



138 First Date Of Torture

Eve 1

I glanced at a blindfolded Hades for what was probably the tenth time as I tiptoed toward the first red flag. Sweat dripped from my brow, and I froze, afraid he would hear it.

He tilted his head slightly, and my heart flipped.

But he didn't turn toward me.

Relief threatened to spill out in a breath, but I swallowed it down. Not yet.

I moved again, each step light against the padded floor. The flag dangled just ahead, swaying faintly as if mocking me.

I can do this.

I reached up, fingers brushing the edge of the cloth—

"Impatient," Hades' voice cut through the silence. Smooth. Unbothered.

I snatched my hand back like the flag had burned me.

His head remained turned slightly away, blindfold covering his eyes, but somehow he still



felt me.

"Slow down, Red," he drawled, arms crossed over his chest. "Or have you forgotten how this ends?"

I swallowed hard, fists clenching. He's bluffing.

I reached for the flag again, this time slower. My fingertips skimmed the fabric, and I carefully slipped it off the hook.

One down.

I pivoted, eyes flicking to the next flag across the room. Three minutes felt shorter than I thought.

Moving toward the second, I measured each step, keeping light on my feet. The room felt suffocating in its silence, like the walls were listening.

Halfway there.

Hades shifted, and I halted mid-step.

He faced me now, though his eyes were still obscured. His head tilted like he could hear my hesitation.

"Panic's already setting in," he murmured. "You have time, but you're rushing."

I grit my teeth and pressed forward. The second flag hung lower, an easy grab if I stayed calm. I



crouched and gently pulled it free.

Two down.

I took a step back—

"Still too loud," Hades said softly, turning his head just slightly in my direction.

I froze again, gripping the flag in my hand tighter. I didn't make a sound. 2

My pulse hammered so loud it felt like even that was betraying me. 1

Seconds ticked by. I waited for him to move, to give me an opening.

But he didn't.

He just stood there, calm as ever, as if daring me to continue.

One minute left.

I exhaled silently and made for the third flag, faster this time. If I keep waiting, I'll lose.

The flag hung near the ropes. I reached out—

Before my fingers even touched it, Hades shifted again.

I yanked my hand back, but it was too late.

His hand shot out, brushing lightly against my



wrist. "Got you."

I sucked in a sharp breath as he gently tugged the flag from my hand.

"Try again," he said, stepping back into the center. His blindfold remained in place, but somehow, his stare felt heavy, like he could see through it.

I bit the inside of my cheek, hating the flicker of satisfaction I caught on his face.

Thirty seconds.

I darted to the fourth flag, forcing myself to move quicker.

The moment I grabbed it, Hades spoke again. "Desperation's louder than footsteps, Red."

I jerked around—

He was already there.

His hand caught the edge of the flag, tugging it loose with ease.

I stared at him, breathless. "You're blindfolded."

"I don't need to see to know where you are," he replied, voice calm and infuriating.

I stepped back, empty-handed.



Fifteen seconds left.

One flag left.

I darted toward the final flag near the exit, shoving down the rising frustration.

I nearly had it when I felt him behind me.

His hand grazed my shoulder before I could react, effortlessly slipping the last flag from my grip.

The timer buzzed.

Hades removed the blindfold with deliberate ease, silver eyes locking onto mine. His smirk was slow, smug.

"Three minutes," he said, twirling the flag between his fingers. "And not a single one left to show for it."

I glared at him, breathing hard. Goddess, I hated losing.

He stepped closer, lowering his voice just enough to make the words crawl over my skin. "You rush when you get nervous. I can hear it. Feel it." His gaze swept over me, lingering. "Control that, and maybe—just maybe—you'll stand a chance next time."



He turned to walk away, tossing the flag back to me without looking.

"Or," he added, "you'll just keep handing me victories."

I knew what was coming next and I steeled myself. "You won and I lost."

He turned me, a smirk on his lips. "Look at you..."
He eyes grazed my body, his voice teasing.
"Stating that obvious."

I brushed off his tone. "What is my punishment?"

His smirk grew, one dimple dipping and for a second I wondered how long it took that goddess to sculpt his face because I doubted, she left the task to her help. I could hang sworn that he only took one step before he swallowed the space between us in an heartbeat. "Let's go out," he whispered. 1

I blinked. "Go out? Go out where?"

He frowned slightly and if he was offended I did not get his very clever joke. "Red, I am asking you out on a proper date."

I blinked again, staring at him like he'd just grown a second head. "You're joking."

Hades arched a brow. "Do I look like I'm joking?"



"Yes," I said flatly. "You always look like you're joking."

The corner of his mouth twitched. "That's fair. But not this time." He stepped closer, voice dropping to that dangerous, quiet tone that made the air between us feel too heavy. "Come on, Red. Let me take you out."

I crossed my arms, leaning back slightly as if the distance would help me think clearer. It didn't. "I thought these challenges were supposed to make me stronger, not... turn into date night."

"They are." His silver gaze dragged over me, slower this time. "But there's more to training than just fights, you know."

I narrowed my eyes. "And a date qualifies as training how?"

His smirk returned. "If I say so."

