



## 204 Nox Lunaris

### Hades 1

We faced each other on the bed, my hand stroking her hair, the other resting against her back as I steeled myself to let it all out. The things I had kept within me for the past five years—the story I should have told at her funeral, the truth I should have spoken when I finally laid her to rest, like she deserved.

"It started with a game of chess," I murmured, tracing slow circles against Eve's spine. I wanted to feel every shift in her body, to sense where the words might hit too hard—so I would know when to hold back, when to let the past spill free. "Between my father and the Obsidian Council. The men who beat him would have their daughters married to his sons."

"You and Alpha Leonard," she muttered.

"Yes. Leon and I."

A tremor passed through her, faint but unmistakable. My hand stilled on her back.

"What's wrong?" I pulled her closer, searching her face. "You shuddered."



She swallowed audibly, her face paling slightly before she forced a chuckle. "I'm fine. I just... didn't know the great Alpha had a nickname."

I smiled, slightly relieved. "There are many things about my brother you don't know, but that's a story for another day."

She hummed softly and nestled against me, though neither of us looked away.

"It was no surprise when the shrewd and exceptionally intelligent Ambassador Montague won," I continued. "And it was convenient that he had two daughters."

"Felicia and Danielle."

I nodded. "The younger one, Felicia, was given to the younger of us."

Her eyes widened slightly, but she didn't say anything.

"Yes, I was once engaged to Felicia. And Danielle —to Leon."

Her lips parted, but she hesitated before asking, "Then what happened?"

I exhaled slowly. "The night of the Ascension, Leon was supposed to reveal his chosen mate."



But instead of Danielle, he called Felicia forward... and revealed she was pregnant with his child."

Eve's brows drew together. "They had been having an affair."

I nodded grimly. "Yes. But Leon has always been untouchable. My father's golden son, his perfect heir. Humiliating the ambassador's 'dull' daughter meant nothing to him. He wanted someone who could match his fire, someone who put people in their place. And that person was Felicia."

A bitter memory flickered through my mind—the way Felicia had smirked at Danielle when the announcement had been made. A silent, triumphant declaration: *I won.*

She had no idea *who* she had won. But anything was better than his monster's brother from hell.

"And Danielle?" Eve asked, voice steady.

"She was discarded." I let out a slow breath. "But through the whole fiasco, she and I were left... paired."

I could still see Montague's face when it was revealed. His barely concealed fury, his



desperate attempt to pull his daughter from the arrangement and save her from me—the so-called Hand of Death. But Danielle...

Danielle had other plans.

"She was the first person to smile at me that night," I murmured, the memory thick in my throat. "Since the moment I became what my father wanted, she was the first."

"And she danced with you."

I looked down at Eve, surprised by the softness in her voice.

She smiled, though there was something deeper behind it. "She sounds lovely."

I was quiet for a moment, reading her expression. Searching for jealousy. Bitterness. But there was none.

She nudged me lightly. "Go on, Hades."

I took a deep breath. "I never thought a political arrangement would turn into something real. But Danielle... she had a way of making you believe in things you'd long abandoned. For me, that was companionship."

Eve studied me carefully. "She pursued you?"



I nodded. "At first, I thought it was duty. She played the role of the devoted mate-to-be well. But over time, I realized... it wasn't an act. She cared. Even when she shouldn't have."

□ □   □ □   □ □

Eve's brows furrowed. "What do you mean?"

"She knew who I was. What I was." My fingers curled slightly against Eve's back. "My father never hid the truth of his expectations. I was raised to be his weapon, his executioner. Even after Leon was declared heir, my purpose didn't change, it was only solidified, craved in stone and blood. And Danielle..." I exhaled. "She didn't turn away from that. She stayed."

Eve's fingers tightened around mine. "And you loved her."

I hesitated. The easy thing would have been to deny it. To spare Eve whatever pain those words might bring.

But lying—to her, to myself—would accomplish nothing.

"I did," I admitted. "But it wasn't the kind of love that could withstand the weight of who we were meant to be."



Eve's expression didn't falter. Instead, she smiled, though her heart pounded wildly against my chest. She didn't just want to hear this to prepare herself for what was coming—she wanted me to say it. To air my wounds.

To let go of the ghosts I had never buried.

I swallowed, tracing absent patterns along her spine as I found the courage to continue.

"Danielle was... steadfast. She believed in me when I couldn't see a future beyond my father's will. She believed that if I could just break free, I would be more than the weapon I was forged into."

Eve exhaled slowly. "But you couldn't."

I let out a hollow chuckle. "No. I couldn't. Not then. The war was brewing, Leon's rule was fragile, and my father needed his sword. And Danielle..." My jaw tightened. "She was the one thing that made me hesitate."

Eve's voice was quiet. "She was right."

I frowned slightly. "About what?"

She met my gaze, unwavering. "That you were more than what they made you. That you were worth fighting for."



I hesitated before nodding. "She saw it before I did."

Eve exhaled slowly, thoughtful. "That must have been... difficult. To have someone believe in you when you weren't sure you could be anything else."

I studied her, searching for any trace of bitterness in her words. But there was none. Just quiet understanding.

"She sounds like she was kind," Eve said finally. "And strong."

A tightness in my chest loosened slightly. "She was."

Eve didn't try to measure Danielle's place against her own. She didn't try to define it.

She simply accepted it.

This woman had to be some type of angel.

There was a pause before I continued. "The incident happened during *Nox Lunaris*."

"The Night the Moon Fell," Eve murmured. "The day meant to remember Luna Elysia's death."

I nodded. "The Mother of Lycans. We have a ceremony at her burial site—*Eterna Noctis*. It is



known only to the royal family. No guards. No ambassadors. Not even my Beta knows the coordinates."

She is sacred, after being murdered by her uncle, Malrik Valmont, the last thing we would allow was let her burial place be revealed only to be destroyed in a mindless act of war.

The moon fell through day Elysia died and that night, on the day of her remembrance there was no moon in the sky. The darkness that was seen sacred became our undoing when the tragedy struck.

Eve's brows scrunched. "So only the royal family knows? That means—"

"That means it should have been the safest place in the entire pack." My voice was flat, the weight of the memory settling over me like a cold shadow. "Yet that was where my father, my brother, and my wife bled out under a sky without a moon."

Eve's fingers curled into the fabric of my shirt, her eyes darkening. "How? If no one outside the royal family had access, then..."

"Then it was an inside job."





204 Nox Lunaris



I met her gaze, my voice quiet but unyielding. "It wasn't rogues. It wasn't an act of rebellion. We had a traitor."

**Comment** <sup>5</sup>

**View All** >



You've arrived at the latest chapter!



**Vote**



**Fandom**



**Send Gift**