden magic. That was the start of the king's madness. My husband said King Sarion's fall to madness was due to the price of that forbidden spell he had casted to revive his wife. His body and soul were taken from him in exchange for her life. But for some miracle, King Sarion's heart remained uncorrupted by the dark magic. He still loved queen Ellia like he had always done. However, the king had become a mindless monster with a loving heart for his wife until unfortunately, his heart died as well because of Ellia's death when she gave birth to Gideon. The birth was tough, and Gideon had been born with untold powers of darkness which terribly affected his mother's health. Queen Ellia's body was weakened too much that she did not make it after delivering her son.

"Belial said that Gideon might have possessed the kind of abnormal magic he has right now because he was the very first dark fae ever born from such parents. A revived person was not supposed to ever conceive a child. But somehow, Queen Ellia managed to conceive, and the only reason must be because King Sarion was already consumed by the darkness. I'm afraid to say that Gideon's existence was only made possible by King Sarion's darkness."

A short silence descended within the room following Queen Beatrice's explanation. Evie could not believe that there was still something more to that tragic story. Just when she had thought she already heard the worse of it, she was wrong. She was taken aback at how Gideon was basically moulded by the ultimate dark magic and the most forbidden spell. Therefore, what could one expect from such a combination that was viewed to be abominable to most?

"And then... just as we had thought everything will be alright when Gideon introduced Leah to us..." Beatrice's face became pained again. "Everything fell apart once more."

"Leah?" Gavriel asked, "that red-haired girl a while ago?"

Evie glanced at her husband then abruptly returned her gaze to Queen Beatrice. Her curiosity skyrocketing now. She was dying to know about that mysterious Leah and her friend Vera. She still could not make out how would Queen Beatrice come to know Vera as they are both from different realms in the first place.

Chapter 498 - Leah (Part I)

Evie had to press her lips tight together in order not to speak and just patiently wait for Queen Beatrice's answer to Gav's question. Her eyes gleamed with anticipation as she looked expectantly at the queen.

"I believe so... yes," Beatrice said, and Evie's eyes stretched wide with shocked surprise. She had already suspected this before but still she could not help but feel shocked. How? Vera is a human and Leah's a dark fae, right? So how could Vera be Leah?

"I believe Vera is technically Leah." Beatrice repeated and Gav creased his brows, confused by the queen's second line now.

"Technically...? What do you mean by that?" he repeated with a low voice. He had a sudden thought when his mother mentioned the word technically. Could it be that something similar to himself had occurred with Leah? Seeing that his mother was about to continue explaining, Gav tamped down his question that he wanted to ask and listened patiently.

"Yes. Leah... she's been very close to Gideon since they were young. You have even met her before when you were a child as Leah helped to babysit you when you keep following after your brother everywhere. Leah was such sweet girl. She was an adopted daughter of the Lord of Axinia, and since her brother Azrael is one of Gideon's best friends, she was already acquainted with Gideon since they were children. During Leah's coming of age ceremony, Gideon introduced her to us. I have not seen Leah for a long time, so it was then that I just found out during that ceremony that she and Gideon were already lovers." Beatrice recounted and a soft nostalgic smile curved on her lips.

"I was so overjoyed at that time because I saw how Gideon loved her so much. And it was heart-warming how Leah loved him deeply as well. Hope immediately bloomed within me and Belial for Gideon as we saw he had somehow changed for the better after being in a relationship with Leah. Since then, we felt Gideon slowly coming back to us. We knew he was trying his best and I know it was Leah who was helping him see the light again. He was still adamant at first, as if something was scaring him, and he still sometimes go into hiding. But I felt everything was getting better. However," Beatrice breath became a little shaky, remembering that chaotic time again, "Leah suddenly disappeared. And since her disappearance, we never have found her body."

Evie could not even speak, she looked at Beatrice with an anxious and questioning look in her eyes. And Beatrice continued her story again.

