

197 Change Of Plans

Hades 1

"I told her," My voice was a whisper, but it did nothing to cushion the blow.

Kael's eyes widened, his jaw practically unhinging. "About the flux?"

"Yes, about the flux." I murmured.

His expression changed slightly, realisation dawning, mixing with the shock. "You...marked her too. You are fully bonded."

I nodded. Exhilarating, that was what it had been, yet the heaviness persisted.

Kael adjusted on his seat, his throat working. "So...so, did it work?"

A pregnant pause.

"Yes, her wolf has returned. It is done." Yet there was so much more now. She had bared her soul to me, but I could not fully do the same. I had pushed to confide in me with every torment, every torture, every destructive word, every starvation, every fucking experiment but I... could not fully let all of mine out, not without



crushing her. 1

She had been forced to lie about her identity, while I plotted not only use her but to end the entire werewolf race.

Where could I go from this?

Kael's silence was uncharacteristic. He was always the first to have something to say, to taunt, to question. But now, he merely stared at me as if I had just admitted to breaking the very foundation of the world.

"You marked her," he repeated, slower this time. His voice was strained, as though the weight of the words made them difficult to say. "And now she's bound to you—completely?"

"Yes," I murmured, pinching the bridge of my nose. "She is mine, and I am hers."

Kael ran a hand through his blond hair, exhaling sharply. "Hades," he said, more carefully now.

"You realize what this means?"

I leveled him with a sharp look. "I realize everything."

"So what happens now?" He swallowed again, his skin pale.

I could feel his reluctance. He did not want to hurt Eve. 1

"Swear something to me first, Kael," I asked.

He blinked, taken aback. "Of course, I am loyal to you."

He stared him down, the decision warring in my mind. Eve trusted him and cared for him like she cared for Jules. Stood between me and him to protect him. If not for the stakes in this game, she would have told him herself. "I love her." It came out as a breath.

Kael's expression shifted slightly, not surprised that I loved her but that I said it out loud.

"I love Eve Valmont." I said. 1

His face fell and it took a minute for it to sink in. His brows knitted. "Ellen's death sister. How can you say that after marking her? You are making no sense."

"I did not mark Ellen Valmont, Kael. It was Eve all along."

Kael's face drained of color, his mouth parting slightly before snapping shut again. I could see the exact moment his mind shattered—



fragments of logic and belief colliding violently. He wanted to speak, but the words wouldn't come.

So I gave him no room to refute it.

"I love Eve Valmont," I repeated, slower this time. The weight of it settled into the air between us, suffocating. "Not Ellen. Not a ghost. Eve."

His breath hitched, and finally, finally, he exhaled a single, broken laugh. Not from amusement. No —this was the sound of a man teetering on the edge of disbelief, trying desperately to grasp something that kept slipping through his fingers.

"That's—" He stopped himself, shaking his head like he was trying to physically rid himself of the thought. "Hades, that's impossible. Eve Valmont was executed. You saw the corpse."

I tilted my head slightly. "No, Kael. I saw what they wanted I to see." 1

His eyes darted over my face, searching, his breathing growing unsteady. "A decoy," he whispered, his voice hoarse.

"Yes."

He recoiled as if I had struck him. "That thing



they paraded in front of Silverpine, the one that was riddled with bullets." He sucked in a breath, his hands fisting at his sides. "It wasn't her?"

I shook my head.

A tremor ran through him. "Then where the hell has she been all these years?" His voice was raw.

"Imprisoned. Tortured. Experimented on."

Each word was a blow, each syllable carving deeper into the silence between us. I didn't rush. I let it settle, let it crush whatever illusions Kael still clung to.

His breathing turned ragged. I could hear the sharp inhale through his teeth, the way his hands twitched at his sides as if his body was rejecting the truth.

"By who?" His voice was a rasp.

I didn't answer immediately.

He already knew.

The second the realization struck him, his pupils dilated, and his throat bobbed with a thick swallow. His face—normally sharp, confident—twisted with something ugly, something I rarely saw from him.



Fear.

"No," he said, barely above a whisper. "No fucking way."

I didn't blink. "You know it's true."

His hands fisted. "Her family?" His voice cracked, disbelieving, furious. "Hades, are you saying her fucking family had her locked away for years— torturing her, using her like some kind of—" He cut himself off, his whole body trembling as he took a step back like he needed space to process it. 3

I watched, silent, unmoving.

