

331 Intertwined Under The Moon's Gaze

Eve 1

Sanctum Core

Midnight and a Breath

The world narrowed around us—sight, sound, breath collapsing into stillness. My heart thundered in my ears, but even that felt distant, like I was underwater in my own body.

The Fenrir's Marker was no longer dormant. It moved.

Threading.

Climbing.

Creeping through the marrow of my bones with a chill that wasn't cold. Not pain, but pressure. Like something ancient was waking—and choosing.

Across from me, the thing in Hades' skin tilted his head. Vassir. Still cloaked in shadow, still



using his voice, his face. But now, flickers of unease sharpened in his eyes—dark and wide, trying to mask confusion as anticipation.

He thought this was the beginning of the bond he'd craved. Of control. Of her.

"Say the words," he said softly, his fingers brushing the space near my collarbone. "Seal it, and we'll be everything they feared."

The shadows around him twitched, coiled—ready.

But so did the Marker.

I opened my mouth to answer.

And felt it—the pull. Not from him.

From within.

A sensation like blood being drained through invisible strings, something primal slithering under my skin, twining up my spine and into the hollow place between us. Where memory lived. Where the Rite waited.

He stiffened.

His expression cracked.





He felt it too.

But not the way he expected.

"What...?" His voice faltered, deeper now, layered with something that didn't belong. "No. No, this isn't right."

He looked down at his chest. At my palm resting over where Hades' heart should be. The place the Marker had ignited.

"You... You tricked me."

I didn't answer.

Because it wasn't a trick.

Not really.

He had asked for a bond. Demanded devotion. Fed on obsession. But what was rising now wasn't devotion.

It was judgment.

The Fenrir's Marker began to wind through the vessel he'd claimed—wriggling through the fabric of Hades' soul like silver thread through rotting cloth.



And Vassir—the Flux—felt it.

He recoiled, shadows lashing, screaming silently into the walls. His form shimmered, destabilized. The stolen body—Hades' body—twitched beneath his control.

"No," he hissed, more beast than man now. "This is wrong. This was ours!"

I held on tighter, even as my legs trembled. The bond deepened, not by my will, but the Marker's. It recognized what I touched wasn't love. It was corruption. Decay wearing a memory like perfume. 1

The Marker responded with one answer: purge.

"You think this is union?" I whispered. "You were never meant to keep him. And I was never meant to keep you."

His hand snapped forward—gripping my throat.

But not to kill.

To anchor himself. To hold on to the vessel now slipping from his grasp.

"Stop this," he growled. "You'll destroy us both—"



His voice fractured.

For a heartbeat, a whisper—Hades.

"Eve..."

I froze.

But so did he.

That moment—just one—where Hades surfaced
inside the storm.

Vassir's panic bloomed wide.

He could feel himself fading.

I could feel it, too.

It rolled off him in waves—something primal,
frantic, feral. Not fear of death. Fear of erasure.

The Marker was waking up the body it belonged
to.

And the Flux didn't fit inside it anymore.

"I gave you eternity," he snarled. "And you repay
me with exile?"

The runes blazed. Blue. Then white. Then
something brighter still—too bright to name.



"You wanted a wedding," I whispered. "This is a funeral." 2

That's when he roared.

The sound split the chamber.

Raw. Violent. Endless.

And then—

Light.

It tore across my vision like a blade. Blinding.
Total.

A ringing detonated in my ears—high-pitched
and deafening. I gasped, staggered, but there
was no air. No floor.

Only white.

And the feeling of being pulled in two. My limbs
floated, then didn't. My blood felt like it was
being wrung from my body, twisted into
something new. My mind surged, cracked,
blurred at the edges.

And I faded.

Just for a moment.



But in that moment, I felt everything.

Him.

The echoes of the man beneath the corruption—
grief layered over love layered over rage.

And the Flux, trying desperately to hold him
back. To chain what little remained of Hades
deep, beneath regret and fury and failure.

But the Marker saw it.

And it didn't flinch.

It began to tear.

The Rite wasn't done.

The light ebbed for a moment, and my vision
stuttered—colors bleeding wrong around the
edges, breath hitching as if I was breathing
through someone else's lungs. My knees hit the
stone. The circle beneath us pulsed, then
tightened. Not outward.

Inward.