I crossed my arms. "You didn't need to ask me. You took me to the art gallery without my knowing."

He raised a brow.

"I loved it but that is not the point,"

"I want this to be real date. With all the traditional things. And you will have to wear my



little gift."

"Little gift?"

And just like that, as if from thin air, he brought a little black box to my face. "Here. You will wear this for our date." He offered it to me and I tentatively took it from him.

"Open it, Red," his voice was a sultry command.

My eyes flickered from him to his little gift. It was probably a piece of jewelry. I lifted the cover of the box and the world tilted beneath me, my eyes widening.

But when my eyes shifted to Hades again, he was still smirking.

Maybe I was seeing things, so I looked down at the item nestled in the velvet. It was small, pink, round, and smooth with a string attached. 3

I snapped the box shut so fast I nearly pinched my fingers.

"What the hell, Hades?" My voice shot up an octave, the heat crawling up my neck spreading to my ears.

His smirk didn't budge. If anything, it deepened, one brow lifting in mock innocence. "Something wrong with your gift?"



"Gift?" I hissed, holding the box like it might explode. "This isn't a gift. It's—" I stopped myself, cheeks burning hotter. I wasn't about to say it out loud.

Hades stepped closer, the space between us dissolving like it always did when he got that look—predatory and too amused for my sanity.

"I thought you'd like something that would keep you on edge," he murmured, voice low enough to send a shiver down my spine. "Consider it part of your training, Red. Control, remember?"

I couldn't decide if I wanted to slap him or sink into the floor. Probably both.

"You are so perverse," I gritted out, trying to shove the box back into his hand.

Hades didn't take it. Instead, his fingers lightly curled around mine, keeping the box pressed against my palm. His touch lingered, firm but gentle, as his thumb brushed over the back of my hand.

"I mean it," he said, quieter now. "Wear it tonight."

I searched his face, half-expecting the smug grin to crack and reveal the joke beneath it. But there



was nothing—just silver eyes watching me carefully, waiting.

I swallowed, pulse hammering annoyingly loud in my ears. He's not kidding.

I pulled my hand away, tucking the box into my pocket before I could second-guess myself. "Fine. But if this is some elaborate trick to humiliate me, I swear I'll—"

"You'll what?" His grin returned, sharp and teasing. "Throw your drink in my face? I'd like to see that." 1

I glared at him, lips twitching. "Don't tempt me."

He chuckled, stepping back with that slow, deliberate grace that made it impossible not to watch him leave. "Seven o'clock, Red. Be ready."

I stood there long after he was gone, fingers still brushing against the outline of the little black box.

I was going to wear a vibrator on a date. What the hell was I going to do? 2



139 In Control

Hades 1

The clinking of heels reached my ears. I raised my head, finger poised to press the elevator button. But just before I could make contact, I stilled.

My breath caught.

She stepped into view, and for a moment, I forgot how to breathe. The dress she wore – sleek, understated but devastating in its elegance and allure – seemed to dim the entire hallway.

The emerald mini dress hugged her full figure, the black floral stockings highlighting her long sculpted legs. The ankle boots added a inch or two to heights.

Her titan curls were swept to one side in a way that drew attention to a lightly angled, delicate features of her face and the subtle shimmer in her eyes held me captive longer than I cared to admit.

I forced my gaze away, clearing my throat as if that would somehow erase the seconds I'd spent



simply staring.

Focus, Hades.

Stepping to the side, I extended my hand toward her, palm up, a silent invitation. "Shall we?"

Her eyes settled on me, hesitating for just a breath before she placed her hand in mine. The contact was light, uncertain, but enough to send a slow burn through my palm.

The elevator doors slid open, and I guided her inside with a careful grip. She stepped in close, her posture perfectly poised but her fingers tightened slightly around mine, betraying the nervousness she tried to hide.

As the doors closed, enclosing us in the small space.

Watched her from beneath my lashes; she was fidgeting, a lot. Her eyes were stuck on what she was taking in outside the tinted windows. I knew that the reality of her punishment was finally dawning on her.

Three, two, one...

"The road..." she breathed, barely audible over the low hum of the engine.



"What is wrong with the road, Red?" I kept my voice casual, though I could already sense where this was heading.

Her head turned slightly, but her gaze remained glued to the scene beyond the window. "It's packed. There are people everywhere."

Ah. She'd finally noticed.

"They live here," I replied smoothly, shifting in my seat as if this wasn't unusual. "It is always busy. You know how cities are."

Her brow pinched. "I know that. I meant... it's different today." Her eyes narrowed at the crowded sidewalks, at the headlights stacking up along Lunar Boulevard as far as she could see. "I don't think I've ever seen it like this when we're out."

I said nothing for a beat, letting the quiet stretch long enough for her to start overthinking. It wasn't often that she caught on to the things I did for her, and I found I enjoyed watching the realization dawn on her.

"I didn't close the roads today," I admitted, finally breaking the silence.

Her head snapped toward me then, those green

eyes narrowing with something between confusion and suspicion. "You close the roads when we go out?"