"She was sent to the surface?" Gavriel wondered out aloud. Did she somehow got sent away from the Under Lands due to having to pay a price for some forbidden spell being casted? But Beatrice shook her head and Gav lost his trail of thoughts.

"No, she was not sent there. Leah had died here in the Under Lands. We knew she had died the moment she disappeared. We never found out the reason of her death as we couldn't find any signs of her remains anywhere. Gideon even jumped into the abyss again to see what had happened to find her. Gideon never said a word about it. But we knew he jumped into the abyss because it seems, he might be able to decipher the truth when he's down there. Belial told me that Gideon started acting cold since he accidentally fell into the abyss. We thought that perhaps, he had seen the truth about him and his birth parents when he was in there. And when Gideon finally came out from the abyss, he had stopped looking for Leah's body and just disappeared and went into hiding again. We believed that he must have found out what had happened to Leah there and that's why he had stopped the search for her remains. I tried to speak to him about it. But it was impossible to make him talk about her anymore after that. He did not even want to hear her name being mentioned anywhere around him. I also tried talking to Kione and Azrael but apparently, any mention of Leah became a taboo to him. Those told me her name never crossed his lips ever again since then." Queen Beatrice sighed heavily after speaking at length on this.

A heavy silence reigned for quite a while between the three of them until Evie spoke.

"How... how did you know that Leah died?" Evie asked. She still could not understand what Leah's connection with Vera was. How were these two women technically the same person? Why did the queen say Vera was Leah? Was she still holding back some information that she had yet to share with them on it? She thought perhaps what happened to Leah was akin to Gav, maybe she was suddenly sent on the surface and lost her memories. But the queen said that it was not the case when Gav queried earlier.

Looking away towards the window, Beatrice's eyes became sad and pained again as if she was seeing a very painful memory in that space. She seemed to be caught in her own agony for some moments before turning tear filled eyes to them to continue speaking.

"When Gideon was forced to come out from his hiding again due to the king's summons, I saw Leah's spirit sticking to him." Beatrice said, smiling so sadly. "That was after months since Gideon stopped the search. Leah was... she was just following Gideon closely, walking by his side, never leaving his side at all. And apparently, I am the only who was able to see her spirit. Gideon was not even aware that she was always... always with him.." this revelation from Queen Beatrice caused both Evie's and Gav's eyes to widen in shock. This means that Leah really had died? But if her spirit had been following Gideon around, then what about Vera?

Chapter 499 - Leah (Part II)

Listening to the story Queen Beatrice was telling was like hearing a hauntingly beautiful and tragic story. A story that could make anyone's heart bleed. And the most painful thing was that it was not just some fairy tale being told for the sake of entertainment. This was as real as it got. And it happened to a person who was a family member.

Queen Beatrice took in a deep breath. The story was not over yet, and Evie could not help but hope that the tragedy of this story stopped there. It was painful just hearing about it, how much pain would have it caused to Gideon himself and the people who loved him?

"Dark fae's souls, when their physical body dies, will always go to the realm of the dead. So the only possible reason why Leah's spirit didn't leave was because she must have used a spell to keep her spirit from leaving. I can see her, but I can't communicate with her."

"You can't? Why?" Evie was curious about this.

"Because it's the condition of the spell. Spirits aren't allowed to disrupt or get involved with the matters related to the living creatures. She will disappear if she communicates with me."

"You mean her spirit will be sent to the realm of the dead where she should have gone to in the first place?"

The queen shook her head. "Sadly, no. If she broke the conditions in her spirit state, she would disappear and vanish into nothing. Her spirit would never be able to return to the realm of the dead again as she had rejected her only chance and stayed back in the realm of the living. She knew the conditions and that's why she never spoke or did anything. She simply stayed with Gideon, following him everywhere like a guardian angel, flying with him, hiding with him, sleeping next to him... and that went on for years. And Gideon does not have the slightest idea that this was happening. I always told Gideon that Leah's always by his side but...?whatever I say, Gideon does not seem to listen nor believe to anything I say anymore. Thus, I could only keep my silence about Leah as I feared the consequence if Gideon found out about this." Queen Beatrice confessed sadly.

