



201 His Fragile Resolve

Hades 1

Amelia remained silent for what was probably a full minute. I could hear the gears in her head turning and stopping, then turning again.

Finally, she glanced at me, avoiding both Eve's and Kael's anxious gazes.

"This cannot be true. This is unfathomable." Her voice was quiet, but I could tell that she wanted to exclaim.

"I would never joke about something like this," I countered.

"He never jokes," Kael quipped, trying to disrupt the tension in the room. In a more serious tone, he added, "This is very real, Lia. Ellen Valmont is truly Eve Valmont."

"The cursed twin," she whispered under her breath before she caught herself, but Eve had already flinched at the title. I wrapped my arm around her, attempting to soothe her.

"Yes, according to the prophecy," I murmured, my voice sharp, so she would get the message.



She coughed, clearing her throat. "I apologize, El — I mean Eve. This is unprecedented. I am sorry."

"I more than understand, Lia," Eve tried to keep her tone light, but the tension she was attempting to hide shone through.

Lia took a deep breath before looking around the table, the silence suffocating. "And you were imprisoned?" Empathy seeped into her voice. "You were..."

"Tortured, starved, and experimented on," Eve listed them out like a measly list.

My jaw clenched. "Ordered by her own family," I added.

"And now..."

"They are back. They want her back in Silverpine and are using the decline after Jules died as a crutch," Kael supplied again.

"Pulling shit from their asses, calling it a stipulation."

"But it's valid."

"Very," I replied.

"The fact that they stayed shows that they are desperate, too. They want her back at all costs



for the goddess knows what. It can't be anything good. Those monsters," an edge crept into Kael's tone.

"And when that didn't work, their Beta decided that a diplomatic scandal would be perfect to force my hand."

Eve's shoulders stiffened at the mention of the Beta. Her memories were still fresh, and every word felt like a wound reopened. I could sense her fighting to maintain her composure, but I also knew how much it cost her.

Amelia noticed the shift, and for a moment, her eyes softened. She leaned forward, placing her hands on the table. "Eve," she said gently, her voice calm, "do you need a moment?"

Eve shook her head, forcing a smile, though it didn't reach her eyes. "I am fine, but I have to give them a private audience. Hades cannot be in the room." She shut her eyes, a shudder passing through her. I held her closer to me. She was not weak, far from it, but she was petrified. Even with Rhea, these people still betrayed and hurt her.

Even after I awakened Cerberus, I still feared Lucas; his presence had been a haunting void



which I could not escape. Every step in my training was etched and branded into my soul like a scar that refused to fade. I could only imagine how much worse it was for Eve, who had lived under their control, who had been shaped by their cruelty. And now, she was expected to face them again—alone.

My grip on her tightened. "I tried to make sure she wouldn't have to..."

"No!" Eve's voice was sharp enough to make everyone in the room, including me, sit straighter. "I have to do this for not only the Obsidian people at the border but for myself. The Goddess knows I cannot keep hiding and keep lying about who I am. If I do, they'll come for me again, and they won't stop until they get what they want. They already think I'm weak. But I won't give them that satisfaction. I won't let them take control of me again."

Her words struck like a thunderclap, but there was a fragility behind them that no one in the room missed. It was clear Eve was pushing herself to the limit, and her resolve—though strong—was a fragile armor against the past she could never forget.



"I need to do this," she iterated, even though we all heard her voice crack.

"You heard her," Kael said first. "She isn't wrong. Abusers don't back off until they know there is no longer a way in." Kael looked pointedly at me, but I faced Eve.

"Are you sure?"

"Yes," she replied. "I am sure."

I glanced back at Amelia.

She sighed deeply before taking off her glasses and facing Eve. "Ever since your wolf returned, how have you felt? Has there been a difference in your state of mind?"

"Yes, it was instantaneous. It felt like I was no longer bearing the full weight. It was like I was having help to deal with it. I feel less alone. The despair is not as potent and suffocating. I feel like I can finally take a breath."

"With the Hollowing reversed, your wolf is able to return to you in full strength," Amelia continued, her tone careful and deliberate.

"That's a significant change, Eve. But there's more to consider here. Your emotional recovery isn't just about the Hollowing. It's about dealing



with the trauma, the psychological scars that have been left by everything that's happened to you."

Eve nodded slowly, her fingers tightening around the edge of the table. "I understand that, Lia. But I can't keep running from it. It's been my whole life, and if I don't face it now, it will never stop haunting me."

"How does facing them alone make you feel?"

Eve didn't answer immediately. She was silent for a long moment, staring at the surface of the table, her mind seemingly miles away. When she finally spoke, her voice was barely above a whisper. "Terrified. I'm terrified of facing them, of what they'll do... what they'll say. But I know I have to. I can't keep hiding, not from them, not from myself."

Her words were raw and vulnerable, and it made my chest tighten with both pride and sorrow. Here she was spilling every wound and fear. But I still hid things from her, detrimental things.

I wanted her as a weapon.

I wanted to harvest her essence like some lab rat.



I wanted to wipe her kind from existence.
A lump formed in my throat, but I swallowed it down. We would cross the bridges when we got there. One thing was sure: no matter what, I would be by her side. Absolutely nothing could change that. I could never go through with my plans—not because of some far-fetched morality that I had suddenly grown, but for her. Only her. 1

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