



195 Truth

Eve **1**

My stomach plummeted.

**A sharp, unnatural cold swept through me,
sinking into my bones like creeping frost.**

**The warmth of his body, the weight of him above
me—all of it vanished, swallowed by the crushing
pressure of his words.**

Tell me why she has red eyes like a Lycan.

**My pulse thundered in my ears, my breath
caught in my throat, choking me.**

No.

No.

**Hades felt my body tense beneath him, his eyes
narrowing as he lifted his head, his grip
tightening on my waist.**

"Red?" His voice was softer now, questioning.

I couldn't speak. Couldn't breathe.

**Because the truth was crawling up my spine like
a phantom, an undeniable force pressing down
on me, squeezing, suffocating. **1****



The world around us blurred, but his voice came sharp, edged with something I couldn't name.

"What are you hiding?" 1

I tried to move. To escape.

But he didn't let me.

Hades caught my wrist in one swift, fluid motion, his fingers coiling around me like shackles.

"Red," he said again, this time harder, darker.

The weight of my secret pressed against my chest, threatening to crush me.

He couldn't know.

He could never know. 1

Because if he did—if he understood what it meant—

I was already dead. 1

A tremor racked through me, and his silver eyes sharpened.

My breath hitched and immediately I began to pull away, but he locked me in place, pulling me back fully beneath him.



His eyes remained intense as he stared down at me, his expression unreadable but piercing. "Red..." His voice was a painful caress, filling me with more dread. "You are not going anywhere until you tell me what exactly you are hiding," he swallowed thickly, the first sign that this was affecting him way more than he let on. "I have my suspicions but I want to hear it from your mouth." In a surprising gesture, he stroked my cheek with a thumb.

Tears filled my eyes as I stared up at him wide-eyed, my tongue locking as I shook my head. The pressure against me was monumental. Every breath I took was a task.

His frown deepened even though his touch remained tender. "Tell me, my love." He whispered.

My heart lurched at what he had called me. It was all that I believed I ever wanted. Here I was, naked, beneath the man that I loved, skin to skin, as close as we possibly could, yet the schism remained, ever taunting and ever daunting. The secrets pressed against me, keeping me tongue-tied as my tears continued to fall.

A sob choked me as I stared up at him, my lips

parting, but no words would come.

I had held on to this secret like a lifeline, clawed and bled to keep it buried where no one—not even Hades—could reach.

But he was reaching now.

Digging into me, pulling apart the layers of lies and silence, demanding the truth that could tear us apart.

His touch was still gentle, but his grip was unrelenting.

"Red." His voice was soft, coaxing, but his eyes—those burning irises—were unreadable.

Waiting. Expecting.

I shook my head, squeezing my eyes shut. "Don't ask me this," I whispered, my voice breaking.

I couldn't.

If I said it, it would become real.

Hades' jaw clenched, his fingers sliding from my cheek to my throat—not squeezing, just holding. Feeling my pulse race beneath his palm.

"I already know, don't I?" he murmured.

I gasped, my eyes flying open, panic tearing

through me.

No. No, he couldn't.

He couldn't know. 2

But something in his gaze shifted, sharpened.

"I just need you to say it."

I trembled. Tears blurred my vision, my breath coming in sharp, uneven bursts.

But I couldn't say it. I wouldn't.

His fingers tightened, not in anger, but as if anchoring me. Holding me in place before I could run.

"You're shaking," he observed, his voice quiet but laced with something dark.

He knew.

Maybe he had known from the moment he saw her—the moment he saw Rhea's eyes.

His gaze flickered over my face, searching, reading every emotion that crossed my features.

Then, his entire body tensed.

A breath. A stillness.

And finally—the words that shattered me.

"You were never just a wolf, were you?" 1

I broke.

A sob tore through me, raw and violent, my hands fisting against his chest as if I could push him away, push away the truth.

But Hades did not move.

He just watched me unravel beneath him.

And his silence was worse than anger.

His silence was understanding.

Acceptance.

And that was what truly destroyed me.

Because it meant there was no way out.

There is no way to pretend anymore.

A tremor rocked through my chest as I finally whispered, so quietly I barely heard it myself—

"No."

The single word cracked between us like thunder, final, and inescapable.

Hades exhaled, his eyes closing briefly, his thumb still tracing absently along my throat as if committing this moment to memory.



Then—he looked at me again.

"Tell me what you are, Red."

I shuddered, the weight of the moment pressing into my chest, pressing into my very bones.

"I don't know," I admitted, my voice breaking, my tears slipping freely now. Was I Werewolf or Lycan? I never knew. How could I explain when it never made sense to me? How could I dismantle the house of lies that I had built?

