

## Chapter 21

**Very sorry for the late update guys. I will post the next chapters once a week or once in two weeks. I will always be grateful for your continuous support. Love you guys**

**Don't forget to comment.**

#####

I woke up to Tonya gently shaking me awake. She looked very worried. As usual, I looked at her intently trying to keep my eyes open. I still felt weak but not as weak as....

Tonya?

I looked around and my thoughts were confirmed. I was at the quarters. The regular change of my location sometimes had me wonder if all that was going on was actually a dream.

Sadly I couldn't wonder too much. I had my condition and the bruises to prove it was reality.

"H...h..." I croaked.

"Hey," she gently caressed my cheek.

Her deep look and that simple touch of a action made a small crack to the walls I had built. My eyes welled up just by looking at her.

".....I don't know what to do anymore Tonya. I'm not as strong as I thought I was." I sni led.

"Shhh, ssshhh. Don't say that Eve. You're the strongest one of all here," she wiped away my tears and played with my hair. I relaxed in her touch.

"I don't know.....how much longer.....I keep missing everything up.." "Hey, hey. There's no way I'm letting my little sister fall apart. I can clearly see that this life is slowly killing you, but I will not let you fade away like this no matter what." She spoke just like a momma.

I smiled a little. She sounded so confident. "What could we possibly do Tonya? Absolutely nothing. I....I don't know why I'm doing this to me. I'm just a servant."

"Did that bastard take more blood?"

"Ssshhh....someone could hear you. Why are you becoming like Kyle?" I whispered looking everywhere. To my relief the quarters was empty apart from me and Tonya. Someone must have given her permission to be here.

"Answer the question."

"No. Not in the recent days," I whispered more to myself.

"I don't understand if he isn't taking your blood, why does he keep you then?" I looked up at her surprised.

"What? You don't return every night to here's only one explanation."

"Oh..." I was a fool for thinking I could hide stu from Tonya.

"Eve....has he ever...you know...has he ever hurt you like that? It was so hard for her to get her sentence out."

"No. No he hasn't." But he has crossed the line many times. That is the only thing he hasn't done and I pray he wouldn't. Her question suddenly brought back memories. Memories of how he forced me to do things. She gently squeezed my hand and brought me back to reality.

"Eve what has he done to you? He's touched you hasn't he?" Oh God, I didn't want to cry again but this conversation is making me to just do that.

"Tonya, I'm sure other servants have to go through situations like these too." I whispered unsure.

"So he has taken advantage of you." I looked the other way refusing to meet her eyes. I didn't want to break down.

"When was the last time Eve?"

"I can't remember," I didn't want to lie but I didn't want to think about it either.

"So what does he do now?" she was confused.

Well, so was I.

"He feeds me," I said so ly.

"He feeds you? Does he feed you or feed on you?" she asked even more shocked.

"He feeds me Tonya, like food. I don't know why. He doesn't let me leave when I'm done. He hurts me but then he makes sure I eat. Maybe he doesn't want his personal servant dead too soon."

Tonya only stared at me. Her mouth formed an 'O'. We continued to stare at each other for I don't know how long before she broke the silence.

"How long was I going to be in his blood bag? How long could I?"

"Okay enough about him....for now. I have important news Eve. There's a certain Lady Esther coming to visit. She'll be here tomorrow. Ms.Odelle has already briefed us on what to do. You missed it of course. The thing is, she is a very very important person to the Royals and the council."

I've heard this name, I recalled Mr.Percival mentioning her. She's what the King had wanted to speak to the Dark Prince about.

"Listen Eve, she's very powerful as well. If she isn't pleased with anything, anything at all, she'll take action. Lady Esther can give a death sentence to any servant. Which she has. Many times. No questions will be asked. She can even punish them as she pleases. She sounds evil you know. That's not even the worst. Our poor Henri is assigned as personal servant to her," Tonya revealed biting her nail.

"This is not good."

"He....Henri? Tonya, Lady Esther sounds horrible. But then maybe those are just rumors and she's actually really nice?" I mean none of us have actually met the woman. How could we assume she's evil?

