



359 From The Top

Eve ¹

There was long pause as I readied myself for what felt like a confession.

"I hated him Majesty, my husband,"

I watched their expression shutter, faces contorting into shock. Perhaps not because of my former hatred of their king but because I had the gall to confess it before an audience like this.

"So I..." the memory for some reason made me chuckle as I paused my speaking. "Tried to poison him." ¹

Despite the silence, they were supposed to keep since questions would allowed at then of my statements, gasps and murmurs ripped through the press, all scribbling before their shock had even subsided.

"The poison, Argenic was my lipstick on the day we shared our first kiss." I glanced down at where Hades's hand was still connected with mine. He was shaking but as my eyes snapped to



his face, I saw a dimple peeking through.

Relief fluttered in my chest as my eyes fell forward, back to the press who were waiting, apprehension and shock written all over their faces, and surprisingly some had light smiles splitting their lips as wrote down vigorously.

"But I don't feel that way anymore," I quickly added, heat rising up my neck.

"True enemies to lovers then," a reporter in back blurted.

To my shock, the others responded with reluctant laughter.

I could feel Hades' eyes on me as he watched me unabashed before his people. A lycan king staring at a werewolf should have been a scandal and could awaken a greater wrath from the people who would not accept the concept but Hades did not seem to care in the slightest.

"You could call it that," I answered that question.

"The aftermath of the stunt I pulled was anything but pleasant, but you already knew that. You know your king." I stated, keeping my face



straight once more.

Some responded by nodding and smiling as they continued to scribble furiously.

"But it was expected. Two people coming together in a marriage that neither wanted, forged under political duress, with centuries of bloodshed between them... What did you all think would happen?"

This time, no one dared interrupt.

"It was a power move. A performance. They dressed me up, paraded me around, and expected me to play the silent Luna. Smile. Wave. Bow. Be tamed."

I looked out at the press, catching the eyes of the older officials near the front. One of them—an elder Lycan from the Western Coalition—looked away first.

"But I am not a tamed thing. And I never will be."

Silence again. Heavy. Respectful.

"And neither is he," I added, glancing at Hades.

"That was the problem. And maybe... the beginning of the solution."



His gaze met mine, unreadable but steady.

"I didn't understand him then. I saw a tyrant in a crown, not the man beneath it. And he—" my voice wavered slightly, "—he saw a monster in a pretty dress. Someone he could use, like everyone else."

I let the words hang, raw and honest. Let them sting. "The feeling of utterly despair was further exersubated when I found out my father had a hand in the massacre of the royal family, of my majesty's late wife and unborn child." Tears welled as I recalled that moment when he revealed it to me.

The room turned dulled, solemn.

"The only way out of the guilt was death for me so I took that way..."

The room turned into a graveyard of breath. Even the scribbling stopped.

You could hear the click of one pen hitting the marble floor. No one dared move to pick it up.

"I tried to kill myself," I said.

Gasps. Audible and immediate. But no one



spoke.

"I slit my wrist in the bathtub but... he saved me... just in time. Got me help in form of a therapist and even took me out to the gala, where I was first interviewed." I glanced at the familiar blond reporter that was seated in the front row. The one by the name of Maris.

I looked away.

Maris didn't. Her gaze lingered, pen frozen midair. She looked different now—less poised, more human. As if what I'd said had peeled away the polished lens through which she viewed me.

I returned my focus to the crowd.

"You all saw that interview," I continued. "But what you didn't see was the part where I had to be convinced to even step outside my room. What you didn't see were the guards posted at every exit in case I bolted. What you didn't see... was him."

I turned slightly to Hades again. My voice was softer now. Not weak. Reflective.

"You didn't see how he sat beside me, silent, for



an hour before I could breathe properly. How he didn't force me. Didn't command me. Just waited. As if... my will still mattered."

The murmur that spread was not one of shock this time—but of something else. Something more dangerous in politics.

Sympathy.

"I didn't fall in love that day," I clarified quickly, raising my voice above the budding hum. "This is not a fairy tale. I didn't swoon, or forget the blood between us, or pretend that he hadn't hurt me before."

