



## 174 Shrine For Her

Hades 1

"She has been sedated," Amelia assured me, "But when she wakes up, you have to be by her side."

"Alright," I said in the mouth piece before cutting the call. I let out a heavy sigh. Eve's condition had worsened and it seemed she was spiralling. Jules death hit her. Hard. 7

She would not eat, or bath unless I was there. Before I left the tower I bath her, dressed and fed her myself. She would not let anyone enter the room, especially Mrs Miller. Her resemblance to Jules did Eve no good. 1

I seemed to bounce off the walls in a haze of grief and anxiety, her eyes shadowed from the lack of sleep that I had to sedate so she could get some sleep. 1

Still, it gnawed endlessly at me that she might have another nightmare or worse a night terror and I would not be there to hold her and console her.

I raised my head and my skin prickled as I finally noticed Ambassador Montegue's gaze cast on



me.

It was unnerving.

It made me uneasy tht way that I did not notice he had been looking right at me, when my senses were perpetually heightened. 1

His eyes narrowed, before he looked away, his gaze shifting to look out the window of the car. "How is the girl?" He asked, his tone inscrutable. I could get no signal that would tell me just what he was thinking. "I heard that the spy of yours was killed." What it implied was clear despite his voice being devoid of hostility.

Ellen was a killer.

I did not miss a beat. "Jules pulled the trigger on herself, unfortunately. It's complicated."

"Isn't it all?" Montegue replied ominously. "First person that Princess did not pull the trigger on when she got the chance. Her pack were not given that mercy, your majesty."

"Indeed," I replied plainly.

The silence that followed was heavy as the car continued to traverse the road to a destination that I was not privy to. I just had to hope that it was worth my time.

As the car rolled to a stop, I surveyed the surroundings. It was an ordinary greenhouse compound, tucked away in an unassuming corner of the city.

This was where Montegue had brought me?

I stepped out, the scent of earth and damp leaves filling my lungs. The towering glass structure ahead reflected the faint glow of streetlights. Montegue didn't speak, only adjusted his coat and strode forward, expecting me to follow.

I did.

The moment we stepped inside, the air changed. It was thick with the fragrance of rare flora, humid and warm. The greenhouse was vast, brimming with plants—some I recognized, others I had never seen before. Vines curled around metal trellises, their tendrils pulsing faintly as if alive in ways they shouldn't be. Bioluminescent petals cast a gentle glow over the polished stone pathway we walked.

Montegue moved with practiced ease, weaving between plants until he reached the farthest wall. He pressed his palm to a panel hidden behind an overgrown fern. The ground beneath us shifted with a dull rumble, and before I could



question him, a hidden passage slid open, revealing stone steps leading downward.

A secret chamber beneath a greenhouse? My instincts screamed caution, but I followed him down the spiraling descent. The further we went, the more unnatural the space became. There was no sunlight, no open sky—yet the underground garden before me flourished.

**I stopped in my tracks.**

**The cavern was enormous, its ceiling domed with what could only be described as an artificial moon, casting a silver glow over the landscape. The plants here were unlike anything I had seen. Softly glowing blue roses, vines with leaves like molten gold, trees that swayed though there was no wind. It was hauntingly beautiful. 1**

**We walked deeper still, and that was when I noticed them. The walls were lined with framed paintings.**

**I barely breathed.**

**Danielle's paintings.**

**My fingers twitched at my sides, an invisible force wrapping around my chest, tightening with each step. I knew these strokes, the way her**



hands moved across the canvas. These were hers.

Montegue said nothing, merely led me forward as if allowing me to drink in every carefully preserved memory. The ache in my chest burned. My pulse thundered in my ears.

And then I saw it.

The altar.

Atop it, encased in a clear capsule, lay a body.

Danielle. 2

I barely felt my legs move.

One moment, I was standing frozen, the next, I was at her side, my hands pressing against the glass. My breath hitched, my vision blurred.

It wasn't a trick. It wasn't a hallucination.

Danielle.

Her brown hair framed her face, her lips slightly parted, as if she were merely sleeping. She looked exactly as she had the last time I saw her —before death took her. Before the beast took her. 1

A low, guttural sound left my throat, a sound I didn't recognize as my own.



Cerberus lunged forward within me, his anguish bleeding into my own.

His mate. 4

Our mate.

She is here. She was always here.

A thousand emotions crashed into me, threatening to drag me under. My hands curled into fists against the glass. I swallowed hard, forcing myself to breathe, to steady the storm inside me.

The glass slid open with a soft hiss, and for a moment, I couldn't move. My breath was locked in my throat, an anvil of disbelief weighing me down. But then, like a man in a trance, I reached forward, my fingers trembling as they grazed her cheek.

Warm.

A violent shudder rippled through me, my lungs straining for air as my mind warred between the impossible and the reality before me.

"She's... warm," I murmured, voice fractured. My gaze snapped to Montegue, searching for answers. 6

He nodded, a slow, deliberate motion that



stirred the stagnant air around us.

On instinct, I gathered her in my arms, her body delicate and light against me, as if she might vanish with a gust of wind. I cradled her close, my hands roaming over her back, her arms, her face, memorizing every inch of her—the curve of her brow, the slope of her nose, the soft parting of her lips.

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