

257 Truths That Shatter

Eve 1

My skin prickled, my heart leaping into a sprint as the words sank in. My lips quivered as I spoke.

"You don't mean that," I whispered, breathless. "I'm so sorry. I didn't mean to hurt you—"

The words I wanted to say choked me when his expression didn't change. Not even a twitch. His eyes remained cold—colder than they had been the first day we met.

"I mean every word. And since I know your well-kept secrets, I guess it would be unfair if I didn't tell you mine."

He stepped closer, his scent wafting through the air. Somehow, it was unfamiliar—tainted by something decayed. I almost scrunched my nose. The smell that reached me was rot—sickeningly sweet with an acrid, flesh-like stench that punched me in the face.

Something was wrong. Very wrong.



His skin wasn't just pale. It was deathly. Like a corpse.

"Hades... what happened?"

The Hades I knew would have flashed a cruel, mocking smile. But this person just stared vacantly at me. His gaze bored so deep, I wasn't sure I wasn't already bleeding.

"That won't matter in a minute," he replied ominously.

I swallowed, my saliva drying my parched throat even more. "Hades..."

"The second verse of the prophecy spoke of a blood moon."

Confusion overtook me, my brows furrowing. "A second verse? There's a second verse? I thought the prophecy was a lie."

"The one you know is a lie—tangentially—because it's missing the most poignant part," he informed me. "The propaganda your family spread left you and your pack defenseless against the truth."

My knees weakened, but for the moment I



remained standing, tethered by the thread of his voice and the sinking weight in my gut.

"What are you saying?"

Hades tilted his head slightly, like a puppet moved by invisible strings.

"The blood moon wasn't just a lie spread by the people you call the Eclipse Rebellion. The same ones you slaughtered to prevent an uprising." 1

I flinched as the truth hit me like hot liquid metal, burning me.

During the two days I had been left here, I'd had a lot of time to think—and even more time for implications to settle in.

I was the beast of the night.

I wasn't just responsible for the death of three people, but far more. Innocent people who fought against my father's regime were also my victims.

All I had done for two days was vomit and sob. My eyes were heavy and swollen, every breath a battle between shame and disbelief.



He stepped even closer, and for the first time, I noticed the faint pulse of black veins beneath his skin—as if something ancient, foreign, and monstrous was trying to escape his body.

The flux.

Was that its smell?

How had it gotten stronger?

More guilt pierced me. I had caused him so much stress that the corruption had gotten worse?

"Should I tell you what it says?"

I didn't answer.

Anxiety and anticipation filled me painfully.

"Yet when the blood moon bathes the earth in crimson fire, neither shall fall. One shall wield the moon's fury as their shield, unbroken by its curse. The other shall walk within the shadow's heart, where no light nor affliction may reach." 1

The words hit like thunder.

Not the way sound rumbles in the sky—no.



They struck bone. Shook marrow. Broke something I didn't know could still break inside me.

I stared at him, unable to speak, barely able to breathe.

All this time, I thought the curse was the end of me.

But now I saw it for what it really was.

A countdown.

We weren't surviving.

We were stalling.

Every day we'd spent clawing toward each other, hurting, healing, breaking again—it wasn't fate's gift.

It was borrowed time.

I didn't need to ask where the source was. It had to be no coincidence that this was what the Eclipse Rebellion had been trying to preach for years.

Only for them to be prosecuted and annihilated... because my father wanted to keep the rest of the



prophecy under wraps.

He was trying to control the narrative—again.
But for what? What was all this secrecy for?

My heart thundered in my chest. The people of
Silverpine were in trouble—but they didn't even
know it.

My breath hitched.

Silverpine.

My people.

The pack that—despite everything—was my old
home. They were innocent. They had no hand in
this.

The ones I had once vowed to protect.

They were in danger.

They were all in danger—and they had no idea.

Panic clawed at my chest as I stared at him, truly
seeing him for the first time.

A prophecy twisted into silence, hidden from
those who could've prepared.



My heart raced. My throat felt like it had closed up.

"Hades," I croaked, "what about Obsidian?"

His gaze shifted slightly, that cold stillness never breaking—but something else changed. The edges of his lips lifted. Barely. A smile.

But his eyes... they didn't follow.

They stayed dead. Detached.

I couldn't tell if he was amused or just tired of pretending to feel anything at all.

He crouched slowly in front of me, the movement fluid—unnervingly graceful. Like he was gliding instead of kneeling.

And then he did something that sent my heart lurching.

He reached forward... and cupped my cheek.

His palm was ice.

Flesh that once radiated warmth now felt like marble dug from a crypt.

The sharp edge of a callous thumb traced the



corner of my mouth.

I didn't flinch.

I should have.

But I didn't.

Because for the briefest moment, the contact
sparked something.

Hope.

Faint. Delusional.

But real.

It bloomed in my chest like a dying ember
reigniting—

Until he spoke.

"Yes," he said softly. "Obsidian will fall too."

The breath was punched from my lungs.

"And that is why," he continued, tilting his head
ever so slightly, "you will have to undergo
extractions."

The words didn't hit immediately.



They hovered in the air like smoke, waiting for me to inhale the full weight of them.

But when they did land—

They landed hard.

My heart dropped.

Hope withered.

Died.

And in its place, something darker bloomed. 1

"Extractions?" I echoed, voice faint.

"You are the cursed twin. One of the few people immune to the effects of the blood moon to come. Don't tell me you've forgotten?"

"Like the prophecy said..."

"Glad it's clicking. You're a bit slow sometimes."
He mocked. 3