I inhaled.

"But I started to see the man behind the monster. Just as he began to see the woman beneath the scars."

At that, Hades visibly shifted. Not toward discomfort, but pride. Silent, subtle pride. His hand rested on the table, open, near mine. I didn't take it this time. But I let it be close.

"And still, it wasn't easy. There were arguments. Screaming. Silence. Doors slammed so hard the



Tower trembled. I'm sure some of you here heard them."

A couple reporters chuckled tightly.

"But we didn't give up. Not out of romance. Out of necessity. Because this bond—this cursed prophecy—forced us to confront not just each other, but ourselves. Our grief. Our rage. Our losses."

My eyes swept across the sea of faces again.

"You know what it's like to lose someone. Some of you lived through a cataclysm that destroys all in its wake. The fires. The coups. You know what war does. It doesn't just steal lives—it changes the survivors. War doesn't ask who's right. It just keeps going."

The cameras flashed. Light after light like little bursts of heat against my skin.

"That's why I'm here. Not to prove I'm innocent. Not to ask you to like me. But to tell you the truth: this war, the one on your doorstep, will not be won by loyalty alone. It will be won by truth. By unity. And by leaders who aren't afraid to bleed before you."



I stepped slightly back from the podium.

"I have bled. You've seen it, whether you realized it or not. You've judged me for it. And now I stand here, unpainted, unmasked, and undeniably still alive."

Hades rose beside me, his towering form drawing silence again. He didn't speak. Not yet. He didn't need to. His presence was a closing statement on its own.

But I turned toward him anyway.

"Do you want to say anything?"

He looked at me, then at the room.

And shook his head once.

"You said it all."

The press began to stir—questions trembling at the edges of their tongues, pens gripped tight, hope and hunger alive in their eyes.

But Montegue stepped forward once more.

"That will be all for now. Questions will be answered during the next segment. Security will guide you through the designated paths."



Groans, protests, snapping shutters.

But no one disobeyed.

I said laid the foundation for the truth. But soon they would question me on everything else. Me introducing myself, laying it down for them was for credibility and to ensure the next part would be taken as the truth because the first part was as genuine as I could manage.

It was necessary.

Because what came next... would shake what little peace this realm still clung to.

I could already feel the questions behind their eyes. The weight of them. They weren't here just to hear about our marriage, or my redemption, or even my pain. That was the humanizing prelude—the part that made me real. Relatable. Breakable.

But the next part?

That was where everything broke.

Montegue announced a five minutes, break for both the speakers and reporters to get their things in order.



Hades

As soon as Montague announced the five-minute recess, I turned to her.

Eve stood with her hands still at her sides, fingers twitching as if they weren't sure whether to ball into fists or reach for something. Her expression remained composed, but I saw the faint pulse at her neck beating too fast.

"You were brilliant," I said quietly.

Her shoulders lifted, held the breath, then dropped.

"Brilliance won't save me from the next round."

I stepped closer, dropping my voice to a murmur only she could hear. "You can do it."

Her gaze flicked up to mine. There was a tremble in her eyes, but not from fear—more like steel heating in a forge.

"Are you ready?" I asked.

"No," she answered, but she straightened anyway. "But that never stopped me before."



We returned to the stage.

The lights snapped back on. The press returned like bloodhounds after a scent, this time no longer restrained. The rules had changed. The first part was a monologue.

This part was war.

Montegue's voice rang out crisply.

"Segment Two: Verified Questions."

He gestured to the first journalist—a woman in a sleek navy suit with a badge from the Eastern Tribune.

She stood, flipping a page on her clipboard.

"Lady Eve, first question—rumors have circulated since your first shift that your wolf is... not fully werewolf. That it has Lycan traits. Is it true that your wolf is, in fact, a Lycan?"

A hush fell.

Eve's spine didn't so much as twitch. She took a slow breath and leaned toward the mic.



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Eve

"It's not a rumor," I replied clearly. "It's fact."

A soft ripple of murmurs ran through the crowd.

"My wolf, Rhea, is a Lycan."

The reaction was explosive.



I am sorry, I will update soon



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