"Oh God Eve, you're killing me. I thought by now you'd know what kind of beings we're surrounded with! They're vampires okay! And this warning came from Ms.Odelle so be careful at all times."

I already have the Dark Prince to worry about. I really hope this Lady Esther takes up a lot of his time. That way he'd be occupied with her and maybe.....leave me alone.

"What are you thinking? Eve you seem very distant lately and I can guess it's not only the Prince. Did anything else happen? You know you can tell me."

"No Tonya, nothing else happened. I'm just overwhelmed with everything that's going on. I thought you wouldn't ask so many questions?" I muttered the last part.

"I know, I'm sorry I can't help it." She sighed.

"So how's Kyle doing?" I asked changing the topic.

"He's not getting used to it," Tonya said laughing. Kyle was definitely a better subject to talk about.

We went on talking about how he always complains about the young Prince Timothy. To me it seemed like they would eventually become close friends.

I spent some more time talking before attempting to get up.

"Woowo, you start tomorrow. Orders from Ms.Odelle, which are obviously from the Prince himself so rest."

So Ms.Odelle knows? I bet she already knew what was happening. Speaking of the Prince, he always does this. Make me rest, then when I'm strengthened he hurts me all over. Was this some kind of a game for him?

But then again he has been feeding me and not taking my blood. It's only been two days but I'd like to think that it's some sort of improvement. I hated having too much hope but the way Mr.Percival said he wouldn't hurt me like that again made me hope.

I guess I would have to find out tomorrow.

"You're allowed to be here?" Tonya walked out and came back shyly with a small tray.

"Yeah, Ms.Odelle thought I would be best." She cracked a smile.

We made small talks while she opened the tray and set up our meal. It was supposed to be just for me but I wasn't going to eat all that by myself.

"That's less than half Eve! Ms.Odelle has to report this to the Himnyou know!" She panicked. "You eat the rest Tonya. I can't. I'll throw up and that would be a bigger problem," she kept quiet because she knew I was right. She'd seen me do it.

"Please eat Tonya." I pleaded with her until she eventually gave in.

"Rest now, you're so thin and pale," she laid down beside me.

"Sometimes I just wish we were stronger you know. Why do we have to be the weakest of all beings?" She grumbled, staring at the ceiling.

"It's not going to get any better so quit saying that and we are the weakest beings so deal with it because it's not going to change," I whispered. I recalled the many times I yearned for extra strength and courage. Especially whenever I was alone with the Prince.

It never came.

We just had to deal with it. Tonya will learn. Maybe in a week.

"Since you're allowed to be here too, rest yourself! We have a big day tomorrow."

"Yeah," She mumbled.

Everyone was asked to get ready a little earlier the next day. I sat at the breakfast table waiting for the rest since I was extra early. Starting from a few days ago, I was beginning to have trouble sleeping. I would wake up in the middle of the night feeling anxious and afraid. Like something was going to end my life. I on dream of horrific black orbs which seemed like never ending pits of darkness.

His eyes.

I remember the night I first looked into his eyes. It was the first and last time I ever looked into them. A er all these time, I still couldn't get that image out. Soon it turned into my regular nightmares. They would eat me alive and I would wake up. Once I was up, I could never go back to sleep. It was better to just stay awake.

"Hey! You're early. Couldn't sleep?" Beth walked in taking her seat beside me. She looked tired and gloomy. Not at all like the Beth I knew.

"Yeah," I smiled up at her. It had been a long time since we last spoke. She remained quiet staring blankly ahead.

"Beth?"

"Yeah?"

"Say something, Are you okay?" I asked genuinely worried now.

"I'm fine Eve. The senior chefs were a pain in the ass that's all." I checked at her annoyed tone.

"They wouldn't stop looking for minor mistakes like how so the biscuits had to be, and how beautiful the fruits had to look and how everything had to be perfect!" She went on and on about how the higher ups corrected her work.

"And all this for that Esther woman. Eerrggh!! Who is she anyway?" She rambled on.

"Beth! O gosh you need to breathe," I grabbed her shoulders making her face me.

"Breathe Beth."