Watched as he ran his hands down his face, gripping his jaw so tightly I thought he might break it. Watched as the foundations of everything he believed in cracked beneath him.

"The experiments." His voice was raw. "They were testing something, weren't they?"

I inclined my head slightly. "Yes."

Kael turned away, pacing like he needed to physically escape the weight of my words. "For years—" He let out a bitter laugh, running his hands through his hair before gripping the back



of his neck. "For years we searched for answers. We assumed she had been executed like they claimed, that there was nothing left. And all this time..." His voice dropped, almost breaking. "She was alive?"

A muscle in my jaw ticked. "If you can call what they did to her living."

His breathing turned uneven, his flared. "Now, they want her back. They want the same thing we want from her. Wait..."

The puzzle pieces were clicking into place behind his eyes. "She is the cursed twin, but Silverpine knew of her blood's ability before we did. They have been experimenting on her despite lying to their citizens that the second part of the prophecy is a lie."

"Most likely." I tried to keep my voice even but a storm was raging beneath.

"And now..." His eyes were haunted. "We want to do the same thing to here. Make her go through that shit a second time. Rip her heart out again like the monsters she calls family." 1

Kael's words landed like a blade to the gut, sharp and unforgiving.

I clenched my jaw, the weight of what he was saying settling in my chest like stone. I had always known what this war would demand—what I would have to take from her.

But hearing it spoken aloud, hearing him say it, made it real in a way I hadn't allowed myself to acknowledge.

My silence stretched between us, thick, suffocating.

Kael's lips curled into something bitter. "You don't deny it."

Because I couldn't.

Not without lying.

His breath came in sharp, uneven bursts. "She was supposed to be our leverage, our key to tearing down Silverpine. And now?" His fists clenched at his sides. "Now, she's just another name in the long fucking list of people we've used."

"She's not just another name." My voice was low, edged with warning.

Kael laughed, but there was no humor in it—only something fractured, something unraveling.

"Isn't she?" His eyes burned with accusation. "Tell me, Hades—what makes her different? Because from where I'm standing, she's just another pawn in your game. A weapon you plan to wield against the very people who already destroyed her once."

I exhaled sharply, pinching the bridge of my nose. "It's not the same."

"Bullshit!" His voice cracked, his rage rippling through the air between us. "Tell me what's different, then! Tell me how we're not the same fucking monsters who locked her in a cage!" 3

I snapped my gaze to him, my patience unraveling thread by thread. "Because I would burn the entire fucking world before I let her go through that again!" 1

The words left me before I could stop them.

Kael's breath hitched.

I hadn't meant to say it. Not like that. Not with that kind of raw, unfiltered truth.

But it was out now, and the weight of it settled between us, thick as smoke.

Kael swallowed hard, searching my face like he



didn't quite recognize the man standing before him. "Then what are you going to do?"

I forced myself to breathe, forced my thoughts into some semblance of order. "The Council will not know, but the plans have changed. That is why I called you here." I clenched my fist. "Eve will live. I will avenge her and destroy the Valmonts." My voice was like steel. "The Silverpine Monarchy will fall but Silverpine will be under Obsidan rule." 1

"They will revolt. What about the bloodmoon?"

"The bloodmoon will work in our favour because it is obvious that Darius plots the down fall of his own citizens and that is why he is suppressing the truth. They will need us if they want to live." 1

Kael stared at me, disbelief warring with understanding. His fingers twitched at his sides, his throat working as if he were swallowing something bitter.

"You're not just planning to destroy the Valmonts," he said slowly, his voice weighted with something close to awe. "You're planning to take Silverpine for yourself." 1

I met his gaze, unflinching. "Yes."

A sharp inhale. He ran a hand down his face, pacing the tension in his shoulders, coiling tighter with every step. "Hades, do you have any idea what you're setting into motion?"

I let silence answer him.

He exhaled sharply, turning back to me, his expression unreadable. "This isn't just revenge anymore. This is war on a scale we've never seen. You don't want to break Silverpine—you want to claim it."

A dark, satisfied smirk curled at the edge of my lips.

Kael scoffed, shaking his head. "And Eve? Where does she fit into this?"

The question cut deeper than I wanted to admit, but I had a plan.

"She will be the stabiliser." I said finally. "Because she will my Luna, she will rule over them all." 5