

## 158 I DON'T LOVE HER

Hades 1

Her eyes weren't just curious; they were ravenous, clinging to that sealed envelope like it held the answers to every unspoken question gnawing at her mind. A thousand thoughts must have been clawing at her, each more desperate than the last. 2

I noticed the slight twitch in her hand, a subconscious inch forward. She wanted to see it. No, she needed to.

Kael noticed too. His grip on the envelope tightened, his jaw ticking with quiet warning.

"Leave us," I said, my tone brooking no argument.

Jules flinched, but this time, she didn't protest. The last shred of stubbornness drained from her as she lowered her head. Her movements were slow, mechanical, as if dragging herself through molasses. She hesitated at the threshold, her shoulders rising with a sharp breath—like she might say something, plead once more.

But then she didn't.



The door clicked shut behind her.

Silence bloomed in her absence, thick and suffocating.

"Kael," I said evenly, my eyes never leaving the envelope, "give it here."

He crossed the room and placed it delicately in my hand, as if it might shatter. The weight of it was heavier than mere paper should allow.

I ran a thumb along the seal, pausing for half a second before breaking it.

The crisp tear echoed in the quiet room.

Unfolding the document, my eyes flicked over the clinical language, scanning for the information that mattered.

And then I saw it.

My grip tightened involuntarily, the paper crinkling slightly under my fingers.

Goddess...

Suddenly, my feet turned liquid, the world tilting beneath me. Yet, every nerve lit up with exhilaration. 2

"Your Majesty?" Kael's voice was wary.

I read it again, slower this time, as though the words might rearrange themselves into something that made sense.

But they didn't.

***Lunar Synchronization Index Report***

***Subject 1: Hades Stravos (Lycan, Obsidian Pack)***

***Subject 2: Ellen Valmont (Werewolf, Silverpine)***

***Test Type: Mate Compatibility Analysis***

***Status: 100% Compatible*** 5

***Findings:***

- Subject 1 possesses the Vassir's Vein (Flux Corruption), a rare and unstable anomaly derived from the Vampiric Essence of the Vampire Prince, Vassir.***
- Subject 2 carries the Fenrir's Marker, an ancient and volatile werewolf trait signifying direct descent from the Progenitor Bloodline.***
- Cross-analysis indicates full-spectrum compatibility between Vassir's Vein and Fenrir's Marker, despite traditionally incompatible species lineage.***



— *Anomalous bond detected: The synchronization between both subjects transcends standard mating parameters.*

— *\*Absolute Compatibility overrides all genetic, species, and metaphysical barriers. This level of synchronization is classified as Unprecedented.*

— *Projected Bond Strength: Immutable and irreversible.* 2

— *Warning: The fusion of Vassir's Vein and Fenrir's Marker may trigger unknown and potentially catastrophic consequences under lunar or emotional duress.* 6

I stared at the words, feeling the ground beneath me give way.

Impossible.

The Vassir's Vein—my curse, my strength, my affliction—was never meant to coexist with anything. It was volatile, a raw tear in my very nature, something even my father feared enough to never take it himself despite the power that came with its infection. 2

And yet here it was.

Bound, balanced, matched perfectly with the Fenrir's Marker.



The two greatest anomalies that have ever been discovered, fitting together like forged steel and sharpened stone.

No force of blood, lineage, or nature should have allowed it.

But the report was clear.

This bond didn't care for species. Didn't care for rules.

It was.

Kael's voice cut into the cold storm inside me.

"Your Majesty... what does it say?"

I could barely form the words, my mind coiled tight.

"It says," I began slowly, folding the paper with deliberate care, "Ellen and I are mates." 3

Kael's breath hitched, barely audible, but I heard it.

Shock flickered in his eyes before he quickly masked it behind a soldier's composure. Yet, I could see the calculation racing behind his gaze.

The Obsidian Pack would not take this news lightly.

Neither would Silverpine.

And the world... the world would burn before it understood what this meant.

A werewolf and a Lycan were mates?

It was an abomination written in ink, yet I knew that it was everything that I craved. It was almost too perfect. The goddess listened indeed to the prayers of villain.