"Consequence?" Gav perked up at the mention of it. Beatrice nodded at Gav when he asked.

"Your father and I have this painful theory on why Leah's body can't be found. The only logical reason we could think of was that Leah choose to incinerate herself when she died."

Evie's eyes widened and she could only look at Beatrice with large, surprised eyes. What? How come? Why would she do that?

"We believe that she did that because Leah didn't want Gideon to revive her. She knew about the story of King Sarion and his wife. And knowing Gideon's love for her and the extent of his dark powers, she must have been sure that Gideon would revive her if he ever found her body. That's why she casted a spell on herself as she took her last breath and incinerated herself. She feared that Gideon would follow in the footsteps of his father and descend into madness after that. If Gideon ever finds out Leah's spirit didn't leave as well, I can't even imagine how he would react. Because... apparently, souls can't stay too long outside the realm of the dead. Meaning, Leah's soul will slowly fade into nothing."

"I was angry at Leah for doing that. Even though I understood that she couldn't bear to leave her beloved, I still think it was wrong for her to do that to herself. But I eventually understood why she did that. Leah started doing something strange. I keep seeing her in the forbidden library that was supposed to be only accessed by the king of the dark faes. Since Belial had long allowed me to go in there as well, I frequented the library often. It was there that I saw her, just standing by the shelves. She could not touch anything nor do anything, but she smiled at me and her eyes seemed to be asking for a favour. I began to read the books she had pointed out to me. I was confused at first, but I knew she was trying to send me a message. So I continued reading and reading and as time

went by, I started to understand. She had chosen to stay because she couldn't give up on Gideon. She was trying to go against the world and prove that even death was not strong enough to separate her from him.

"The books she made me read contained the secret solution on how to stop a spirit from disappearing to nothingness. I found out that there is a way and that was to find her compatible vessel that would accept her spirit. However, finding the right vessel was not an easy feat at all. In fact, the possibility was almost zero and it seems Leah knew but her faith was really strong. I could tell it in her eyes. She didn't plan to ever give up. I spoke to Belial about her situation, and we had searched the entire Under Lands but found no compatible vessel. Our hope was getting bleaker as time went by and the time limit of Leah's soul was getting closer and closer. Until she started to become more and more translucent. She was slowly disappearing every time I see her.

"Still, she didn't give up. And she started to go the books about humans. It was then that I realized she wanted to try looking for her vessel at the surface. I realized the dark faes' bodies were too strong for her already fading soul. They must find something that could match the weak soul. But even the youngest dark fae resisted her. So I asked Belial to bring her to the surface, to the humans who are known to be much weaker. I was so worried because I know we're running out of time. So I just sent Belial in the surface without any plan. He took Leah's fading soul with him. When Belial returned, he told me they actually made it. He said Leah's dying soul was accepted by a dying foetus."

"F-foetus?" Evie stammered out.

"Yes. It must be the fates that intervened, but the moment Leah's soul was about to reach its limit, my husband found a woman who was having a miscarriage. The woman was crying at the amount of blood that was spilling out from her. She was weeping and crying out on why her babies always dies. My husband said that it was then that it just happened. It was as if the dying foetus had called out for Leah's spirit. My husband said the foetus's heart had already stopped beating when it took in Leah's soul. We we're unsure if we made it but, later on, when my husband visited that woman again, that woman's belly had gotten bigger. And the baby inside her was growing and healthy. When it was time for the woman to give birth, I sent Belial to the surface again to check. And when he came back, what he told me was that the baby was born a girl with flaming bright red-hair and eyes the colour of the sky that was an exact copy of Leah's."

Chapter 500 - Fever

In the meantime, somewhere in the deepest part of the Monsters Forest.

Vera was held securely in Gideon's arms. They had materialized moments ago after disappearing from the queen's room and Vera had been wondering for a while now where they were right now. She had somehow felt like they were no longer in the castle anymore. She could tell that Gideon was walking on an uneven patch of ground.

