



325 Elliot

Six Hours before the Rite 1

Eve

"Elliot Stravos inherited the flux from his Majesty," Kael announced, his words falling like a gavel. "He has the flux just like Hades."

The silence that followed weight a ton as I looked around at their expressions. They has not expected that the emergency council meeting would not just be about Hades or the Rite. This time, their was another character in this arc. 1

Montegue was the whitest among the men. "He has... the flux? He has that... thing in him." His disgust was evident just as was his devastation. Elliot was his grandson after all. All that he had left of his dead daughter.

"A child can carry that... parasite, for so long. Is that why he is mute. Maybe it dis not affect him in anyway other way..." But even as Gallinti spoke, even he seemed confused by his own statement. 1



"His mutism is related to the inherited substance but it is not the reason, not exactly. He was made mute. Something ordered by Felicia."

Montegue rose up so fast, his seat flew back. His back was hunched in a minute, his hand slamming against his mouth as though trying to hold back vomited. His eyes darting, his mind unable to accept the gravity of the revelation.

As horrible as I felt, there was no time to console him as I continued to relay latest developments in our current harrowing predicament. The truth was that if the were ever going to get passed his hurdle and fight against Darius and his cronies, while preparing for a literal apocalypse that could be death of multitudes, we had to be on the same page. Move as one, and that meant no secrets that could get up screwed. 1

"It's technical, a complicated enough not to even make sense without the details but Elliot can reach Hades."

Silas, who had tried to keep his wits about himself, snapped up. "But how? How can a child reach into the mind of a man possessed by the Flux. From the reports of the incidence in the



lab, Hades almost killed his beta. Two lab officers are yet to stir from the assault of that thing. His Majesty has always been a law unto himself but unnecessary carnage and killing of his own workers in unheard of. I didn't even need to see the footage to know that he is gone. But a child reaching out to him when his own marked mate was unsuccessful?" 2

His words stung like a red hot rod but I met his gaze. "Because the Flux isn't just a parasite—it's a resonance. A tether. And Elliot shares that resonance with Hades. Same substance, same frequency. Like two strings vibrating in the same storm. Something that not even his mate can do especially in this situation." 3

Cain leaned forward, eyes narrowed. "I know the flux is sentient, its from Vassir's vein, his essence but you now saying the Flux in both of them can communicate."

I nodded. "In memories. In dreams. In bleeding echoes. It's already happening—Elliot's been seeing pieces of Hades' past in his sleep. Things no one told him. Things no one could've known."

"Like Nox," Kael said grimly. "And the Black



Room."

Silas rubbed his temples. "Even if that's true... what does it have to do with the Rite?"

Montegue—ashen but composed—lifted his head at last.

"It has everything to do with the Rite," he said. "You're all forgetting what the Fenrir's Chain truly is."

The room stilled.

He rose slowly, like his joints hurt just remembering.

"The Chain isn't a vow. It's not symbolic. It was forged for war—sacred, ancient, dangerous. When enacted properly, it doesn't just bind two people. It merges them. Soul, spirit, psyche, and essence—all braided together so tightly the boundaries blur."

He glanced at Cain, then Gallintl.

"You've all heard the consequences. They weren't just myths. Once the Chain is complete, the participants cannot lie to each other. They feel what the other feels. Think what the other



thinks. If one dies, the other follows."

A breath passed. Heavy.

"It was created for trust between enemies forced to rule as one. To prevent betrayal. To ensure unity. And because of the Fenrir Marker... it works."

Cain folded his arms, tense. "Because the Marker binds to spiritual architecture."

"Yes," Montegue nodded. "It acts as a conduit. It amplifies whatever is poured into the Rite—emotions, power, intent. If used correctly, it can be weaponized. Or... it can heal."

I stepped forward.

"That's why we even considered it," I said.

"Because my blood—my Marker—can cleanse the Flux. If channeled through the Rite, it would enter Hades directly. Break it apart from the inside."

Silas frowned. "So why hesitate?"

And then I said it.

"Because it won't stop at the Flux."



They looked at me, but no one interrupted.

"The Flux isn't a guest in Hades anymore. It's entangled with him. In his psyche, his survival instincts, even his emotions. The Rite would purge the intruder—but it won't know where the Flux ends and Hades begins."

I turned to Gallinti.

"You know what that means."

He swallowed. "If the infection's grown into vital tissue..."

"You can't remove it without killing the host," I finished. "It's the same in medicine. Some parasites fuse to the brain, to the spine. You try to purge it outright, and you kill everything it's touched."

I looked at them all.

"Without help—without someone finding Hades in there and pulling him to the surface—the Rite won't be a cure."

My voice dropped.

"It'll be an execution."



Silence clamped down on the chamber like a vice.

Even the torches flickered lower.

Montegue sank back into his seat slowly, as though the truth had aged him a decade in seconds. His eyes were locked on the obsidian table, but his mind was miles away. 2

Cain's jaw clenched. "You mean to say—"

"I mean to say," I interrupted softly, "that when the Rite begins, if Hades is still buried beneath the Flux—if he hasn't resurfaced—we won't be cleansing him."

Kael's voice was hoarse. "We'll be killing him."

A beat.

Then Gallinti stood abruptly, chair scraping back against marble. "We can't risk that. Not with the monarch. Not with the Obsidian bloodline. If we purge the King, we destroy more than just one man—we destroy the balance."

"I know," I said. "But if we don't act, we lose him to the Flux entirely. And everything after that—Silverpine, the bloodmoon war—it ends in blood."



Silas shook his head, slow and disbelieving. "We can't control the outcome either way."

"No," Montegue murmured, voice like crushed gravel. "But we might be able to tip the scales."

All eyes turned to him.

He looked at me. "You said someone could pull him back. That someone's already inside."

My throat tightened.

"Yes. Elliot. He can reach Hades. He can pull him out."

Montegue did not just go pale once again, his eyes filled with tears. "My grandson is the only one that can do this? Dani's son? After all that he has already been through?" 1