The Fenrir's Marker—my Marker—wrapped
around his soul like a noose laced in memory. It
didn't just touch the corruption.



It recognized it.

It named it.

And it began to bind.

Vassir snarled. The body he wore seized beneath him, twitching as if something were trying to crawl out from the inside.

> "Enough," he spat, his voice breaking. "This body is mine—mine!"

He lurched back—but the tether held. Thin threads of silver, barely visible to the eye, stretched from my chest to his, luminous with ancient runes that hadn't been spoken aloud. They thrummed with a will that wasn't mine. One I barely understood.

He tried again to pull away—shadows flailing, wings twitching, mouth parted in what might have once been a scream.

And that's when I lunged forward and kissed him.

Not gently.

Not out of mercy.



But because it was the only thing that kept him still.

His body jerked, stiffened. His hands faltered on my shoulders, half-clenched in confusion.

And then the Marker surged.

It flared between us like a living flame, not burning—but reshaping. Threading into the marrow of the vessel. Into the heart he wore like armor. The sanctum's runes spun wildly now, responding to the Rite like a storm to the sea.

That's when I heard him again.

Not through the ears.

Through the bond.

Through the Marker.

> "You hurt him..."

His thoughts cracked, full of grief and warning.

> "And I will hurt him."

> "You will lose me..."

> "...and you will lose him."



Not rage.

But heartbreak.

And certainty.

As if this was the last defense of a dying god, a
ruined king refusing to go quietly.

My throat tightened. I wanted to scream. Or run.
Or reach into the tangle of soul and rot and drag
Hades out with my hands.

But I couldn't.

I couldn't move.

The Marker had taken hold.

The chains had begun.

And with each beat, it wound tighter.

Around us both.

His eyes were wide now—glowing and vacant all
at once. The shadows that had once moved like
limbs now trembled like dying things, sloughing
off him in strips. The wings split at the seams.
Veins of light cracked beneath the skin of Hades'
chest like frost chasing heat.



> "Stop," he whispered hoarsely.

> "Please."

But the Marker didn't listen.

It kept burning.

Kept knowing.

And I...

I started to slip.

The ringing returned, sharper than before. My skin buzzed like static. My lips parted, but no air came. My heartbeat staggered, then faltered.

My limbs lost their weight.

I looked at him—into him—and for one suspended moment, I saw both faces.

Vassir. Hades.

Past. Present.

Ruin. Love.

And then—

Black.

No sound.

No breath.

Only silence.

And the chains tightening in the dark.

There was no waking.

No gasp, no jolt, no breath.

Only the sensation of falling.

And then—not even that.

Just cold.

Not the kind that pricked the skin or sank into bones. This was different. A dread that felt like water poured down the back of the soul. Heavy. Wet. Icy. Pressing into places not meant to feel.

I opened my eyes.

But there was nothing to see.

No light.

No form.



No edges.

I didn't know if I was standing, floating, or simply suspended in absence. There was no sound. Not even the echo of my own thoughts. Only the ache of separation. As if something had been ripped from me halfway, and now the bleeding was happening somewhere I couldn't reach.

Hades.

I tried to say his name, but my voice didn't carry.

It didn't exist here.

Still, I felt it in my chest—his presence, faint and flickering, like a star smothered behind smoke.

And then I heard it.

A voice.

Not in the air.

Inside it.

> "You're in my domain."

Vassir.

Smooth. Icy. Cruel.



But quieter now. Not furious like before.

Almost... entertained.

> "The sanctum may have chosen your Marker.
But this?" A pause. A low chuckle. "This is mine." 1

I turned—though turning didn't feel real—and
found no source. No silhouette. No shape.

Only words, drifting closer.

> "Let's play a final game, Eve."

The temperature dropped. I wrapped my arms
around myself, but the gesture didn't help. My
body barely felt like it belonged to me anymore.

> "Find your beloved before it's too late." 1

Something shifted.

Far away, a flicker—like a ripple in black glass. A
pulse of warmth, quickly swallowed again.

Hades.

I reached toward it—but the void dragged at my
limbs. Slower here. Heavy. Like moving through
grief.



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> "Let's see," Vassir whispered, "just how much you're willing to do for him." 1

And the cold deepened.

Not just outside.

Inside.

Because this wasn't a fight anymore.

It was a trial.

And the clock was still ticking.

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