



225 The Chase

Eve 1

The car shot forward the moment we slammed the doors shut, tires screeching as Hades barked an order into the comms.

"Track Felicia's phone. Pull her coordinates up on the dash."

The console blinked to life, a pulsing red dot lighting up the map in front of us. Hades' jaw was stone, one hand locked around the steering wheel, the other gripping my thigh in a grounding hold. But I could feel the tension radiating off him in waves.

Behind us, through the tinted rear window, a convoy of black SUVs roared after us — Gammas, faces grim and focused, headed by Kael. Through the radio, I could hear the distant shouts of those already on foot, running on all fours, having already shifted, claws scraping asphalt as they sprinted faster than anything human.

The city roads blurred past in streaks of light and shadow. Personnel in dark uniforms filled



intersections, waving flags and redirecting traffic. Sirens wailed ahead of us — a police cruiser tearing through red lights, clearing the way. The streets bent to our will, but it wasn't fast enough.

I couldn't sit still. My leg bounced, heart clawing at my ribs as I clutched the edge of the seat, eyes locked on that blinking dot.

Elliot.

I bit down on the panic threatening to rise in my throat, but it spilled over anyway, raw and cold.

The last time I'd seen him, he'd tugged on my sleeve, eyes wide and old beyond his years. Save me, he had signed with those small, trembling hands.

Like he knew.

I pressed the heel of my hand to my mouth, trying not to cry.

Hades' arm slid around me, pulling me tight against his side, but his eyes never left the screen. His voice was calm — too calm — as if the fury and fear underneath would explode if he

let them rise to the surface.

"He's going to be okay, love," he murmured, even though neither of us knew that for sure.

My breath came in shallow bursts. The GPS tracker blinked closer. I could see the pin moving — faster now, shifting erratically. Felicia had relayed in her panic that she and her men were already in close pursuit, but they were afraid of losing them.

"Hades..." I whispered. My fingers dug into his arm. "They are fast."

"I see it," he ground out, pressing harder on the gas. The engine roared in response.

We hit the expressway, the police car ahead blaring sirens and scattering vehicles like frightened birds. The Gammas behind us spread out, some veering onto side streets, others racing ahead. The ones on foot darted through alleyways, faster than anything human.

But all I could do was stare at that dot.

Hold on, Elliot.

The car jolted slightly as we took a hard turn.



Hades' grip on me tightened.

"I should've known," I choked out, the guilt sharp and bitter. "I should've kept him closer. I should've—" 1

"Stop." Hades' voice was firm. He turned briefly to meet my eyes, the storm in his gaze matched by the iron in his tone. "You are not to blame for this."

I nodded, but the words rang hollow.

The city lights fell away as we hit the outskirts. The pin on the map flickered again — slowing.

"We're close," Hades muttered, his knuckles white on the wheel.

My pulse thundered in my ears as I whispered a prayer I wasn't sure anyone was listening to.

Please... please let us be in time.

Then I suddenly felt Hades' hand freeze against my thigh. I raised my head and his expression made my blood run cold. He was pale as a ghost.

"What the hell are these people up to?" His voice was a hiss — part unparalleled rage and



heart-stopping dread.

"What?" I asked, my pulse skipping.

He didn't answer immediately, as though his mind was already miles away from where we were.

"Hades..." My voice was a whimper. What could he possibly have seen to make him react that way?

"You need to stay calm, Evie," Rhea's voice was calming but knowing, as though she could decipher the reason behind Hades' sudden change in countenance. "You have to breathe." Her voice wove into my panic, soothing it, but only slightly.

I swallowed the huge lump in my throat.

"Hades..." I called again.

He glanced at me, but that was all the warning I got before he said, "Buckle up."

My seatbelt was already on, but suddenly it lit up, expanded around my torso, tightening and plastering me to the seat.

I had barely any time to comprehend what was



happening before Hades took the sharpest turn, which would have snapped my neck if not for the adaptive seatbelt. He swerved straight into the thick, dense woods.

My eyes widened in shock, my heart lurching into my throat, every cell in my body bracing for impact — but it never came.

The car didn't slow. It didn't crash. It shifted.

Metal groaned and the frame around us shimmered, the vehicle morphing in real time as Hades pushed it into terrain no ordinary car could handle. The tires expanded, the body lifted, sleek black plating unfolding like armor.

A Lycan war vehicle.

I gasped, but couldn't find the words.

Hades' eyes flashed silver, his voice low and lethal. "They're heading toward the Eternis Noctis." 1

My stomach dropped out.

The Breach. The thin, rotting veil between this world and theirs.



"Hades," I whispered, my hands trembling. "Only the royal family knows. Only Stravos should know —" 2

"I know." His voice cracked, the first real sign that the monster under his skin was straining against its chains. His hands were shifting already — fingers morphing into claws, eyes darkening to blood-red.

Branches tore at the reinforced glass as we sped deeper into the woods. The map on the dash shifted, the blinking dot now dangerously close to a pulsing red line I hadn't noticed before.

"Stay calm but be ready," Rhea said, her voice thick with emotion. "We'll be ready."

I couldn't breathe.

"Yes." I still replied. My skin tingling with anticipation as though every sense I'm my body knew exactly what was to come even if I didn't.