It was the final piece of the puzzle. I would awaken her wolf and the Fenrir's marker in her blood would develop to its full potential.

"So it is set," Kael murmured but he had a strange look in his eyes. The one that told me he had something to say.

"What is it?"

He raised his brow trying to feign obliviousness.

"What do you mean?"

"Really?" I asked unimpressed.

Finally, he let out a sigh, running his hands through his hair. Finally letting his surprise show. "I never thought it was possible but now that know for fact...that she is your mate, it makes more sense."

He was beating around the bush. And he noticed the question in my gaze so he continued.



"I thought... thought that you had fallen in love with her." 4

I blinked.

Then I laughed.

A sharp, humorless sound that tore through the suffocating stillness.

"Love?" I spat the word like it burned my tongue. 3

Kael didn't flinch, but his eyes sharpened, watching me closely.

The idea was so absurd, so grotesque, it made my stomach twist.

I was not some lovesick fool, stumbling into affection. Love was weakness. A leash. A vulnerability I couldn't afford. 9

But—

Her eyes.

Turquoise. Clear, cold, and burning all at once.

They flashed in my mind without warning, and something in my chest constricted.

The curve of her mouth when she sneered at me, the sharpness of her words, each one meant to cut, to wound.

And then—

A flicker of something darker.

The memory of her voice, ragged and breathless, the sound of her moans—unbidden, invasive—seeped into my mind like poison.

Heat coiled low and sharp in my gut.

My pulse stuttered.

A violent shudder tore through me before I forced my muscles to still. My grip on the paper tightened, the edges biting into my skin.

No.

No.

This was the bond. The unnatural force twisting its claws into me. It was playing tricks.

Distorting need into something more. 3

Misleading. Manipulative.

"I don't love her," I snarled, voice low and venomous. 4



## 159 Taboo

**Hades** 1

**Kael's expression didn't shift, but his silence spoke volumes.**

**He didn't believe me.** 2

**He doubted me.**

**Worse, I was doubting myself.** 1

**The very idea gnawed at me.**

**"Do you take me for a fool?" I hissed, stepping forward. "This is not affection. It's a bond forged from blood and prophecy, not sentiment."**

**Kael's eyes flicked to the crushed paper in my hand, then back to me. "Of course, Your Majesty."**

**His tone was neutral, but I heard the undercurrent of doubt.** 3

**I despised it.**

**My heartbeat was still too fast, my breath too shallow.**

**I forced the images from my mind, burying them under ice.**

**This wasn't desire.**



This wasn't love.

It was strategy. Power.

Ellen was the missing piece, the key to awakening the Fenrir's Marker and unlocking a force that would bring the Silverpine wolves to their knees.

She was a weapon. My weapon.

That was all.

The door crashed open with a deafening bang.

Kael's hand shot to his weapon, but even he froze when he saw who it was.

Jules.

She stumbled in, gasping for breath, her face pale and wild. Her hands clutched at her chest as if she were holding herself together, barely restraining the chaos inside. 1

Her wide, frenzied eyes locked onto me, then darted to the crushed report still in my grip.

"No," she rasped, voice broken. Then louder, shriller, "NO!" 2

Her scream fractured the air, raw and unhinged.

"You can't!" Her voice cracked as she took a

staggering step forward, arm outstretched as if she could snatch the truth from my hands. "She can't be your mate! She's a werewolf!" 6

The words echoed in the room, jagged and frantic.

Kael stiffened, and even I stood frozen for a breath, startled by the vehemence in her voice.

"It's taboo!" Jules shrieked. "It's unnatural! She will be your ruin!"

Her eyes shimmered—not with fear, but something far more volatile.

"She cannot love you!"

The words struck the air like a blade.

"Not the way I do." 4

Silence.

A silence so absolute it seemed to drain the room of air.

Kael's expression darkened in shock, his brows knitting as his head turned slowly toward her.

But I—

I couldn't move.

Her confession slammed into me with all the



subtlety of a hammer to the skull.