His jaw ticked. "Then tell me what you do know."

I licked my lips, chest heaving.

What I knew?

And I knew—I knew what red eyes meant. **1**

I knew what they assumed.

Something tainted. Corrupted. An abomination.

A lycan.

I let out a ragged breath, my fingers clutching his shoulders, grounding myself in him, in this last moment before I ruined everything.

"Let it out, my dear," Rhea told me. *"It's time you let it loose."* **4**

A ragged breath tore from my throat as the truth clawed its way out of me.

"I am not who I claimed to be."

Hades didn't move. Didn't breathe.

But his fingers tensed on my waist, his grip firm but not harsh.

I shook my head, tears spilling freely now, my body trembling under the weight of what I was about to say.

"I am not the blessed twin," I choked out. "I am the cursed one."

The words felt like glass in my throat.

Hades' eyes flickered—not with shock, not with rage, but with something far more terrifying.

An intensity so sharp it cut through me.

I forced myself to go on.

"The one who awakened a Lycan, just as the prophecy predicted."

His jaw locked, but he said nothing.

And that silence crushed me.

"I am not Ellen Valmont," I whispered. "I am her

twin." 4

The truth hung between us like a death sentence.

Hades exhaled, slow, and controlled, but the shift in the air was suffocating.

Then—he spoke.

A single word.

A single name.

"Eve."

I flinched, my breath hitching.

It sounded so different when he said it.

Not like a curse.

Not like a lie.

Like he had always known. 1

My chest rose and fell in sharp, erratic tremors, my lungs struggling to draw in air.

But his silence stretched on.

And it was killing me.

His expression was unreadable, his gaze locked onto mine, his hands still gripping me but not moving.



His silence was worse than rejection.

It was calculation.

A pause so heavy it crushed me beneath it.

The lump in my throat grew unbearable.

I wanted him to say something, anything.

I wanted him to scream, to break, to curse me.

But he didn't.

And that terrified me more than anything.

"Hades?" My voice was a broken whisper.

He exhaled sharply, his golden gaze darkening,
his chest rising and falling in measured breaths.

Then—he moved.

So fast I didn't see it coming.

One moment I was trembling beneath him—

The next, I was on my back, his body pressing
into mine, his hands caging my wrists above my
head.

A startled gasp ripped from my throat.

His face was so close, his heat, his scent, his
overwhelming presence pressing into me like a
brand.



"Did you have a choice?" He asked, his voice was soft, hurt. "Did you collude with them?"

A sharp sob tore from my throat as his words cut through me like a blade.

I squeezed my eyes shut, trying—failing—to keep myself from falling apart.

"No, I had no choice," I gasped, my voice breaking under the weight of it all. "I was forced."

Hades didn't move. Didn't breathe. But his silver eyes sharpened, his grip on my wrists tightening just slightly.

"They made you replace Ellen."

I swallowed hard, my chest rising and falling in jagged tremors. "Yes."

His exhale was slow, measured.

Then—his next question stole the air from my lungs.

"Where were you during the five years after you shifted, after you 'died'?"

My breath caught.

The walls inside me slammed shut—the same walls I had spent years building, clawing my way

out of the abyss only to shove it all back down where no one could see.

But Hades was seeing.

His silver eyes bore into mine, sharp and knowing, as if the puzzle pieces were clicking together all at once.

"Hades..." My voice cracked, pleading.

But he wasn't done.

"Is that why you sleep on the ground?"

My pulse skipped violently in my throat.

"Is that why you have nightmares?"

I sucked in a sharp breath, my body going rigid beneath him.

"Is that why you can't stand the scent of blood?"

The sob ripped from my chest before I could stop it.

His words hit me like a physical force—a truth I had never spoken, never admitted, even to myself.

Hades' jaw ticked, but he didn't push me. His eyes flared with disdain and I waited for impact.



Instead, his hands moved—gentle, reverent.

He stroked down my arms, easing the tremors racking through me.

His thumbs brushed my cheeks, wiping my tears away even as more fell.

And then—he pulled me close. 2

Not demanding. Not caging.

Just holding me.

His lips brushed my forehead, a whisper of warmth against my skin.

"Because I can imagine," he murmured, "that is why you fear them that much."

I choked on my breath.

His hands cradled me, grounding me as my body threatened to shake apart.

"It is not just because they hollowed you," Hades continued, his voice impossibly soft, "but because they imprisoned you too." 1

A violent shudder wracked through me.

"That is why the ground gives you comfort," he murmured. "Because your cell had no bed." 3