She stopped for a moment. Just a moment then continued to complain.

"Beth whoever she is, she sounds important. So just don't get on her bad side. Tonya told me that she has authority to kill any servant so behave."

"Behave! P...t," she muttered unhappy. The eating area slowly filled up with more castle servants.

"Hmmm, what's taking them so long?"

"I dunno, they must be tired." Beth simply shrugged.

"Henri too? She's always very disciplined and punctual," I craned my neck to look around, seeing if they had arrived.

"Who cares?"

It was so whimsy but I still heard it clearly. Even the obvious distaste in her voice. I looked at Beth puzzled. Her eyes met mine and they widened. "...uh...I meant no one would care....yet. They still have another ten minutes." She quickly tried to cover up.

It didn't work.

"Beth?" I raised a brow. "Do you not like Henri?"

"What? Of course not. You know I like Henri," her voice sounded shrill. She was lying alright.

"It's okay, I know there's something going on between you two. I've seen the way you look at her Beth. You can't lie to me. Just like I can't lie to you....or anyone else but you get what I mean."

A er a tense moment she let out a sigh. "Okay, okay, Fine. But know this, I don't hate her. It's just that....I don't know how to tell you this...."

"It's fine. You can tell me when you're ready. All I know is that both of you are wonderful people. I hope you guys overcome your di erences. Soon," I didn't need to know what was going on. I just wanted them to get along. I couldn't think of anything that would cause a friction between them.

"Yeah....maybe." She looked even more irritated than before.

Did she really dislike Henri that much?

"Hey how come you don't visit Alex anymore?" she suddenly asked.

She couldn't know!!

How could she not know? Alex didn't tell anyone? Well that's actually good.

"I no longer have free time Beth. You know that right?"

"Yeah but it's been seriously long Eve! Come on!" I looked down. The conversation brought me back to the fight between me and Alex. He doesn't want to see me anymore.

"Eve what are you hiding now?" she had her hands on her hips. She's determined to find out now. If Beth doesn't get it out of me she'll definitely get it out of Alex.

"We....we had a small argument," I squeaked.

"She was alex before she laughed. Like really laughed."

"You and Alex? Argument? Liar!"

I stared at her scrunching my nose in confusion. Why was this funny to her?

When I remained quiet her smile dropped. "Wait are you serious?" I nodded. "W...what happened?" she asked suddenly looking concerned.

"I...I don't know, he was really mad that I didn't make time to come see him. I couldn't because....because you know. Then I made up a stupid lie saying I had extra work to do, and then he got pissed o and we haven't spoken since", my voice cracked at the end.

I missed Alex so much.

"Eve when was this?"

"Three nights ago." I mumbled.

She was quiet. I looked up at her and saw that she was just glaring ahead. She looked furious for some reason.

I hesitantly placed my hand on her shoulder. She jerked away then placed her hand on mine.

"I'm fine, just remembered something."

"Remembered what? You look so angry," was she mad at me too?

"Sorry, Don't worry about it," she reassured me.

"Are you sure?"

"Yes. And don't be sad about Alex. I'll ta..."

"NO!! I cut her o. I didn't need her to solve my problems with Alex. Sheesh, don't shout. People are looking," she covered her ears dramatically.

"Beth I'm serious!! I don't want you telling him anything. You're not supposed to know about the argument between us! I'll take care of it okay?"

"Okay, okay I won't tell him anything."

"Promise me I need your word."

"O God, okay I promise. I won't do anything if you don't want me to. Eve. You know that right? And your secret is safe with me so chill."

"Thank you," I said feeling a little relaxed.

Not long a er, India, Tonya and Henri walked in. We made small talks for a few minutes until Ms.Odelle came in. She looked worked up already.

"Alright ladies listen up! Today is a very important day, you already know who's coming. I've explained everything yesterday," she eyed me as she said this.

"Henri since you are assigned as Lady Esther's personal servant are you prepared?" All eyes were on Henri when she said this.

"Yes ma'am."

"Good. And the rest of you please, please do not make mistakes. Be punctual, be clean and make sure all of you do your best to keep her satisfied. She's only going to be here for maybe four days until further notice." There were groans and whispers all around.

