



## 332 Memories As Bait

Light slowly penetrated the darkness, yet the eeriness of it all did not relent even bit. Slowly, the ground beneath my feet made and appearance as I proceeded forward, not sure what to expect but dreading it all the same. 1

>Rhea?

I called hoping I was not utterly alone in this strange plain.

>Right here, dear.

She assured, her voice an anchor that I needed again the turbulence of fear that was twisting and turning in my mind.

I took a deep breath of relief, my eyes catching more colour and light as the realm revealed itself, almost in pixels.

My leg touched velvet carpets and for a minute I froze. I knew the carpets, I knew them far too well. It should have brought forth nostalgia but it did no such thing.



Red with a slight hue of brown that gave hallway a regal aura. This scene, this place should not be in Hades or the flux's subconscious. It was only in mine. The mounted images of ancestors and nobles. The abstract silver case that never made any sense to me, the beige ceiling. I was in the Lunar Heights, Darius' tower. My old home.

How? I wondered as my thundering heart seemed to beat in apprehension of what I might find.

How did the flux get to this part of...me.

Then it clicked with horrifying clarity. For the Rite, Hades and I were interlinked. I had access to his body and soul and so did he and now the flux what using exactly what it had seen against me.

The realization landed like ice in my veins.

The Flux wasn't just using Hades' memories now.

It was reaching through the tether—into mine.

And it was building something with it. <sup>1</sup>

Twisting it.





A heavy draft whispered down the corridor, stirring the velvet curtains that framed the hallway windows. They fluttered like they used to, caught in the crosswinds of a storm no one could see. But this wasn't wind.

It was presence.

Shifting.

Watching.

I forced my feet forward, the familiar hall stretching ahead, each step a reluctant echo. The portraits seemed to stare deeper than I remembered—no longer content to be still. The silver-framed glass cases gleamed with more clarity than they ever had in life, catching reflections that didn't belong to me.

> "It's not real," I whispered.

But it felt real.

Too real.

Rhea growled low in my mind, a warning more than a protest.

> "You must leave this place, Eve. It is not yours



anymore."

"I didn't come here," I murmured, turning a corner. "He dragged me in."

And just as I said it—

I saw the door.

My old bedroom.

Slightly ajar.

My breath caught.

The carpet dulled underfoot, like age had finally touched it. The lights above flickered. The scent changed too—no longer homey, but sickly sweet. Like dying roses left in a closed room for too long.

I pushed the door open.

The hinges creaked faintly—too faintly. Like the sound was mimicking memory, not reality. Inside, the walls shimmered with a muted golden hue, the drapes a soft lilac that caught the last light of a sunset that didn't exist.

And there she was.



Ellen.

Seated before the vanity, brushing her hair with lazy, practiced strokes. Her black curls shimmered, pinned back with the silver crescent comb I'd given her. The one she said was too "sentimental" for everyday use. 3

But she was using it now.

Her face glowed with youth—untouched by betrayal. Eyes bright, lips glossy. She looked exactly as she had five years ago, just before everything shattered.

> "You're late," she said, without turning. "We're going to shine tonight, Eve."

Her voice was light. Girlish.

My breath caught.

Because I knew now what "shining" had meant. Not a debut. Not a celebration.

A sacrifice.

A setup.

> "You planned this," I whispered, the ache in my throat raw and fresh.





She turned to me, still smiling. But her eyes...  
they didn't match the curve of her mouth.

They were empty.

A puppet running a loop.

Yet something was off.

Her right hand, brushing through her hair,  
paused midair—and that's when I saw it.

A mark.

A faint brand inked beneath her wrist, just above  
her pulse.

Shaped like an M.

Sharp, almost jagged. Familiar.

No, not familiar—known.

It was the same symbol I'd seen scorched into  
the arm of the feral who'd taken Elliot. The one  
I'd killed before it could flee. The mark I hadn't  
understood until now.

The image pulsed—glitched—and the whole  
room shimmered, like heat rising from asphalt.



Then it shifted.

The vanity was gone.

So was Ellen.

Now, I stood in the banquet hall.

Lights twinkled from glass chandeliers  
overhead. Long tables draped in silver and pale  
blue lined the room. Wolves and nobles danced.  
Laughed. Toasted.

And I stood among them—frozen.

Because I knew what came next.

It was our 18th birthday.

The day the world celebrated us.

The day the world ended.

I turned toward the dais. Ellen stood there in her  
gown—white, embroidered with moonlace. She  
smiled down at the crowd, radiant. Then she  
turned to look at me.

That same smile.

The same glitter in her eyes.



And then—

She jerked forward.

Doubling over.

The room hushed.

A sharp, wet sound broke the silence as blood  
sprayed across her bodice.

