



## 219 The Beast She Saw

Eve 1

Felicia's whisper barely carried across the room, but I heard it.

"You..."

She took another step back, her hands trembling, her expression torn between horror and something else.

Recognition.

I frowned, my breathing still uneven, my pulse still slowly settling.

Why did she look at me like that?

I tightened my grip on Elliot, shifting him fully against me, letting his small weight press into my shoulder. His warmth soothed me, reminding me of where I was, of what mattered.

But Felicia's expression didn't change.

If anything, it worsened.

"This can't be," she whispered, more to herself than to me.

A sliver of unease slithered through my ribs.



I looked at Hades. "What is she talking about?"

Hades didn't look at me.

His gaze was locked on Felicia, his posture coiled, his shadows twisting subtly at his feet again. He was letting me see them.

"Don't take her seriously," he murmured, his voice smooth, controlled, as if he were trying to pull me away from this moment, from whatever Felicia had just stumbled into.

I might have let him.

If Felicia's gaze hadn't been filled with something more than fear.

It was realization.

"You were..."

She stopped, as if saying it out loud would make it real.

Her hand flew to her mouth, slamming over her lips as a strangled sound left her throat.

My skin prickled.

Hades pulled away from me, his warmth leaving my side in an instant, his entire presence shifting.



His energy was scorching.

I could feel the heat of his fury in waves, slow and deliberate, more dangerous than if he had exploded outright.

His shadows darkened, stretching subtly along the floor.

And then, slowly, dangerously, he took a step forward.

Felicia flinched.

"What," he said, his voice low, even, dangerous, "did you just say?"

Felicia shook her head, her fingers still pressed over her lips.

But she wasn't denying it.

She wasn't taking it back.

She looked at me again—no longer with amusement, no longer with smugness, but with something so bone-deep and eerie that it made my chest tighten.

"You are..."

The moment the words left her mouth, something in Felicia snapped.

Her fear, her hesitation—all of it vanished.

Instead, rage took its place.

"You are touching my son!" she spat.

And then she lunged.

It happened too fast.

One second, she was frozen in fear.

The next, she was charging at me, eyes wide, hands outstretched, a feral snarl ripping through her throat.

I barely had time to react before her fingers latched onto Elliot.

She clawed at him, trying to rip him from my arms—but I held on.

Her nails scraped against his delicate skin, leaving thin, jagged red lines trailing down his arm.

Elliot let out a pained, sleepy little moan, shifting against me in confusion, the scent of his blood hitting my nose like a thunderclap.

Something inside me snapped.

My vision blurred, the edges burning, my instincts roaring to life before I could even think.

*A growl ripped from my throat—low, lethal,  
inhuman.*

*And then—I moved.*

*My claws tore through the air, through flesh.*

*So fast—so sharp—Felicia didn't even have time  
to dodge.*

*She let out a choked sound, stumbling back as a  
spray of blood painted the floor.*

*I barely registered it.*

*Not until I looked down at my own hands.*

*Blood.*

*Dark. Wet. Fresh.*

*The scent was thick, curling in the air like  
smoke, like something deep and ancient and  
wrong.*

*Felicia crashed to the floor, her hand flying to  
her chest where my claws had slashed deep, her  
breathing ragged, uneven.*

*I couldn't move.*

*I couldn't breathe.*

*A hand was suddenly on my wrist.*



Strong, firm—Hades.

"Red," he murmured, his voice low, steady, an anchor against the chaos.

I couldn't look at him.

I couldn't look at what I had done.

Felicia was bleeding.

Elliot was bleeding.

And I—I had lost control.

Felicia was shaking, her fingers pressing against the deep gashes on her chest, her breath coming out in sharp gasps.

She tried to speak, but all that came out was a wet, broken laugh.

"You..." she whispered, her lips curling into something between pain and something terrifying.

"You know what you are, don't you?"

I sucked in a sharp breath.

But before I could respond—before I could even process what the hell she meant—

Hades pulled me close, his presence wrapping

around me like a shadowed storm, his voice slipping through the chaos.

"Red," he whispered. "Look at me."

I did.

And just like that—I could breathe again.

But the dread was relentless as it lingered.

The dread didn't leave.

It sat, heavy and unshakable, in the pit of my stomach, even as Hades' presence wrapped around me like a shield.

Felicia's breath was shallow, her fingers pressed against the deep wounds on her chest. But even as her body trembled, as blood dripped between her fingers, her wounds were slowly knitting back together.

Not instantly.

Slow. Sluggish.

Like something was interfering.

Felicia's eyes flickered, her gaze settling on the small figure still curled in my arms.

Her son.

She swallowed hard before lifting a shaky hand, palm up, fingers twitching.

"Give him back." 1

I tightened my grip on Elliot, holding him closer, my breath still uneven. My body was still wired with something feral, something I barely understood, something that still wanted to tear and destroy—but Hades' arm around me kept me tethered.

Kept me from falling completely.

Hades was silent, his grip on my waist firm. He was reluctant—I could feel it.

But slowly, cautiously, he nodded.

I forced my hands to move, to unclench. To let go.

My fingers brushed against the scratches on Elliot's arm, barely healed, tiny beads of blood still forming against his skin. It made my stomach turn.

Felicia had done this.

And yet...

I stepped forward, my heart hammering, and placed Elliot back into her arms.



Felicia let out a shaky breath as her fingers curled protectively around her son, pressing him against her chest. Her hands were still trembling.

Not just from pain.

From fear.

From me.

She held Elliot like a lifeline, her body still tense, her eyes flickering between me and Hades, her breathing still ragged.

And then, she laughed.

A quiet, breathless, horrible sound.

"This is..." She exhaled sharply, her shoulders trembling.

From something far worse.

Conviction.

"The final straw," she said, her gaze locking onto mine.

A shiver traced down my spine.

"I will expose you," she whispered.

My body went rigid.



She stepped forward—not fully, not recklessly—  
but enough. Enough for her presence to sink in.  
Enough to make the weight of her next words  
crush me.

"And we will see," she continued, her voice silk  
and venom, "if he will not carve your heart out  
and spit on your corpse."

My stomach dropped.

My breath hitched.

Carve out your heart.

The words clawed through me, each syllable  
embedding itself into my ribs, burrowing into  
the deepest part of my mind—because I had  
heard them before.

James' voice. Low. Faint. Right before the dust  
had settled, after the heavy doors were knocked  
down.

"He plots to carve out your heart and drain your  
blood. The truth is in the memory card. When  
you accept this, call for help." 3

My chest tightened.

My pulse roared in my ears.

The room blurred, my breath coming out too

fast, too uneven, my hands twitching at my sides.

No. No. No.

I hadn't let myself think about it.

Hadn't let myself remember.

But Felicia's words...

Felicia's words made it real.

Made it feel inevitable.

###

Second portion of my exams start by the 21th, just an heads up but before then... I will keep them coming hot and in clumps. I am sorry that this is the best I got.