

290 Allies

Eve 1

"The feeling is less than mutual," I replied coldly, glancing behind him. 1

He caught on. "You are looking for my brother. He is in the kitchen. He cooked the meal." His supplied lightly, almost conversational in a way that would have disarmed me if I was not as paranoid as a feral cat in a cage of wolves.

"I don't care who cooked it," I said flatly. "I'm not eating anything either of you touched."

Rook didn't look surprised. If anything, he looked... tired. Like he'd expected it.

"We figured as much," he said. Rook's jaw tensed, the barest flicker of something unreadable crossing his face.

"I want you alive," he said simply.

I blinked, thrown for just a second—not by the words, but the way he said them. Not righteous. Not pitiful. Just... matter-of-fact. As if that was



all there was to it.

"I can take a bite of the food if that's what you need," he added, nodding toward the tray.

"I need you to understand I'm not that easy to win over," I replied coolly.

His lips twitched, not quite a smile. "Didn't think you were."

I took a step toward the door. "If I'm not a prisoner," I said, voice flat, "then I'd like to leave now."

He didn't move at first.

So I added, "Or do I have to get you out of the way?"

That made him blink, tension flickering across his expression.

But then, to my surprise, he stepped aside. Slowly. Deliberately.

"You can leave," he said, his voice lower now. "But you..."

His sentence stalled.



His hand dipped into his pocket.

Not for a weapon—but his phone.

He checked something. A message? The time? I didn't know, and I wasn't sure I wanted to find out.

That hesitation was enough.

I made for the door.

But I hadn't taken three steps when he stopped me in my tracks with a single sentence.

"We know what happened."

I froze.

My entire body went cold.

Slowly, I turned. "What the hell are you talking about?"

He met my stare without flinching. "Some of it. We're not Obsidian's intelligence team, but my brother and I have eyes. We worked there before. We have friends within those walls. Word travel fast. You were framed. You were most likely tortured."



My throat tightened. But I scoffed, masking the tremor in my chest with bitterness.

"Didn't take you for the type to believe misinformation."

I moved again, trying to brush past him.

"You used to cower," he said, his voice quiet.

"Back when we first met. You had defiance in your eyes, but you shook. You hesitated. You looked for permission to be strong."

He took a step closer—not threatening, just steady.

"You don't do that anymore. You move like someone who's had to earn every piece of herself back with blood. A lone wolf winning a fight without shifting, against three half-shifted Lycans? That doesn't happen by accident. That's evolution. That's pain."

I snapped my head around, locking eyes with him.

I didn't speak.

Didn't need to.



My silence screamed.

"I know you didn't bring me here out of the kindness of your heart," I said. "Or some pretentious sense of gratitude. So what is it, Rook? What do you really want?"

He inhaled through his nose, slow and measured. Rook's gaze stayed steady on mine, as if he was weighing every word before it left his lips. Then he spoke, quiet but not uncertain.

"Don't you need allies?"

I didn't answer.

He tilted his head slightly, voice low. "The Obsidian Royal Tower is no place for a lone woman. No matter how strong she is."

I stiffened, but he kept going.

"What happens next? Can you trust those you learned to trust before? Amelia? The king? Jules? Even Kael?" He paused, letting the silence do the cutting. "There's far more looming than what's already bled into daylight. And from what I see—you're utterly alone. Or you wouldn't have been out walking for days without pausing. You



wouldn't have let yourself collapse in a city like this."

My fists clenched at my sides. He knew so much.

"What are you saying?" I asked, my voice tight.

He stepped closer—not threatening, just close enough that I could see the line of tension in his jaw, the sincerity curled in his brow.

"You need partners to get what you want."

"I don't want revenge," I shot back, quick and sharp.

He didn't flinch.

"Who said anything about revenge?"

That made me falter.

His next words dropped like a stone in a lake.

"The Blood Moon is part of a prophecy your people don't know about."

I blinked, stunned.

"They don't know," he said, "that they're about to die and from my sources at Silverpine's borders,



the king, your father might very well be the devil's incarnate. He is continually stamping out people who spread the truth."

A silence fell, thick and sudden.

I stared at him, trying to read the lie—except there wasn't one.

"You want to save them," he said. "Don't you?"

I felt the floor shift beneath me—not physically, but internally. Like the ground of my certainty was crumbling beneath my feet.

"I don't even know who you are," I whispered, my voice low, tight. "How do you know all this?"

He tilted his head slightly, almost as if he'd been waiting for that question.

"I was curious," Rook said. "Curious about the werewolf who spared a Lycan. Even after what I did."

I stared at him. My mind reeled.

"You mean... I told Hades not to kill you," I said, slowly piecing it together.

Rook nodded. "Most wouldn't have. Especially



after what you endured. But you did. You spared me. And that—"

He paused, his jaw tightening like it pained him to admit this.

"That made me curious."

My heart thudded. His voice was quiet now. Honest. Too damn honest.

"You were the Enigma no one could figure out. The mutt who survived the Hades Stravos in one piece."

He took a breath, and I could see the flicker of something else in his gaze—something heavier. Like this had been festering inside him.

"You got under his skin," he said, softer now. "Our King. You were the only one who ever did. He wouldn't admit it. But we could see it. The way he looked at you. Like he was holding his breath around you. He wanted you before he knew it himself."

My throat thickened.

"And then," Rook continued, "you saved his nephew."



My breath caught.

"Even after everything. You threw yourself into the fire for that boy. You didn't even hesitate. You didn't even know him."

I clenched my jaw, my arms wrapping tighter around my middle like I could shield myself from the truth in his voice.

"And I thought," he went on, "maybe you weren't just what they made you into. Maybe you were something more."

He stepped back then, gaze never leaving mine.

"So I started digging. Quietly. Discreetly. Silverpine is a cesspool of proganda, secret executions ...and buried bodies," he finished. 1

His voice was no longer soft.

There was steel in it now—quiet, controlled rage, like he'd seen too much, swallowed too much, and was finally letting it bleed.

"Silverpine isn't ruled," Rook said. "It's managed. Like a disease you don't want to spread. The monarchy's been hunting anyone who remembers what the prophecy actually says. The



Eclipse Rebellion is dying doing what you want to do; Saving the people."

A chill broke down my spine.

He took another step away, like he didn't want to crowd me, but his eyes remained locked on mine. "You need allies in this fight, whether you like it or not. But not from the Obsidian Tower. They also gain from the extermination of your people. You need an outsider."

My heart lunged into my throat as the sound of footfall scared me out of my skin.

We were not alone. 7