She vomited red.

Dark.

Unnatural.

I heard someone scream.

The first scream.

I turned, heart racing, vision tunneling—and saw  
myself.

At the edge of the hall.

Falling to my knees.

Clutching my head.

And then I shifted.

Not into a wolf.





Not into anything that belonged to this world.

My skin split.

My bones cracked.

And the beast that erupted from my frame had red eyes—blown wide, animal and ancient and hungry.

The room erupted into chaos.

People ran. Silver clanged. Some tried to shift. Others cowered. The lights above exploded one by one as I—she—the beast, leapt from the platform.

Blood.

So much blood.

> "Stop this!" I cried, voice echoing through the vision. "It's not real! It's already happened!"

But it kept happening.

Again and again.

The screams. The chaos. The betrayal.

Rhea's voice broke through the noise like



thunder.

> "It's not a memory anymore, Eve. It's bait."

And that's when I felt it.

A presence behind me.

Watching.

Feeding.

I turned slowly.

I turned slowly.

But it wasn't Vassir.

Not exactly.

The vision had changed again.

I stood now in the Obsidian lab—cold, metallic, humming with fluorescent light and the antiseptic scent of sterilized cruelty. The walls were glass, smeared with blood. The ground was littered with broken instruments and vials. I knew this place. Too well.

The lab

Kael was off the ground.



And in front of him...

Hades.

Or what wore him.

Black veins crawled across his skin like vines starving for light. His mouth curled, lips pale, eyes nearly gone—all blood and shadow, Flux surging at the seams. Wings was outstretched, claws curled tight around Kael's throat.

Kael's eyes bulged.

He wasn't fighting.

He wasn't screaming.

Just looking at me.

Begging.

My past self—stupid and shaking—stood before them with the final vial. The last doses of Vassir's Vein. The vial that could end this—or ruin everything.

And I remembered what I had done.

What I chose.





I had screamed. Cried. Pleaded. But in the end—

I saved Kael.

Injected the flux.

Doomed Hades.

> "And there it is," Vassir's voice coiled into my mind like smoke curling through a cracked window. "That pretty little moment where you decided."

I looked down at my own hands—empty now, shaking even in the illusion.

> "You love to say you came here to save him. But you chose someone else, didn't you?"

The scene froze.

Kael on the floor. Hades mid-snarl. My own face twisted in horror and decision. The needle just inches from flesh.

> "Tell me, Eve," he crooned, tone like shattered velvet. "Did you love Hades then? Or was Kael just... easier?"

I shook my head. "Stop."

> "Did you inject him because you were afraid of what he'd become—"

> "Stop—"

> "—or because deep down, you already believed he was too far gone?"

"No!"

My voice cracked through the silence,  
ricocheting off the illusion like a bullet.

But it didn't break.

It just shifted again.

The light flickered and the scene warped like a  
melting screen—colors sliding, floor turning to  
glass beneath my feet.

And suddenly—

I was outside.

In sunlight.

Bright.

Too bright.

The ruins of some battlefield stretched around



me. Burned trees. Blackened earth. And there—

And suddenly—

Heavy metals clamped around my neck.

Not metaphor. Not magic.

Chains.

I knelt before a crowd that stretched farther  
than I could comprehend.

Hundreds.

Thousands.

Rows upon rows of solemn faces, cloaked in  
mourning and justice, judgment and reverence.

Obsidian armor gleamed in the sun, spears  
raised skyward, unmoving.

I couldn't speak.

Could barely breathe.

The air was heavy with history.

The sky bled with the color of dusk—deep violet  
laced with orange like the last breath of a world  
that had watched too much, forgiven too little.





A holy platform rose before me, carved with  
runes I recognized in my marrow.

My hands were bound behind me. I knew this  
place.

I had never been here.

But Elysia had.

This was her execution.

And now I wore her memory like a funeral gown.

A hush fell over the crowd.

Chains rattled behind me.

And I turned.

He was dragged forward by six guards—no, not  
guards. Priests. Drenched in moon sigils, their  
eyes hidden beneath veils. They hauled him to  
his knees beside me.

Torn.

Bloodied.

Barefoot.

A man.



No—

A vampire.

Vassir.

But his face...

His face was Hades'.

Not almost.

Not similar.

Exactly.

I couldn't breathe.

His eyes met mine—wild, broken, pleading.

And for a second, just a second, everything  
inside me screamed.

Because it wasn't just illusion.

It was memory.

It was real.

It happened.

The past folding into the present like a knife  
folding into skin.



332 Memories As Bait



We were back in the past. The day we were executed, before the moon fell.

**Comment** <sup>11</sup>

**View All** >



Post your first comment!



**Vote**



**Fandom**



**Send Gift**