

346 Symbol Of Malrik

(I AM SORRY FOR THE LATE RELEASE, I WAS IN SURGERY AND I AM JUST RECOVERING) 1

Hades

My eyes remained steady on her as she reported, divulging all that had happened during the Rite. Her back straight, jaw set, eyes sharp making sure to make eye contact with everyone one at the round table. Her hands gestured as she spoke, once in a while she would tuck rouge fiery strand behind her ear.

She had the whole room's attention, effortlessly as though she had always had it. Even Silas did not move an annoyed muscle as he seemed to absorbed every word.

Gallint nodded along, his eyeing slightly in my periphery before he would catch himself.

I could see it, see her now, a queen, a Luna to all of them. A crown on her head, a new title, heightened respect. She was perfection personified, nothing, no one came close.



And then it hit me... and heart twisting painfully in my chest as I recalled what we had wanted. She was here, but not for much longer. I had lost forever with her.

The painful remembrance was enough to wake me from my hopeful stupor, her words tuning in fully as—

"During the final phase of the Fenrir Rite," she stated, "a cognitive shift occurred within the possessed Alpha. Vassir—the entity formerly believed to be separate—confirmed otherwise."

I froze.

So did half the table.

"He stated clearly that the Alpha did not simply host the Flux," she continued. "He is its reincarnation. The second life of Vassir himself, forged by unnatural convergence—venom, trauma, legacy."

The silence that followed was surgical. Stiff. Still.

"He referred to me as Elysia's return. And referred to him—" she did not look at me, "—as his own."



A few council members stiffened. Others whispered beneath their breath. But no one interrupted her.

"He further claimed that the Bloodmoon is not a prophecy, but a gate. A convergence point designed to collapse the current order. The war to come will not be Lycan versus Wolf. Nor Alpha against Alpha. It will be entropy. The end of lineage, of species, of balance."

"Collapse of the current order?" Cain muttered, there was a strange hope in his voice, a glimmer in his eyes unmistakable.

My eyes narrowed at my brother. I still had no idea what the deal between Eve and Cain was.

Her voice didn't shake. Not once. "Yes, that was what he said."

A fleeting smile marred his lip before it faded again.

I clenched my fist on the table before relaxing again, releasing air through my nose. I knew my brother, too well. He was hiding something.

I had been so preoccupied with not letting the



flux devour me from the inside out and trying not lose my mind over Eve that I had to paid enough attention to the new player at the table.

He had been trying to pull Eve in since the moment she came here—the cryptic messages, the sudden coincidental meeting when she left the tower. At first, I thought it was strategy.

Now I wasn't so sure.

Cain leaned forward slightly, elbows resting on the polished obsidian table, his expression unreadable. But I knew him. I knew that glint in his eye wasn't just curiosity.

It was calculation.

"He said to follow the symbol of Malrik," Eve continued, calm as steel.

At the mention of a symbol pertaining to Malrik, a cold, icy chill spread through my veins, a oddly familiar sensation as though my body new but my mind was yet to catch on. "That it would lead to the location of his second horn—a relic necessary for survival. Not power. Survival."

That got Silas' attention. The sour-faced Alpha



fingers twitched. He didn't believe in gods, not in the way most did in our world, but he believed in weapons. "The Vampire prince's horn is ripped off his head, according to archive records."

"She would know," Kael stated. "She saw it."

Eve went momentarily quiet before clearing her throat. "Yes, I saw the execution."

"No offense but did you travel into his majesty's psyche or used a time machine?" Gallintl questioned."

"It could be both. I have memories of my past life, so I can recall the events and yes, Vassir's horn was broken off."

"Without it," Eve added, "he said our army would be dust. With it, the forgotten would remember."

A murmur rippled across the table.

"That is," someone muttered near the far end, "just great. More riddles."

Montegue sighed, rubbing his temple. "The location of the horn has remained unknown till today. Every search team sent over the centuries



has turned up with dust and speculation."

"Perhaps that was the point," Cain said, voice smooth. "It was never meant to be found until now."

