

207 Head Of The Beast

Eve ¹

"What do you mean by a contract?" Hades' voice was a low rumble that vibrated through everyone in the room. "What contract?"

"It will profit your side as well, I assure you."

"Your assurance is worth less than shit, Your Majesty." Hades was quick to reply.

"No offense," Kael quipped in where he sat.

James glanced at him, his eye twitching before facing Hades and me again. "It's just a simple guarantee that the meeting will not be interrupted no matter what. You will not be allowed to open the door until the thirty minutes are up. Then, the princess will come out, I promise, in one piece."

The temperature of Hades' body increased, raising the heat in the air-conditioned room. His grip on me was almost painful, but I knew it was instinctual, and he was not doing so on purpose.

After my second nosebleed, he had been on edge, unable to leave my side. And to be honest,



I needed it because the visions that attacked me the previous night were as fresh and bloody as a stab.

This time, it was not flashes but full-on images that pulled me into the abyss. I was trapped in a scene straight from a gory nightmare.

A man gurgling on his own blood as the claws of the wolf ripped at his throat.

"You won't... get away... with this."

Those had been his final words.

It made no sense, and it chilled me to the bone. I wanted nothing more than to get this over with because it seemed that the stress was getting to me. I needed to close this chapter.

And the talk of this contract was just another means for my family to draw out this fight. "What do we get out of this so-called contract?" I asked, cutting everyone off.

I gave Hades a reassuring glance before turning right to face my family. "Lay it out for me, if you please."

"Straight to the point, aye," my father smirked before signaling to James, who retrieved an



envelope and pulled out its contents.

"Here it is, Your Highness." He passed it over to us.

"There shall be no interruption during the meeting, and if there is, the meeting will be extended by an hour." 1

I felt Hades flare up. "That is not going to happen." Hades' voice dropped into a lethal growl, his eyes darkening like a storm cloud before a tempest. His body vibrated with rage, the heat rolling off him in waves. If he was trying to keep his temper in check, it wasn't working.

I placed a hand over his, squeezing gently in silent reassurance. His grip eased slightly, but I could feel the tension coiling through him, a predator ready to strike.

"That is ridiculous," I finished for him, my voice firm but controlled. "An hour extension? For what? More time for my family to plot their next move? More time to twist the situation in their favor?" My gaze locked onto my father's, daring him to lie.

James cleared his throat, shifting uncomfortably. "It is simply a safeguard, Your Highness," he



attempted, but my father held up a hand, stopping him.

My father leaned forward, steepling his fingers as he regarded me with an unreadable expression. "It's a show of good faith," he corrected smoothly. "This meeting is meant to attempt to give my daughter a chance to reveal her true feelings about the situation without any manipulations. If anyone interrupts, it only proves to make our attempts difficult."

"Reveal her true feelings?" Hades let out a dark chuckle. "You call this that?" He motioned to the document, his expression a mask of pure disdain. "Your idea for that is locking her in a room with you while I sit outside and wait like a fool? I have entertained many things, but I will not be made a fool of."

"Then don't," my father countered. "Agree to the terms, and there will be no interruptions. I know we will be monitored, and if at any time we come close to her or threaten her with a weapon from where you watch the meeting unfold, then you are within your full right to have us removed from Obsidian. And not only that," my father chuckled. "If we as much as put her under



physical distress, the stipulation in the contract that says we have to take her back if we deem her to be in danger will be null and void."

Silence fell over the room like a heavy fog. My father's words settled between us, each syllable laced with calculated precision. He was playing a dangerous game—one that relied on twisting logic into something almost convincing. Almost.

Hades' muscles were coiled like a beast barely held back by a leash, his anger simmering beneath the surface, restrained but not tamed. I knew that if I gave him even the slightest signal, he would tear through the negotiations without hesitation.

I inhaled deeply, my gaze never leaving my father's. "So let me get this straight." My voice was cold, even, slicing through the tension like a blade. "You want me to sit in a room with you for thirty minutes, uninterrupted, while you attempt to 'discover my true feelings'—and in return, if anything happens, Hades has the right to remove you from Obsidian and nullify any claim you think you have over me?"

A slow smile curved my father's lips. "Precisely." "And you think I would agree to that?" I asked,



arching a brow.

James shifted uneasily, as if he already anticipated my response. My father, on the other hand, looked amused. "You always were skeptical, daughter. But this is a rare opportunity for you as well. You claim to know what you want. That you've made your choice. So why hesitate? Or are you afraid that, given the chance, you might feel otherwise?"

Hades moved faster than I could react, the table in front of us cracking beneath the weight of his fist. His power surged through the room like a tidal wave, sending James scrambling backward. The air thickened, vibrating with the heat of his fury.

"You dare question her choice?" Hades' voice was a low, guttural snarl, each word edged with the promise of violence. "You manipulate, deceive, and then pretend this is some noble endeavor?" He leaned forward, his eyes glowing with an unearthly fire. "You insult her intelligence, insult mine, and expect me to sit here and entertain your pathetic ploys?"

My father merely smiled, unshaken. "I expect you to do what is best for her."



My hands clenched into fists, nails digging into my palms. "Enough."

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The room stilled. Even Hades, caught in the throes of his rage, turned his gaze to me.

I exhaled slowly, steadying myself. "I will agree to the meeting."

Hades stiffened beside me. "Red---

I squeezed his hand, his pulse a steady thrum beneath my fingertips. I didn't need to look at him to know he was barely holding himself together.

"I'll do it," I repeated, my voice steady despite the tightness in my chest.

Hades inhaled sharply beside me. "Red--"

I turned to him, my grip on his hand firm. "But you have to promise me something."

His jaw clenched, his molten gaze burning into mine. "I don't make promises I can't keep."

"I know." I held his stare, unwavering. "That's why I need you to listen to me."

Silence. The air between us was heavy, thick with unspoken emotions. His grip on my hand



tightened as if letting go would mean losing control entirely.

"You won't step into that room," I said. "No matter what happens, you stay outside."

Hades let out a sharp breath, his expression shifting from fury to disbelief. "Red, you can't be serious."

"I am." My voice didn't waver. "But you'll watch everything. If anything feels off—if anything at all seems wrong—you come in. You stop it."

His fingers twitched against mine. "That's not good enough."

"It has to be," I insisted. "I need you to trust me, Hades."

His jaw flexed, the war in his eyes unmistakable.

Hades exhaled through his nose, slow and controlled. "I don't like this."

"I know."

His other hand lifted, running through his dark hair. "If they so much as look at you the wrong way—"

"You'll be watching," I reminded him. "You'll know."



His eyes searched mine, burning with something raw and possessive.

"You're asking me to let you walk into a room with a man who's done nothing but hurt you."

"Yes." I squeezed his hand. "Because I need to do this, Hades. And because I know you'll be there."

"How adorable," my father cut into the moment. "You really have him wrapped around your little finger. You are indeed my daughter."

We ignored him and got up after I signed the contract. "That should be all," Hades murmured as we made our way out.

"Your Majesty, one more thing," my father called out.

We stopped and turned.

My father had a smile on his face. "It's been five years, hasn't it? Since darling Danielle died."

Hades' entire body coiled like a spring, but he said nothing.

"I was just wondering what you would do when you finally get your hands on my beast." 1

Silence.



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"Or have you forgiven—"

"I will rip off its head," Hades ground out.

Strangely, my father and James exchanged glances before glancing over at me, their smiles filled with sick amusement. ⁴

"Perfect then."

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