*Not the way I do.*

It shouldn't have rattled me. Shouldn't have touched anything beneath my skin. 1

Yet—

Something inside me lurched.

No.

A sick twist knotted in my gut. 1

Her eyes gleamed with something possessive, something feral.

And gods, it made my skin crawl. 1

I felt it again—that same cold, invasive sensation slithering into my veins.

But it wasn't desire.

It wasn't intrigue.

It was disgust.

Jules took another slow, trembling step forward.

"It's a trick," she whispered now, softer but no less frenzied. Her voice trembled with conviction. "It has to be. The test is wrong. She's manipulating you—she's deceiving you!" 1

Her gaze flicked desperately between me and the crumpled report, as though sheer will could make it vanish.

"I've always been loyal," she breathed, eyes glistening. "I've always been here, by your side. For you." 3

She took another step.

And something in me snapped.

"Don't."

The word was sharp, guttural—dragged from somewhere deeper than my voice.

Jules froze mid-step.

Her lips trembled.

"But I—"

"Don't," I growled again, quieter now, colder.

The air thickened, darkened.

Kael hadn't moved, but his hand rested dangerously close to his weapon now, his eyes locked on Jules.

She blinked rapidly, her face crumbling.

"You... you don't understand," she whispered, voice brittle. "I love you. I belong to you." 1



Something vile coiled in my chest. 2

"No," I said, the word final and unrelenting.

"You don't."

Her face twisted—shock, pain, and fury blending into something fractured.

"You're wrong," she choked out, shaking her head. "She's not meant for you. She'll break you. She can't even begin to understand you. Not like I do." 2

Her words slithered toward me, but they couldn't reach. They never could.

Because the bond pulsed under my skin—silent, electric.

And as much as I should have hated it, Ellen was already there. 1

Not Jules.

Never Jules.

Never anybody else. 1

"Get out," I said, low and seething.

Jules didn't move.

"GET OUT!" 2

The walls seemed to tremble with the force of it



Kael flinched. Jules stumbled back as if struck, her breath hitching in her throat.

And for a single, fractured moment, she stared at me, her eyes hollow, shattered.

Then she pointed at Kael. "There is something that I refused to tell you." She snarled. "Your beta is fucking your wife." 4

For a long moment, there was pin drop silence.

Without confirming the validity of the statement, my body moved before my mind could catch up.

A violent, primal force erupted inside me, so sudden and absolute it felt as though the air had been sucked from the room.

In a blink, my hand shot forward, seizing Jules by the throat. 2

Her breath caught in a strangled gasp, her feet barely skimming the ground as I lifted her with terrifying ease.

*"What did you say?"*

The words were a low growl, barely human, laced with something ancient and unforgiving. It was a voice I recognized; Vassir himself spoke through the vessel that was my body.

Her hands clawed at my wrist, nails digging into flesh that wouldn't give.

Kael didn't move.

Didn't breathe.

I knew he would never. I trusted Kael with my life. But the words themselves had already awoken the corruption that refused to recede not until it drew blood. Control was slipping right into the grasp of the corruption. 1

The revelation of the test results had stoked the flames of my possessiveness. It was all-consuming now, every breath I took scorched by the inferno raging within me. 2

The corruption pulsed violently beneath my skin, thrumming with dark, ancient energy, each beat demanding blood, demanding retribution.

My grip on Jules' throat tightened, and she gagged, her legs kicking weakly, scraping at my arm with no effect.

Her accusation echoed in my skull.

*Your beta is fucking your wife.* 1

The words, poisonous and venom-laced, repeated over and over until they blurred into something primal.



Kael hadn't moved.

Didn't defend himself. He was completely speechless, his gaze distant, his pallor sickly.

He didn't deny it. He didn't need to. If he needed to, it would mean that I didn't trust him. And I did. **3**

Yet, Jules continued to speak. "I saw... her... a hickey...on her neck." She grinned, almost smug.

Realization dawned and I tightened my grip until her face turned blue, pulled her ear to my face. "I put it there. I marked my wife." I snarled before tossing her unto the ground. **6**

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