



## 212 Who You Took From Him

Eve <sup>1</sup>

Rhea's presence roared in the of my mind, her hackles raised, her disgust so tangible that I could taste it on my tongue. "Do not let him pull you in, Evie. Do not let him rewrite history." Rhea pulled me against the tide of shock and horror.

"I never wanted it to be like this," he continued, voice almost pleading. "You were meant to be mine once. Watching you make this decision—watching you stand beside him—" he shook his head, his jaw tightening. "You cannot really think he isn't the greater evil. He is making promises that he will break. He will turn his back on you." <sup>1</sup>

His eyes searched mine, his voice dipping into something dangerously close to desperation.

"This infatuation—"

"I love my husband," I pronounced, calm, absolute.

There were just things that needed to be spelled out for the intellectually deficient, unfortunately. <sup>1</sup>

James flinched.



I tilted my head, the corners of my lips curling into something sharp, something vicious.

"Whatever you and I had pales pathetically compared to what we have, Beta."

Silence strangled the room.

James swallowed, his throat bobbing, his mask slipping for the briefest moment.

"I thought cheap tricks like these would be beyond you," I mused, my voice coated in mockery. "But even with my expectations so low, you still manage to disappoint me." 1

A muscle in his jaw ticked. His fingers curled into fists. The softness in his eyes shattered, replaced by something dark, something livid.

Anger.

There it was.

My father exhaled sharply through his nose, his golden eyes flashing with something more than irritation. My mother's nails tapped against the table, faster now, betraying the storm brewing within.

They had lost.

They knew it.



We all knew it.

I looked up at the cameras installed and hoped that Hades was watching this, like I knew he would be.

For the first time, I watched James hold his head in his hands and stare down at his feet.

The dread in my stomach hadn't lessened, but I kept my expression neutral, my body relaxed, as if I hadn't just cracked the foundations of everything they had been trying to do.

Rhea exhaled in satisfaction. "They are grasping at straws now. Be ready."

I was.

I had been ready since the moment I walked into this room.

My father leaned back in his chair, his jaw tightening as he finally—finally—tore his gaze away from me. "We did it for the prophecy, you know that, right?"

I raised a brow. "This again?"

"What would you have done in my place?"

"We are going in circles, your Majesty."





"Answer me, since you have so much morality." His tone was bitter. "So much morality that I am no longer your father because in your eyes, I am some insidious sinner." 1

I held his gaze, unfazed. "Morality?" I echoed, letting the word settle in my mouth like poison. "You speak as if you've ever had a shred of it."

His expression didn't falter, but the muscles in his jaw tensed. He was waiting for an answer. Expecting me to engage in this charade where he could twist my words, pull me into a discussion that would somehow justify what he had done, make me see whatever mirage he had projected.

I wouldn't give him that.

I was done giving.

"Answer me," he repeated, this time slower, as if I were some child he was attempting to reason with.

A slow breath left my lips. "If I were in your place, your Majesty," I said smoothly, "I wouldn't have created monsters just to parade them in front of a crowd." I gestured vaguely at the screen. "I wouldn't have murdered civilians to

stage an illusion of control. And I certainly wouldn't have tortured my own daughter for the sake of a prophecy that—"

I stopped, watching his reaction carefully.

His nostrils flared slightly.

That was all the confirmation I needed.

There was something there. Something like dread and anticipation.

I smiled. "A prophecy that is questionable."

My mother stiffened beside him, her nails digging into the table. My father, however, gave nothing away. A master of restraint, even now.

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"You don't know what you're talking about," he muttered, but there was something... off in his tone.

Doubt.

And surprisingly—astonishment.

He had not expected me to have any idea.

But it was my mother who shot up from her seat.

The ground tilted as her tears filled her eyes.

"You know the truth. Did he tell you?" She was



trembling, her lips quivering, her eyes suddenly bloodshot. "The second verse..."

"Lyra!" My father intercepted, his eyes glowing gold so bright that I had to look away.

"Heed!"

A high-pitched tone permeated the air for less than a second.

And right before my eyes, as if she had been suddenly drained, she slumped down into her seat, like a half-corpse.

My blood chilled, my veins turning to ice as I reached for her—but I held myself back at the last moment.

"What did you do to her?" I demanded.

I had just caught a glimpse of the mother on the phone. The one who cried for me, who apologized those months ago.

It was not just pretense.

Something more was happening here.

"None of your concern," my father growled.

"That..."

Suddenly, James got up.





**"You love him? You think he loves you?"**

**His eyes were crazed as I looked between him and my mother.**

**Then—there was slamming at the door.**

**A thunderous, relentless pounding that made my heart lurch into my throat.**

**I jerked toward the sound, pulse hammering against my ribs.**

**The walls trembled with each impact.**

**Time was up.**

**They were trying to get in.**

**Hades.**

**I glanced at the door, completely out of my element.**

**"Stay calm, Eve," Rhea murmured.**

**But James—James kept talking.**

**The slamming against the door intensified, each hit sounding more like a warning, a promise of wrath that was moments from breaking loose.**

**"You think he does," James smirked, his eyes glinting with something twisted, something**



dangerous.

The wood cracked.

Another slam.

Splinters rained onto the floor.

James leaned forward, grinning like a man moments away from lighting a match just to watch the flames dance.

"But don't you want to know who you took from him?" 1

###

I apologise for not updating for two days, I am in the middle of an exam so the chapters will be uneven but in little chunks but after my exams there will be the mass release that I promised.

Ps: I really thought I could update consistently during my exams but I guess I might have overestimated myself. Again, I apologise and this book will not be abandoned, please don't worry. 1

Thank you