India told us that there were at least five senior servants in this room. So apparently they knew the Lady Esther and let's just say that they're not very pleased with her visit here today.

Once Ms.Odelle had said whatever was needed to be said. We began to disperse.

"Good luck Henri," I gave her a hug.

"I hope she isn't as bad as they say." She looked worried. "Hey maybe she isn't. We don't know yet." India added trying to console Henri.

Tonya gave a her a reassuring smile. Beth however just walked away.

It's like she didn't care. I know they had their misunderstandings but she could at least say something. Right?

Henri didn't seem to mind though. So a er our last hug we went our separate ways.

~~~~~

I brought up hisbreakfast as usual. But this time I immediately started cleaning up first.

Two hours later the Prince still did not show up so I continued cleaning. I had totally forgot to ask India or Tonya for another rose. The absence of flower made me more gloomy.

I neededthe flower.

I didn't know why but I just neededit.

Badly.

It was almost six thirty when I was done with the room and his clothes. The longer I was there alone the more I wanted the rose. Minutes past and I could no longer take it.

I felt a little too empty.

Going out and requesting for a rose wouldn't hurt.

With that thought I walked towards the door. When my hand was a centimeter away from the door handle, it opened.

"Going somewhere Little Flower?"

I yelped in shock. I had not expected him to show up at this time. "Y...Your Highness," I bowed.

"Where were you rushing o to?" He asked stepping closer to me. I stopped back to create more space. But he just took another step towards me daring me to move away.

I didn't move back again.

"I...I wanted to get another rose>Your H.Highness," my voice trembled. I couldn't even stand up straight. My legs suddenly felt numb. Everytime I was close to him my body would just freeze in fear.

"You and your stupid roses. Why do you want it? So you can speak to it like a lunatic?!" his voice grew louder with each word. I willed by the time he ended.

"No...no Your Highness." I whispered feeling even lower.

"Get back to work. Bring me my dinner," he gritted out his command.

"Yes Your Highness." I scrambled out.

I arranged everything on the table as usual, and my toes behind his chair. I just stared at my worn out shoes, moving my toes in them.

"Sit."

My head shot up.

Why again?!

"Sit. Now." He said in his cold voice. Since he was already angry I didn't want to push his limit. I pulled the chair adjacent to his and as I was about to sit his next words stopped me.

"You will not sit on that chair," I was more confused when he said that. Maybe he wanted me to sit on the floor? I looked at the ground.

"No." He said as if reading my thoughts. I looked higher and saw his smirk.

I stood there not knowing what to do. That's when he pulled back slightly and patted his legs. He then patted his right lap.

Did he really expect me to sit there?!

I wouldn't! I mean I can't!

With these thoughts running in my head, my hands began to sweat and tremble.

"Are you disobeying me Little Flower?" he asked seemingly entertained by my discomfort.

I shook my head as words refused to come out of my mouth.

"Then come here before I make you regret it," his voice sounded more sinister. I took slow steps towards him.

I honestly thought this day would be better but apparently I couldn't expect anything good anymore.

Once I was close enough the Prince held my small waist with both his hands and pulled me down on his lap. Even with me sitting on his lap. His form was still huge compared to mine. Every part of him was muscular. This alone made me pray that I don't do anything to anger him. All my strength would be less than nothing compared to his.

I trembled even more in his arms. I couldn't control it. It was like a natural reaction. I could feel beads of sweat forming on my forehead.

The Prince however, did not show any emotion. He casually began to eat his meat and drink the red metallic liquid out of his chalice. I couldn't stand the smell of it but somehow managed to stay and appear unaffected.

When he was halfway done, he cut the remaining meat on his plate into smaller pieces and began to feed me with his fork. I didn't open my mouth at first due to my surprise, but he gripped my chin and forced the food in me. I had no choice but to eat.

Thankfully he didn't force me to eat too much this time. He stopped when he sensed my di iculty in keeping the food down.

He also held the cup filled with water to my lips and made sure I drank it all. I wish I knew the meaning behind his actions towards me. It was so uncomfortable.

I obeyed only because I feared punishment and death.

When I was done he kissed my forehead. A gesture to show that he was pleased. I thought he'd let me go a er that but he simply buried his face at the crook of my neck and tightened his arms around me, keeping me in place. I didn't move or struggle. I heard him inhale sharply, taking in my scent.

I sat there paralyzed in fear. I could feel my heart beating in my head again.

He stayed like that for a few more minutes before he stood up with me still in between his arms. My back was firmly pressed against his front. I couldn't move in that position.

"Do you remember the rules when it comes to being a personal servant?" he asked suddenly. His hold on me tightened as he said this.

"Y...Yes Your Highness," I croaked out.

"Say them."

I was taken aback by this weird demand but I had to answer him anyway so the first thing I did was try to get my breathing even. I hoped I would get it right.

"T...there can be no begging, or crying. No complaining. A servant always has to be punctual, and a p...personal servant shall not serve two masters. Never can a servant do anything without permission, and a...servant never speaks unless spoken to. There shall also be no eye contact with the Royals." I couldn't believe I remembered them. I also couldn't believe how many rules I had broken as I said them out loud.

The minute I was done, he tilted my head towards him and brought his lips close to my ear.

"You be sure to remember all of the rules Little Flower. Never will you break any of them or disobey me from this moment onwards."

His voice sounded so dark and menacing. I didn't know why he was enforcing the rules on me now. At this moment.

Yes, he had threatened me countless times whenever I cried but not like this.

What I felt that moment was very unsettling. Like something bad was going to happen. But all I could do was say "Yes Your Highness".

He replied with two more kisses on my forehead. "Now go to the hall. All the servants are already gathering there." He said flatly.

I took that as an opportunity to get out of his hold. I hated being so close to him. I hated it more whenever he touched me.

Because even a er I e the room, I could still feel the heat of his touch. The effect of his dark aura was so strong on me and it would last. All these would only bring back unwanted memories and nightmares.

