



## 252 Memories of Vassir

Hades 1

The vial was ready.

Thick. Black. Burning.

"Last chance, Your Majesty," Tavin said.

I held out my arm.

The straps tightened.

The needle plunged in.

The world stopped.

The first drop hit my bloodstream and pain—  
blinding, searing pain—shot through my spine like  
lightning striking bone. I convulsed, fists  
clenching as the darkness raced through my  
veins.

And with it—

Memories.

Her laughter in the ring.



Her face, vulnerable defiant, the first time she stood up to me.

The weight of her curled against my chest the night she called herself mine.

The way she whispered Red, like it meant salvation.

The way her lips trembled the first time, she told me she trusted me.

The night I told her I did, too.

Each memory struck like a dagger.

Not piercing my body.

But my heart.

Cerberus howled inside me, his cry fractured with grief. "STOP! Please—pull it out—pull it OUT—" 1

But the flux spoke over him. "Yes, more, more, more." The corruption's disembodied voice enough in my skull.

I gritted my teeth, tears burning the edges of my eyes—the memories ripping through me like ghosts begging to stay.



Then came the second dose.

It was worse.

The lights above flickered violently, glass cracking in the ceiling. Power surged. The heart pulsed in its chamber—no longer faint but alive. Responding. Thriving.

Dr. Tavin screamed, "His vitals—he's seizing!"

"I said let it run its course!" I roared.

My skin blackened along the veins. My bones creaked as strength clawed its way through marrow. I gasped, every part of me thrumming with something ancient and merciless.

Cerberus faded, his voice echoing like a dying echo.

"Please... don't let her be the last good thing we remember." 1

I didn't answer.

Because the pain had reached its crescendo.

And then—

Silence.



Not peace.

Stillness.

Like a corpse exhaling its final breath.

I opened my eyes.

The world looked... different.

Sharpened.

Colder.

Calmer.

Deadlier.

I stood. No trembling. No hesitation.

Just clarity. Cruel, clean clarity.

"We will have to monitor you for the next 24 hours, just to..." one of the assistants asked in a whisper. None could look me in the eye.

I got up, making them all take a step back. "There is no need," my vision swam.

I looked down at my hands.

Stronger. Steadier. Empty.





I turned toward the door.

Sleep was impossible.

The flux twisted beneath my skin, crawling like serpents through my veins. My body throbbed in silence, but it was my mind that screamed.

Every time I closed my eyes, she was there.

Eve.

Her smile.

Her tears.

Her scent, clinging to the folds of my coat like the last warmth I'd ever know.

The memories refused to die.

The flux had dulled so much—fear, hesitation, guilt—but not her. Not yet. Her presence clung to me like smoke after a fire, seeping into every corner I couldn't seal off.

I growled, raking a hand through my hair, pacing the room like a caged thing.

Each step felt too light and too heavy at once.



My hands trembled—not from weakness, but from  
the frustration of still feeling.

Still remembering her.

Still loving her.

> "Why?"

"Why won't it leave me?"

Cerberus didn't answer.

He hadn't said a word since the second dose. Not  
even a whisper. It was like he had curled inward,  
recoiling from the corruption trying to take hold.

I checked the clock on the far wall.

12:34 AM.

Tomorrow, her suffering begins.

And the thought...

Made me sick.

Not because I doubted the plan.

But because I cared. Still. Still. 1

The rage curled tighter in my chest.



I stood sharply, walking to the mirror by the wall.  
My skin was pallid—ashen. The black veins pulsed  
beneath the surface like cracks in stone. My  
reflection stared back, something unfamiliar  
already settling into my features.

Sharper.

Harder.

But the worst came when I felt it.

A dull ache, right at the base of my skull.

I winced, reached up—and froze.

Something... was there.

Something hard.

A point. A growth.

I touched it.

And the world exploded.

Images slammed into me like an avalanche—  
blinding, suffocating, ancient.

Red hair. A battlefield drenched in ash.

A woman, tall and regal, wielding a blade of fire.



A scream—then steel through her chest.

"Elysia!"

The name was a scream in my skull, a voice not mine—Vassir's.

Not just a name.

A memory.

A death.

A Mother of all Lycans. 1

I staggered back, grabbing the edge of the sink to steady myself. My heart hammered like it was trying to escape my ribs. My breathing was ragged. The taste of old blood clung to my throat.

These weren't my memories.

This was the prince whose heart now beat with mine.

The price of the vein was no longer just pain. It was identity. It was inheritance. It was funny, that it only after my father died that fully began to embrace Vassir's Vein.

I straightened slowly, my reflection blurry.





warped. I no longer looked like the man I was just a day ago.

The black veins beneath my eyes had thickened. My irises were darker—almost red under the right light.

> "You're changing," Cerberus whispered weakly. 1

"You've let him in.

But I ignored him. I needed him, like he needed me, a vessel.

I turned to the digital clock again.

6:40 AM.

I blinked.

No.

It had been midnight.

