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Eve 1

I tried not to flinch at his painful jab.

He droned on. "I already made sure and had your blood scanned. With what they call the Fenrir marker in your blood, you are indeed my pack's ticket to survival."

I blinked slowly, his words crawling like spiders beneath my skin.

His tone was too calm.

Too cold.

Like he wasn't talking about *me* anymore. Like I was a resource. A relic. Something ancient to be unearthed and gutted for parts.

"My... blood," I echoed, the realization flooding me too fast, too loud. "You want to extract it—to give it to others?"

"To the pack civilians, yes."

I shook my head, breath picking up. "You're



talking about—about transfusions? Injections? Experiments—"

"Harvests," he cut in.

The word silenced me.

It was so final. So brutal. So detached from the man I knew. I was in Faculty 14 again, and it wasn't Hades speaking to me—it was the scientist.

"You're not serious," I said, my voice cracking.

"Hades, this isn't you—"

"This is necessity," he snapped, rising to his feet with slow, calculated grace. "You don't get to decide what you are anymore, Eve. Not after the lives you've taken. Not after the beast you became."

"I didn't choose that—"

"But you let it live," he drawled. "You should have ended it." 3

My mouth opened, but no sound came out.

I couldn't speak.

Not because I didn't have words—but because I



had too many.

Too many truths I hadn't known.

Too many lies I'd believed.

My body trembled, barely held upright by the restraints bolted into the chair. My wrists stung from where I had pulled against them—where the metal bit into raw skin in some vain attempt to escape.

But there was no escaping this.

Not from him.

Not from the truth.

"You don't get to decide what you are anymore,"
he had said.

And I believed him.

Because the Eve that had existed before this room... before this moment... had already died. How many times would I have to die before I finally stopped breathing?

"Hades..." I choked, voice shredded. "I didn't know. I didn't know what I was. I didn't want to be this. I didn't ask to be born cursed. I didn't



ask to be her twin—" My voice cracked, sobs
brimming just beneath. "I didn't ask for any of it.
You have to believe me. It's not what it looks
like."

The silence after my words was a cruel thing.

Indifferent.

Until he turned, only slightly, to look at me.

And then came the final nail.

"I knew," he said simply.

I blinked. "Knew... what?"

He took a breath.

But it wasn't steady.

It was jagged. Sharp.

Painful.

"I knew you were my mate," he said, "weeks
before I ever marked you."

The room tilted.

I forgot how to breathe.



"I knew," he repeated. "And I let Amelia make you believe you were dying—that the Hollowing was finally killing you. Not fate. Not sickness. *Me.*" 1

I whimpered, a sound I didn't recognize as mine.

He stepped closer again, voice low. "I needed you desperate, Eve. I needed you to reach for me. I needed you to want your wolf back badly enough that you'd take the only route left."

My lips trembled. "The mark..."

He nodded. "You were the only one who could survive the coming Bloodmoon. But your blood—your marker—it wasn't ready. The Fenrir strain in you was dormant. Immature. Useless."

I shook my head. "So you—"

"I had to bring Rhea back," he said flatly. "Your wolf was the key. The trigger. Once she returned, the marker started to change. And you started to change."

He looked at me then—not like a lover. Not even like a king.

Like a collector admiring something finally complete.



"I made love to you," he said, voice so low it was almost tender. "Not for love. But to reverse the Hollowing. To catalyze the marker's maturity. I needed your body primed. Your blood viable. Nothing more."

My scream ripped from me before I realized I'd made a sound.

It wasn't loud.

But it was broken.

A raw, ragged noise born of too many betrayals packed into too little time.

"You used me," I whispered. "You used everything I gave you... every piece of myself..."

He didn't deny it.

He didn't flinch.

I could barely see through the blur of my tears.

Every breath I took scraped against my lungs. Every word he spoke felt like a gash that would never clot.

"I loved you," I sobbed, voice barely audible. "I loved you with everything I had left, and you—" 4



"I know," he interrupted. "That's why it worked. I guess loving me wasn't part of your plan." 1

I flinched so hard my whole body shook. "There was no plan."

He scoffed. "Sure there wasn't. That's why you plotted Elliot's kidnapping and your heroic rescue." 2

"If you're... so sure... then give me one reason why I would do that," I all but screamed, shaking.

He only looked at me, indifferent. "That shit won't work on me, especially when I already know why. You wanted to seem like a hero to Obsidian. A werewolf princess on a Lycan throne would be scandalous—you'd be hated, targeted—but with a heroic act," he continued coldly, "you could shift the narrative. You could go from 'cursed mutt' to savior. The girl who risked everything to rescue a child."

His voice was like ice sliding down my spine.

I recoiled as if he'd struck me.

Because he had.

Not with his hands.



But with every revelation that left his mouth.

I was nothing more than a vessel.

A lab rat wrapped in love's illusion.

He'd shattered me.

And still, some ruined part of me was begging him to stop—just so I could pretend, even for one more breath, that what we'd shared was real. 1

But it wasn't.

He'd made sure of that.

And as he turned again, preparing to leave me with these confessions bleeding through my chest like open wounds, I knew—

This wasn't punishment.

It was annihilation.

Not of my body.

But of everything I'd ever believed love could be. 1

Then he smiled again, a little twinkle in his eyes.

"This is just the beginning. When I'm done,

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EVERY. SINGLE. WEREWOLF. WILL. BE.
ERASED."

I stopped dead in my tracks. 7

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