I met her gaze head-on, unwavering. "Usually, yes. I prefer not to take chances." She was a werewolf after all and if the statistics were correct and the the border to Silverpine was as closed off as it had always been that would mean she was the only werewolf in the Obsidan pack. She was a royal to boot. There was no bigger target.

A flicker of something unreadable crossed her face, but she looked away quickly, her attention returning to the city moving slowly outside the window.

"You didn't today," she said softly, more to herself than to me.

"No," I agreed. "I wanted you to feel it—see it for what it is. No barriers, no buffers. Just us and the city." I leaned back, watching her closely. "It's authentic this way." When I said first date, I meant first date.

For a long moment, she said nothing. Her reflection in the glass looked almost distant, as if she wasn't entirely sure how to process the



information.

"We're not untouchable, Red," I added, my voice dropping lower. "No matter how much power we hold, we exist in the middle of it all. I won't always shield you from it. Consider it a part of your training." 3

She crossed her arms, still staring out. "Training," she muttered.

"You act like you haven't seen traffic for five years." 4

Her posture stiffened just slightly, though she made no move to argue.

We rolled down Elysian Artery, weaving through the bustle of city life. The flickering neon lights from storefronts, the clusters of Lycans gathered on street corners, and the faint glow of sigils marking territory boundaries all painted the canvas of Lunar Boulevard's nightlife.

Dominion Tower loomed ahead, cutting through the skyline like a spear of glass and steel. The golden lights at its peak shimmered, marking our destination—the Silver Dominion.

"It's not far now," I said, my eyes tracing the tower's silhouette. "We'll take the elevator



straight to the top once we arrive."

She finally glanced over at me, her expression softer now, though the edge of curiosity remained. "It's beautiful," she murmured, a simmer in her eyes.

I shrugged lightly. "I figured we should indulge in something different."

Her eyes narrowed slightly, searching mine for hidden meaning. There was some, but I kept it buried beneath a carefully crafted mask of nonchalance.

After a moment, she exhaled and leaned back into her seat, gaze drifting to the tower ahead.

I'd let her have this victory—the small satisfaction of feeling unprotected and free, even if I knew every enforcer on duty tonight was tracking our route, hidden in the shadows.

She didn't need to know that, and anyway, she had bigger fish to fry tonight.

The sleek black car slowed to a stop at the entrance of Dominion Tower, the imposing glass facade shimmering under the city lights. A valet stepped forward, but I dismissed him with a subtle shake of my head. I preferred to handle



things myself when she was involved.

I opened her door, offering my hand once more. She hesitated, just for a fraction of a second, before slipping her fingers into mine.

Her eyes wandered, taking in the lavish entrance lined with polished marble.

"This is more than I imagined," she murmured, her grip unconsciously tightening around my hand.

"You'll find the inside even more impressive," I replied, leading her through the entrance.

The lobby was bustling. Conversations hummed, but a noticeable shift occurred the moment we stepped inside. Eyes followed us, some lowering in deference, others lingering too long. They knew who we were; there was no need to announce it.

She felt it. I could tell by the subtle way her shoulders squared, though she kept her chin lifted, refusing to be cowed by the weight of so many gazes.

But I felt her hand tremble.

We stepped inside, and I swiped a keycard, directing the lift to ascend. As the doors slid



closed, she finally let out the breath she'd been holding.

"I thought you said this was a first date," she said, arms crossing over her chest.

"It is."

"Then why does this feel like I've just walked into a council meeting I wasn't invited to?" She knew why.

I smirked but didn't answer. 1

The elevator rose swiftly, the hum of the machinery the only sound between us. When the doors opened, the top floor stretched before us, sleek and modern with dim lighting that cast long shadows against glass walls.

The restaurant's interior sprawled across the open space, divided into intimate booths and tables, most of which were already occupied. Soft music drifted through the air, low and melodic.

And that was when she saw it.

Her eyes widened, halting abruptly as she realized.

I didn't buy out the restaurant.



Lycans filled the room—men and women from the elite circles of Obsidian Pack. Some were powerful Alphas, others warlords or heads of influential families. The hum of their conversations faltered when they spotted us, but none of them vacated their seats.

"They're staying," she whispered, barely masking the disbelief in her voice.

"Of course they are," I replied smoothly, pressing my palm against the small of her back to guide her forward. "I thought I'd offer you a... more authentic experience tonight."

"But the..." she whispered. 1

My finger hovered above the button, sinful anticipation flooding my veins. If she needed a distraction, I would give her a distraction—with my personal twist. I wrapped my arms around her waist.

"The what, Red?" I whispered against her hair.

She stiffened against me as a waiter came forward. "Your Majesty, your table is ready."

Her hand trembled lightly against my arm, but she didn't pull away.

I felt the eyes on us—some curious, others

calculative. The weight of the Obsidian Pack's attention wasn't something easily ignored, and she knew it. 1

"Right this way," the waiter gestured, his voice neutral, but his gaze flickered toward her just a fraction too long.

I didn't like it.

"Is it in?" I whispered.

She paused before we continued to walk again.

"Yes."

"Are you ready?" I murmured as we sat down.

Her eyes widened. "What?" she mouthed.

I pushed the button.

A mix between a yelp and moan escaped her, and silence suddenly doused the whole room. 8