Silas scoffed. "Or it never existed in the first place. Maybe the Prince of Ash just liked drama."

"It exists," Eve said firmly, silencing the room again. "And he said it would sing. Not to me. Not to Hades. But to those meant to rise."

Her words fell like stone into a deep well. No echo. Just weight.

Montegue adjusted his seat, expression unreadable. "And this 'symbol of Malrik'? Did he elaborate?"

"No," Eve replied. "Only that it will lead us there. That when it surfaces, it will call out."

"A myth wrapped in a curse wrapped in a scavenger hunt," Gallint muttered.

"Isn't that what saved your King?" Kael snapped.

Gallint's lips pressed shut, but not in agreement.

My hand curled tighter around the edge of the



table. I could feel the room splintering into factions, those who believed her, those who doubted, and those like Cain... who were already moving pieces.

> "The horn must be found." Cerberus growled.
"It is the key to a new world."

> "How do you know?" I asked.

> "Being lost takes you to where lost things go."
He replied ominously.

"The symbol of Malrik, he said?" Montegue muttered, all eyes falling on him.

"Yes," she replied.

He held her gaze, and I could see the gears in his head turning, trying to figure out if in the numerous tomes and articles he had read, maybe just maybe something would click.

The silence was heavy as slowly everyone seemed to await the the oldest council man share what he would eventually discover.

But the chill spread again.

This time it wasn't subtle. It wasn't a whisper



along the spine or a fleeting brush across skin.

It gripped me.

I stiffened in my seat, eyes narrowing, pulse skipping once—twice—before thundering forward like a war drum.

Something about that name—Malrik—itched at the inside of my skull. My fingers curled tighter, the table's edge biting into my palm.

> Symbol. He said symbol...

And then, in a blink, it was there—not in the room, but behind my eyes.

That M.

That strange sigil.

I had seen it.

Not in a tome. Not in passing.

I had seen it on the throat of one of the ferals who had taken Elliot.

That beast, no, that thing, had it branded beneath its skin. And I remembered...



I remembered the way the Flux inside me had recoiled. Not raged. Not fought. Recoiled. As if it was disgusted by it. As if it recognized it.

My breath caught, heat creeping into my spine.

"Eve," I said, louder than intended.

Her head turned sharply toward me.

"That symbol," I said, voice tight. "Did he describe it?"

She blinked, thoughtful. "He didn't describe it..."

I stood abruptly.

Startled glances flicked toward me, but I barely noticed.

"It was carved into the feral's throat," I said. "The ones who took Elliot."

"It was an M," I said, voice low but firm. "A strange one, crooked, bizarre looking. But unmistakably an M. Stylized like mirrored fangs."

A few council members exchanged confused glances. Silas frowned, Gallint tilted his head.

But Eve...



Realization blew across her face like wind over flame.

Her breath hitched.

"I've seen it," she said softly, an almost-gasp.

Her eyes met mine, sharp, shaken.

"I saw it on my sister's hand," she murmured. "In the void. A faint, branded version hidden beneath her sleeve, just before the party..."

Her voice faded off...

She looked around the table now, eyes widening.

"It was on the guards too. The ones who stood by during Vassir's horn removal. And..."

Her voice dropped to a whisper.

"...the same symbol was carved into the skin of every feral, like the lab reported."

A suffocating stillness swept the room.

Cain's expression was unreadable. Montegue sat straighter, hands folding on the table as though steadying himself.



"It cannot be a coincidence," Montegue finally said, his tone grave.

"No," Eve whispered. "It can't be. We know the ferals were most definitely sent by Darius."

She looked up, gaze burning now.

The room had held its breath. Kael was on his tablet already, scrolling and searching before a whisper escaped him. "It is a M, it was a M..."

"M for Malrik," Gallinti whispered.

A slow chill worked its way up my spine.

The Flux hadn't just feared that symbol.

It remembered it.

Eve was breathless, her eyes never leaving me.

"The ferals were from Darius. The horn is with Darius."

