

31 Broken Humor

Eve~ 1

They had no faces, but I heard their voices, every damn word laced with hate. They all pointed fingers at me.

"Cursed!"

"You will doom us all!"

"Kill yourself!"

I held my hands to my ears, willing myself not to listen, but to no avail. I could still hear them; they surrounded me. I clutched my chest as fear seemed to swallow me whole. I raised my head again, willing to beg for mercy now.

But my eyes widened as I came to the horrifying realization that it was not their fingers that were pointed at me. Now each of them had guns, all aimed at me.

They all cocked their guns with a terrifying click and pulled the trigger. A blood-curdling scream tore out of my throat as I squeezed my eyes shut.

"Princess, wake up," a voice broke through my terror.

I jerked away, thrashing against the hold I found myself in.

"Princess," the voice called again as I felt warmth surround me. It was dark, and my heart rate was off the roof. I opened my mouth to scream again, but a rough hand covered my mouth.

"It was a nightmare," the person was saying. "You are okay."

Realization dawned on me, relief washing over me like warm water. I sagged against the hold of that figure in the darkness, panting and sweating like I had just run a marathon. It was hard; the body was solid. I could feel the contour of muscles, and it was unmistakably male.

I pulled away as it hit me—there was a man in my bed. I tried to get off in a hurry, my terror returning. I narrowly missed the floor as my legs tangled with the linens.

"Who are you?" I demanded just as the bedside lamp was turned on.

Silver eyes, tousled midnight hair—Hades.

I nearly jumped out of my skin. I could only stare at him, wide-eyed, while my heart beat a mile per second.

I braced myself for whatever he planned for me. What was he doing here? And in the night, for that matter?

"What do you want from me?"

A slow smile spread across his lips. "What if I said I came to kill you?"

I stared at him like he had just sprouted a new head. "What?"

"Is that not what you wanted?" he asked, making his way to the edge of the bed, his intense eyes still on me.

I was left dumbfounded, unable to think a single coherent thought, let alone speak.

"Why are you so quiet?" he asked, tilting his head sideways. His eyes roved over my body, and I felt my skin tingle under his scrutiny.

He got up, instantly dwarfing me. "Is it because I was in your bed?" he asked.

Again, I could do or say nothing but look at him.

"If I recall correctly, you were the one who jumped into my lap not too long ago."

"It's not the same," I said defensively, suddenly finding my tongue, my cheeks heating up. What

the hell had I been thinking?

"Oh, so?" he asked.

"You know exactly what I was trying to do," I countered.

"I do know, and that is why I am here, didn't I tell you? I came to kill you."

My breath fractured, and my legs turned to jelly. I shakily took a step back.

Then, all of a sudden, he morphed again, like a shapeshifter, his eyes softening with amusement as he smiled at me. "I was joking," he revealed.

My brain could not comprehend the words that had just come out of his mouth, nor the shocking shift in his mood. "You can joke?" was the first sentence out of my mouth.

I watched as his smile faded, his demeanor morphing. "What is that supposed to mean?" he asked, his voice having lost its earlier lightness and now tinged with a sharp edge. The Lycan king looked... offended, as if I had just insulted his prized collection of Rolex watches.

I flinched inwardly but forced myself to respond. "I mean... you don't really seem like the type to joke. You're always so... serious." I was trying to

tread carefully, but it felt like walking through a minefield.

Hades' expression darkened. "Serious?" he echoed, the word dripping with disdain. "And what exactly makes you think I don't understand humor, Princess? Because I don't laugh at every foolish thing?"

I swallowed, realizing I'd hit a nerve. "No, that's not what I meant," I hurried to explain, feeling my palms grow clammy. "It's just... the joke... was not really funny." What the hell was I doing?

Hades' eyes flashed, and his entire body seemed to stiffen. "Not funny?" he repeated slowly, his voice dangerously low. The air in the room thickened, and I felt like I had just stepped on the tail of a slumbering beast. "I see. So now you're a critic of humor, Princess?"

I took a shaky step back, my pulse racing. "No, I didn't mean it like that," I stammered, trying to find a way out of the mess I'd created. "It's just... it didn't seem like something you'd say. It caught me off guard."

His silver eyes bore into mine, glinting with frustration. "What? You think because I'm the Lycan King, I'm incapable of lightening the

mood? You think all I do is growl and bark orders? That I can't grasp something as basic as a joke?"

I winced, realizing just how badly I'd misjudged the situation. "No, of course not, I—"

"Enough." His voice cut through the air like a blade. He took a step closer, towering over me, his presence suffocating. "Let me make something clear, Princess," he said, his tone laced with anger. "I don't need to be 'funny' to anyone. Least of all you."

"Then why did you attempt to make a joke?" I asked.

"I... You had a nightmare," he countered. "I just wanted to soothe you. Isn't that what people do?"

I blinked. "Is that why you came? Because I was screaming in my sleep?"

"It doesn't matter now, does it?" he grumbled, and without another word, he strode to the door and walked out, slamming it hard behind him.