~~~~~

When I came to the hall, most of the castle servants were already there. The first person I saw was none other than Alex. I kept staring at him like a crazy stalker. As if feeling my stare he turned towards me and our eyes met.

I gave him a small smile and waved, hoping he'd at least give me a tight nod.

He didn't.

The moment he saw me, his face didn't show any reaction. He turned around almost immediately and walked to the other side of the hall.

I know I've never experienced heartbreak. But the moment Alex did that, my heart broke into a million pieces all over again. I looked down as my eyes began to get watery.

You can't do this here Eve!

I shook my head forcing my tears back as the servants began to form a line. Once we were all standing in an orderly manner, Ms.Odelle and Mr.Percival stood in front of the line.

We stood like that for fi een minutes before the King and Queen descended the stairs. The Royal pair was followed by Princess Esmeralda, beside her was a young man I did not know. It had to be her brother because they looked similar. So there was another Prince apparently. Behind them came Prince Timothy. He was holding a young girl's hand. She looked to be around her early teens. I have never seen her before, just like how I've never seen the Prince beside Princess Esmeralda.

Following them, dressed in a suit was Prince Phoenix.

Only he looked more like a King than a Prince. His whole demeanor was di erent from the rest. One could tell just by looking at the way he walked. Confident, dominating and terrifying in a way.

I could feel the room become more still and silent as he walked by.

When they arrived, they took their place close to the entrance of the hall. Seconds later the two majestic looking double doors to the hall opened. We waited a few more minutes before we heard the sound of heels clicking. It got louder and louder.

I was standing somewhere in the middle of the line and almost all of the servants were taller than me so I couldn't see the person approaching.

As the sound grew louder I knew the person was already in the hall. It was followed by greetings from the King and Queen. I stood on the tips of my toes to try and get a good look. I failed.

I don't remember how long we stood there listening to the Royal family exchange words of welcome to their special visitor.

When they eventually stopped talking everyone straightened up again. I could hear Ms.Odelle's voice followed by the sound of footsteps getting closer.

They were walking past the servants.

From my view, I could see that this person was wearing a very elegant green gown. As she got closer I could see her face clearer.