She had tried to peek out from Gideon's dark cloak that was covering her completely, but he did not allow her to even wriggle the top of her head out. After trying for some time, Vera was tired out and gave up on wanting to peek to look at where they were. So she could only find a comfortable position and leaned her head back on his chest again and did not persist on looking. Wherever he brings her does not really matter to her anymore. As long as he would hold her like this and not leave her, she would be happy and satisfied with whatever that comes along.

When Gideon finally halted, Vera moved to peek. This time, he did not try to stop her. However, Vera still could not grasp where they were because it was too dark for her to see. She felt like they were inside a small house. She did not know why she perceived it to be a house though. It was just that the feeling it gave her seemed to resemble an enclosed space similar to a house.

"Where... are we?" she finally asked in a careful voice. Gideon had yet to make a single sound since they had left the castle. Also, she could feel the turmoil going on inside of him. He did not feel as though he was okay at all.

When he still remained quiet, Vera called out to him. His name rolled out smoothly from her mouth. "Gideon?"

That seemed to jolt him out of his daze. Then something lit up the place and Vera could now see her surroundings clearly. Vera immediately looked around and her eyes circled round with surprise. She was right, they were inside a house, a small house that seemed to be carved from the inside a tree trunk. And looking at the size of this space, she would hazard a guess that the tree this living space was carved out from must be a really huge one. Though the space itself is small, but when compared relatively to a tree trunk, it was truly quite large. Looking around, she could see that there was a fireplace, a table, two chairs, and... a bed. There were two small windows on the opposite sides of the 'wall' and the small fireplace was already lit, a lively flame dancing within it as the only source of light in this space. For some reason, she felt a strange feeling that made her feel as though she had been here before. As though this was not the first time that she is visiting this place. But then, that was quite impossible as she has never been to the Under Lands before in her life.

So she thought that maybe, she had seen something like this before when she was still back home. Or maybe she had seen it in one of her dreams before that she had forgotten.

Turning her face back to him, Vera was about to speak when he suddenly put her down and stumbled backwards. His hand was placed on his forehead as if he was having a headache.

And when his back slammed against what looked to be the door behind him, he stilled and then he just slid down on the floor as though boneless. One of his feet stretched out in front of him and the other was folded under him. He looked so weak as he sat there, leaning his head on his palm.

Vera just stood there not knowing what to do, watching him, and listening to the sounds of his heavy breaths. But when she heard his breaths slowly becoming more stable over time, she moved forwards, her steps slow and careful as she approached him.

Quietly, she knelt before him. Then she reached out and her palm gently landed on the skin below his ear, feeling his temperature.

A gasp escaped her. She had already felt it when he was holding her, the burning heat of him. But she had initially thought that it might be because of his magic, or perhaps because it was due to him running around while carrying her that had spiked his temperature a little. But... now that she was touching his bare skin like this, she could not help but feel worried. This was like he was having a terrible and deadly fever! But... do dark faes even get sick? She was not sure about this. But he looked like he was just having a headache!?

"Oh god!" she exclaimed as she started panicking, "I, I think you're having a terrible fever!"

He finally opened his eyes and looked at her. His fiery blue eyes smouldering through his thick dark lashes. The way he looked at her that moment made her feel as though the butterflies were going crazy inside her stomach. But her worry for him helped her manage to ignore that.

"What should we do? I think... I think you're really unwell. Tell me... I... what should I do to help you? You're... too hot! Way too hot, Gideon!" she kept mumbling worriedly when Gideon caught her wrist. She jolted at the contrasting temperatures of their skin, his palm burning hot against her cool wrist.

"If the fever you're talking about is that illness you suffered from that night when I was watching over you, then I'm telling you, dark faes don't ever get fevers," he finally spoke. Vera paused before a long breath of relief escaped her lips. But the worry on her face remained there.

"Then why are you burning up like this? You're obviously not well. Your temperature can't be this hot!"