



166 My Blessed Friend

Eve 1

For a moment, the world stopped before the earth shattering sound of the gun short slashes through the air. My ear was ringing, my eyes were wide, my body was in shock, my mind left in shabbled. 3

I did not know if I screamed or whispered, but I knew I called out her name. "Jules..."

I only snapped out of my gaze when she slumped forward. My arm came away from her throat as she fell unto me.

My legs were jello, as were my thoughts so it was not long before I buckled and fell to my knees, Jules on my lap.

My eyes darting eyes shifted to her face. She was smiling. It made no sense. It was then that it fully dawned on me, scarlet was spreading on her chest. I opened my mouth and my lungs burned as I let out a scream. It was raw, jagged that my throat felt bruised. Desperation filled the sound, echoing louder than the alarm that still hollered in the back ground.



I tossed the gun, bringing my shaky hand to get chest, where the blood gushed out unbridled. I pressed down so hard that I was afraid I would break a bone but she did not even grimace as kept her eyes on me. 1

Her eyes were not glazed over as stared up at me. "She-she would have told...him," she murmured. "I had to...stop her." 2

The confusion did not even have time to settle in as I cradlee her closer to me, pressing into her open wound." 1

"Please!" I screamed, my voice raw and desperate, echoing off the cold, unfeeling walls. "Somebody help! Please!"

My hands pressed harder against Jules' chest, trembling as blood gushed through my fingers, staining everything—her, me, the floor beneath us. It wouldn't stop. It wouldn't stop.

"Stay with me," I whispered, my vision swimming with tears. "You're going to be okay. I can fix this. I can—" My voice faltered, breaking into sobs as she coughed, a weak, wet sound that chilled me to the bone.

Jules' eyes fluttered, heavy and hazy, yet impossibly calm. A small smile, soft and



haunting, curved her lips. Blood trickled down from the corner of her mouth, but still, she smiled. As if she wasn't slipping away. As if she wasn't dying in my arms. 2

"Jules?" My voice cracked, panic clawing up my throat. "Jules, stay with me, please. Why did you— why?" My breath hitched violently. "You didn't have to do this!"

She lifted a trembling hand, fingers brushing against my cheek, smearing warmth across my skin. "Eve..." she murmured, her voice barely above a whisper. "I had to."

I shook my head frantically, my tears falling harder. "No, no you didn't! We—we could have figured something out. Together! Why would you —" My voice was swallowed by the sob that tore from my chest.

"You don't... understand," she breathed, her eyelids fluttering. "I had to stop her."

My mind reeled. Stop her? Who? What was she talking about?

"What do you mean? Stop who?" I begged, clutching her tighter, as if I could keep her here, force her to answer me.



Jules' breath shuddered, her smile flickering like a dying flame. "You wouldn't... you couldn't," she rasped. "I... I love you too much, Eve." Her fingers curled slightly against my cheek. "I couldn't let... happen. 3

I sobbed as Jules' body grew heavier in my arms, but I refused to let go. My fingers curled under her limp frame, my muscles screaming as I tried to lift her.

"I'll get you out of here," I gasped, staggering to my feet, nearly collapsing under the weight of her. "Just hold on, okay? We'll get help. We'll—"

"Eve..." Her voice was soft, yet it held a strength that made me freeze in place.

My breath hitched as I looked down at her, sweat and blood slicking both of us. Her eyes, hazy but still focused on me, held something far worse than pain—acceptance.

"Please," she whispered, her trembling hand gripping my arm weakly. "Don't... I don't want to waste what little time I have left... not like this."

"But Jules—"

"Please," she pleaded, her breath hitching painfully. "I just... I just want to talk to my only



friend before I die. My sister." 3

I crumpled under the weight of her words, falling back to my knees, clutching her closer to me as if I could fuse us together and hold her here, keep her from slipping away. My tears fell freely, soaking into the fabric of her shirt, mingling with her blood.

"I'm here," I whispered brokenly. "I'm here, Jules."

She smiled, that soft, haunting smile that shattered me into a million pieces. Her bloodied hand shakily reached up and cradled my face, her thumb wiping a stray tear from my cheek.

"I should have known," she murmured, her voice fragile, a whisper against the chaos around us.

"You... you've been through so much, Eve. I know now." Her lips trembled. "I should have seen it... your pain was just like mine." 3

I swallowed the lump in my throat, shaking my head desperately. "No, Jules, don't do this. You're going to be okay. Just hold on. Please!" My voice cracked, but she only smiled again, her touch gentle.