How the hell had—?

Time had warped. Warped with the memories. Warped with the presence inside me.

This... this was worse than before.

The flux's crux was only last month. It shouldn't



have been this strong again for two more.

And yet...

Here I was.

More consumed than ever.

I pressed my palm against the cool mirror. The room felt ten degrees colder. My breath fogged the glass.

"Tomorrow," I whispered to myself. "We begin."

And this time, I would not hesitate.

Because whether it was love, or the vein, or rage that drove me—one thing was certain:

Eve would suffer. 1

Just like the rest of them.

The cold water ran over my hands, tinged slightly pink.

Not blood. Not entirely.

Just remnants of something ancient that now lived under my skin.

The pain had faded to a quiet pulse—constant,



humming—like a second heartbeat.

I rinsed my face, blinking against the sting in my eyes. The veins around them had darkened, spidering outward like shadows that refused to retreat. No amount of water could wash it away. The Vassir's Vein had marked me, body and soul.

My jaw tightened as I reached for the towel.

And then—

My phone rang.

Sharp. Sudden. Loud in the stillness.

I glanced at the screen.

Montegue.

I answered. "What is it?"

His voice was curt. Controlled. But beneath it—I heard it. Rage.

"You need to come down here, Hades."

I frowned. "This better not be about the girl. I already told you—"

"It's not. It's about your Beta." 5



I stilled. My grip on the towel faltered.

"What about Kael?" I asked, already knowing I wasn't going to like the answer.

Montegue's voice dropped, like a sword lowering into position. "You need to come down here before I become a law unto myself."

The line went dead.

My breath caught.

Kael.

No.

Not him.

Not the test.

The realization crept in like cold fog, slow and paralyzing.

He did it.

He fucking did it.

I didn't bother changing. I didn't need to. I just moved—fast, driven by a storm that raged from deep within.





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The doors of the lower hall burst open beneath my palm, and what greeted me was chaos barely contained.

My office.

It had been turned into a standoff.

Montegue's men lined the room, armed and alert. Their weapons—silver-forged and spell-tempered—were drawn and trained on a figure bound to the center table.

Kael.

His shirt was torn. His lip, split. One eye swollen. Blood dripped slowly from a gash at his temple but his wounds were already slowly healing. Runes shimmered along the restraints digging into his arms.

He looked up as I entered.

Not defiant.

Not apologetic.

Just tired.



"About time," Montegue said from the far corner, arms crossed and gaze like a blade. "Tell me, Hades. What does it mean when a man goes behind his king's back and requests unauthorized bloodwork... from a child?" 1

The other Montegues said nothing, gauging my appearance but saying nothing. I must have looked like hell. But Montegue was not phased.

My spine straightened. My face betrayed nothing.

Montegue stepped forward. "He submitted a sample. Claimed it was for routine screening. But the markers?" His voice grew sharper, biting. "They weren't routine." 1

I looked at Kael.

He said nothing.

Just stared.

His mouth barely moved. "She deserved to be listen to," 2

The rage twisted, but it was not at Montegue.

It was at him.

At the betrayal. At the truth.



"You went to the child," I said, my voice low and dangerous. "Behind my back."

Kael's jaw flexed. "To protect your future. To save you from yourself."

I stepped closer. The room shifted with my presence.

"Or to prove me wrong."

He didn't deny it.

Just took the punishment already bleeding through every bruise on his face.

"They won't let me see the result," Kael complained, accusation clear in his tone.

"You had no fucking right!" Felicia finally exploded.

"My child has been through enough at the hands that woman and her henchmen."

Montegue didn't care for the tension. He threw down the results—crumpled, blood-spotted.

"I suggest you read it. Before I do what you clearly won't."

I picked it up, hands steady, despite the storm within me.





I felt a bit of hope...

But I snuffed it out.

When I looked at it, I felt a renewed sense of something that dared not be named.

Kael looked up expectantly. "What does it say, Hades. I knew she wasn't lying..."

I cut him off by shoving the results in his face.

Kael stumbled back a step as I shoved the paper into his chest.

"Read it yourself," I said, voice like iron.

He snatched the document, eyes scanning—fast, frantic.

And then he stopped.

His expression faltered.

The color drained from his face.

"No..." he whispered.

Silence fell, suffocating.

Kael looked up at me, disoriented. "This... this can't be right." 2





I didn't speak.

Didn't move.

Didn't blink.

Because if I did, I might feel.

And I couldn't afford that—not now.

Kael turned toward Montegue, as if pleading. "Run it again. It could be tampered. It could be wrong. There are—there are circumstances—" 1

"There aren't," Montegue cut in. "The child is not his." 7

The words hit like a final nail.

Kael's hands clenched the result tighter, the paper crumpling as his shoulders dropped.

"She said he was yours," he said to me, broken.

"She looked me in the eye and said it."

I stared at him for a long moment. Then:

"She lied," I said. "Like she always does."

And this time, they were not just words to me, I believed them fully myself. 4