

## 224 Faith In What We Have

Eve **1**

I was already halfway through my second burger by the time Hades sat on the edge of the bed, watching me with an expression that could only be described as smitten disbelief.

I took another huge bite, sauce smearing the corner of my mouth, the tang of pickles and the smoky sweetness of the meat hitting every craving I hadn't known I had. **1**

Hades said nothing — just sat there, shirt half-unbuttoned, tie loose around his neck, staring at me like I'd hung the stars. His eyes flicked from my flushed cheeks to my stuffed mouth, and then down to the lace I still wore, like it was perfectly natural to be half-naked and devouring burgers in bed. **2**

He reached out, thumb brushing the corner of my lips where a streak of sauce clung stubbornly. He wiped it slowly, lingering a little too long, then lifted his hand — and licked it clean.

I froze mid-chew.

He hummed, gaze hooded. "Delicious."

I blinked, cheeks puffed out, and swallowed with effort.

He chuckled softly, leaning back on his hands. "You were a hamster in your past life."

I glared, but it was ruined by the involuntary snort that escaped me. "Excuse you."

He smiled, impossibly fond. "The cheeks don't lie."

I wiped my mouth with the back of my hand, only for him to catch my wrist and gently guide it away. "Let me," he murmured. His lips brushed against the corner of my mouth, soft and lingering, tasting the remnants of sauce before pulling back just enough to look into my eyes.

The look he gave me was molten.

"Breathtaking," he whispered again.

I took another bite, just to hide the ridiculous grin stretching my face.

And Hades, the Hand of Death, sat there —

utterly helpless against a woman in lingerie, with burger grease on her fingers and her cheeks full of food — and looked at me like I was magic. 1

Maybe I had been hearing things last night, or I had taken things out of context. He had not mentioned my name. 2

It made me glad that I had trashed the memory card before I let James bait me into believing him. I had made the right choice. I could not break it; whatever it was made of was indestructible. He really wanted to make sure that I watched whatever lie he wanted me to believe.

I simply tossed it out the window and then tried to feel better about doubting him by dressing up for him. 4

I had fought hard for this happiness — five years and a marriage I never wanted had turned into the one good thing in my life. I was not willing to jeopardize it, especially for a man who would happily rip my heart out of my chest for his nefarious agendas. 4

Hades waved his hand in front of my face. "Earth to Eve," he said before pulling at my cheek.



"Where are you wandering to? You should be on high alert dressed like a — like a snack," he finished with a teasing smirk, tugging playfully at the lace strap on my shoulder.

I rolled my eyes, though my face heated. "I was thinking."

"Dangerous pastime," he teased, but his eyes softened. "What are you thinking about?"

I paused, searching my mind for another issue that weighed heavily on me. "Ellen."

He paused, his eyes searching. "What do you think about her?"

"It hurts," I replied simply. "It still does but..."

"But what?"

"I feel like there is much more beyond the surface. This is far more convoluted than it seems. I am starting to have doubts."

He grabbed the robe and draped it over my shoulders. "Tell me your doubts, love."

"The video of the execution. I saw her face; she seemed different... almost as if she was not fully



there. I didn't think it had any consequence until my mother spoke up about a second verse or something..." I looked at him to make sure he was listening, but his eyes betrayed something that made my stomach drop.

"I saw that part. The second verse..." His voice was solemn.

"Second verse to what?"

"The Prophecy."

I blinked, caught off guard. "The propaganda reached Obsidian too? The Eclipse Rebellion has been spreading it for as long as I can remember."

Hades became quiet as he reached for my hand. "There is a lie that you and your people have been made to believe for so long." His eyes were searching; there was guilt in their stormy depths as he rubbed my hands as if trying to prepare me for the storm. "It was also something I intended to use..." 1

Hades' fingers tightened around mine, my heat rate sky rocketed.

I barely had time to process the weight of his

confession before a shrill sound shattered the moment.

The phone on the nightstand buzzed and rang, vibrating so insistently it rattled against the wood. 2

Hades' jaw clenched. He checked the screen.

Felicia. 1

He silenced it with a flick of his thumb and looked back at me, trying to recapture the thread of his revelation. But the phone immediately started vibrating again.

A muscle ticked in his jaw. He gritted his teeth, picked up the phone, and without hesitation, hurled it at the wall. It hit with a sharp crack, splintering the casing before clattering to the floor in pieces.

Hades turned back to me, visibly forcing calm. "Eve—"

A heavy knock pounded at the door before he could say another word.

Hades growled low in his throat, storming to the door with a predator's fury.



He yanked it open.

Kael stood there, eyes wide, holding his own phone out as if it burned.

"It's Felicia," he said quickly. "It's urgent. She's losing it."

Hades' face darkened. "What else is new?"

Kael shook his head. "No... this is different. She's sobbing, Hades. I've never heard her like this."

Hades snatched the phone from Kael's hand and barked into it. "What the hell do you want now?"

Felicia's scream was so piercing and frantic that I heard it from across the room.

"It's Elliot!" she wailed, her voice raw and broken.

I was out of bed before I even realized I'd moved, the robe slipping off my shoulders as my heart dropped into my stomach.

"They've taken him!" Felicia's voice cracked.

"They're going to kill him like they killed Leon!"



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