"Five years, darling," she whispered, her eyes dark and heavy with memories. "What did they do to you?" Her fingers brushed through my hair,



her touch as tender as a mother's, as a sister's.
"But... I understand now. You couldn't tell me the truth. You had to save your pack. You had to save yourself." 1

I sobbed, pressing my forehead to hers. "You don't understand," I choked out. "I didn't want to lie. I didn't want this, Jules, I swear—"

"You are so brave," she interrupted, her voice soft but resolute. "Despite all the scars I can't see... you carried it all. And still, you found room to care for me." Her lips curled in a wistful, bittersweet smile. "I have no regrets about meeting you." 2

She cupped my face with what little strength she had left, her eyes swimming with warmth even as her body failed her. "In my eyes, Eve Valmont... you are my blessed friend." 4

Her words crushed me, squeezing the air from my lungs, the pain in my chest unbearable. "No," I whispered, shaking my head. "No, don't talk like that. You're going to be fine. We'll get through this, together, just like always."

Jules smiled again, but this time it was tinged with sorrow. "There's so much to say now that I know the truth," she murmured. "But it's time... I



rest." A single tear slid down her cheek, and my heart shattered all over again.

"I'm tired, Eve," she admitted softly, her eyes gazing past me as if she were seeing something I couldn't. "Tired of the pain... the memories... the darkness."

A sob tore from my throat, and I grasped her hand tightly. "No, please don't leave me," I begged, my voice cracking under the weight of my grief. "I need you, Jules. You're my family. You're all I have." In that moment, she was all I had. I had no one at home. She was my family now and she was slipping through my fingers.

She smiled through her pain, her expression heartbreakingly gentle. "But I get to see my light before I rest," she whispered, her voice growing weaker. Her thumb brushed against my cheek once more, her gaze unwavering. "You, Eve Valmont... you are my light." 1

I shook my head, whispering desperate pleas, but she reached for something around her neck, a delicate silver chain that I had seen so many times before but never paid attention to. Her fingers trembled as she pulled at it, revealing a small, worn pendant.



With shaking hands, she pressed it into my palm. "Take it," she whispered, curling my fingers around it. "It's... it's yours now."

I looked down at the pendant, my vision blurred with tears, and saw a small, hidden compartment at its center. A key. A secret. A part of Jules I had never known.

"Jules..." I sobbed, clutching the pendant to my chest as if it were her heartbeat.

She sighed, her body growing heavier against me. "I wish I could tell you," she murmured. "But... some things... you have to find on your own."

"No," I whimpered, my tears falling freely onto her face. "Please don't go."

She smiled once more, her eyes fluttering closed. "I love you, Eve," she whispered, her voice barely audible. "My sister... my light... Tell me something..." 1

I sniffled. "Anything," I promised.

"Were you really the one at the execution?" She asked.

I shook my head. "It wasn't me," 4

She smiled. "Thank the goddess...it would



have...hurt." her tone hopeful. "Be ready to fight, Eve," She whispered. "The worst is yet to come. Hades is intentions are not pure. The truth will shatter you. But...he...loves...you." 3

My breath caught.

But then, with a final shuddering breath, she stilled in my arms.

For a moment, everything was silent—my sobs, the alarms, the world itself. It all ceased to exist except for the unbearable weight of Jules in my arms, and the cold reality sinking into my bones.

I let out a strangled, anguished cry, rocking her lifeless body, my heart breaking apart with every shuddering sob. "Jules... Jules, please!"

But she was gone.

I clutched her to me, pressing my face into her bloodied hair, my entire world collapsing around me. "I love you too," I whispered, even though it was too late.

She didn't hear me.

I rocked Jules' lifeless body in my arms, my sobs coming in ragged gasps that burned my throat. My fingers dug into her cooling skin, desperate to hold onto something that was already slipping



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away. Jules, my friend, my sister—was bleeding out in my hands, and I could do nothing but drown in the horror of it.

"I love you too," I whispered again, over and over, as if saying it enough times could undo the damage, could bring her back. My voice cracked into a choked scream, raw and desperate. "Jules, please, please don't leave me. Please..." 1

The sharp slam of the door bursting open jolted through the air, but I barely registered it. Heavy footsteps rushed toward us, shouts filling the room—muffled, distant, meaningless.

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