



362 Where is The Beta?

Eve ¹

His body slammed into mine, arms wrapping tight, just as a slab of ceiling cracked from above. We hit the floor hard—his weight shielding me from the stone and smoke and fire as it rained down.

Screams tore through the air.

Reporters scrambled in every direction, some knocked over by the shockwave, otherjg'f l

s dragged behind upturned chairs as another section of the ceiling gave way. ²

Hades rolled, dragging me with him behind the metal framework of the backdrop as heavy debris pelted the stage like divine punishment. "Shift!" he barked. "Now, Eve—go!"

My bones snapped mid-breath, clothes shredding away as fur and power tore through skin. I burst forward in Rhea's form—large and red-eyed—just in time to avoid a falling light fixture that would've crushed us both. I dodged



out of the way, heart in my throat from the fear and adrenaline.

The floor was a battlefield of overturned chairs, dust clouds, and screams. I dodged a support beam, nearly tripping over an unconscious guard, and ducked behind what was left of a camera tower.

"Gammas—contain the chamber!" Hades roared, half-shifted now, his eyes glowing like scorched suns. "Evacuate civilians! Ensure to scan IDs in case we had the infiltrator in out midst."

Dozens of Gammas rushed in from the side entrances. There were wounded wolfs all around, the press had shifted to save themselves from raining debris.

Now as the thick dust settled, I watched as some of the civilians were able to heal from their injuries, while others injures were far too great, their healing too slow to counter the excessive loss of blood.

Stretchers appeared. Guards were already pulling injured civilians out from beneath debris, barking orders over the chaos. Some shifted back as their bodies could no longer hold the



form.

And then—

Boom.

A second blast.

But not here.

Far above.

The sound came distant, dull—but deep enough
to shudder the floor above our heads.

Hades' hand flew to the communicator clipped
to his ear.

"Kael. Do you copy?"

No reply.

"Kael, report! What's the situation on the upper
floors?"

Silence.

Static.

Nothing.

His eyes snapped to me.



Something was wrong.

Very wrong.

I shifted halfway back, my body trembling with adrenaline, ears still ringing. I looked around—dust thick in the air, injured being rushed out through side exits, smoke pouring in from cracked vents.

This wasn't random.

This was planned.

"They had us distracted," I muttered, staring at the chaos. "The press, the unrest in the pack, the Alphas fractures—it was all part of it."

Hades turned toward me slowly, his face stricken, unreadable.

"This was act two," I whispered, barely audible over the screaming and sirens. "The attack was the real hit."

Realization dawned behind his eyes.

"It was a distraction." My voice was stronger now, low and furious. "They wanted us reacting. Scrambling. Talking. Exposing truths while they



moved quietly through the Tower." 1

The puzzle fell into place.

The interview

The unrest.

The need for emergency council meeting.

The press conference..

The council spread thin, the Gamma lines redeployed, Kael held up at the upper wing with no contact.

This wasn't a breach.

This was an infiltration.

A cold knot formed in my stomach.

Hades stared into the smoke swirling from the upper levels, face pale. "They've already moved past security."

I swallowed hard, watching the flood of injured being carried out.

Montegue's voice pulled me back to reality, past the ringing in my ears. "I will take care of this.



Both of you need to get up there."

Montegue's command barely registered before Hades was already shifting beside me—bones breaking, tendons stretching, his form blooming into midnight fur and fury.

I followed.

The change took me mid-step, paws hitting the dust-laden floor with a heavy thud. We burst through the debris cloud together, launching up the stairwell. My lungs burned with the effort, each floor a blur of stone and smoke.

Kael, please be okay. 8

My mind spiraled with every thundering step. The communicator in Hades' ear still crackled with nothing. No signal. No heartbeat. No Kael.

And Elliot.

My heart stung with panic. I pictured his small hands, the way he clung to his drawing pad, the soft sound of his voice when he finally said Daddy. He was just a boy.

Please let him be safe. Please— 1



As we reached the first secured checkpoint, a Gamma stood panting beside the blown-open security door, his fur scorched at the edges.

"Alpha—Luna," he rasped. "It was the holding wing. A bomb—detonated inside one of the reinforced cells. Initial impact took out surveillance, firewalls. We've been cut off from real-time feed."

I exhaled in one sharp breath, relief trickling in.

If it was the holding wing, it wasn't Elliot's floor.

He was safe.

He had to be.

But the Gamma's next words crushed the air from my lungs.

"We believe the target was... Felicia Montegue."

I froze.

My claws scraped stone as I stopped cold in the stairwell. Smoke wafted up around me. Hades slowed, turning back.

"What did you just say?" I demanded.



The Gamma lowered his gaze. "The holding wing. Cell Nine. Her room was the epicenter."

Felicia.

My pulse rang in my ears. I couldn't breathe.

"She was supposed to be isolated," I hissed. "No access. No visitors. How—?"

"There was no breach in her room," the Gamma replied quietly. "Not from the outside."

Hades and I exchanged a look.

No breach from outside... but a detonation inside her cell?

My heart began to pound again.

Not from fear for her.

But for what this meant.

For what she might have said.

Or taken.

Or released.

"She's gone, isn't she?" I asked hoarsely.



The Gamma didn't answer.

He didn't need to.

Hades growled low beside me, his hackles rising.

I stared ahead—past the next floor, into the burning haze.

"She's not dead," I whispered. "She staged it." 1

"She had help," Hades murmured.

And in my gut, I already knew who it might've been.

This wasn't just about revenge.

This was about cleaning the slate.

Wiping evidence.

Resetting the board.

Felicia Montegue had vanished.

And if she had help getting out—then this wasn't act two.

It was the beginning of the final play.



Hades

My voice came out raw, demanding, nearly a growl. "Where's Beta Kael?"

The Gamma flinched slightly, then straightened. "He moved toward Master Elliot's quarters right after the first explosion. Said he was securing the heir personally."

Eve's breath caught.

I saw it—the way her pupils contracted, her body stiffened, her claws scraped the wall as she jerked toward the stairwell again.

"Was there a breach?" I snapped. "At Elliot's wing?"

The Gamma opened his mouth, just about to speak—

But we didn't wait.

We were already gone.

Eve launched forward with a snarl, tearing through the smoke and rubble. I followed, paws slamming the stone, my mind a scream of worst-case scenarios.



Please. No.

The corridors blurred. My communicator still buzzed with static. The guards we passed tried to call out—status reports, updated orders—but nothing mattered. Not if Elliot—

Not if he was—

We reached the hallway leading to the secured suite. But we would reach our room before his.

But stopped dead.

The door of our room was open.

Wide.

A pool of blood soaked the threshold.

Eve shifted back mid-step, stumbling barefoot across the cold floor, her knees hitting marble with a sound I never wanted to hear again.

My heart dropped like a stone.

"Eve—stay here!" I barked, already leaping over the threshold.

The room was chaos.



Ransacked. Torn apart.

The smell of scorched wiring and blood hung thick in the air. A chair lay overturned, its legs snapped clean. The reinforced window had cracked, spiderwebbed with impact. Monitors blinked in and out—one of them shattered, another still playing security footage from earlier in the day.

But they were gone.

Both of them.

"Kael?" I called, voice echoing off the walls.
"Elliot?!"

No answer.

Just silence and static.

I turned, scanning for anything—anything—that could tell me what happened. Blood trailed across the marble floor in staggered streaks, as though someone had been dragged, or fought while injured.

I followed it.

To the corner of the room—where Kael's



communicator lay.

Crushed.

Smeared in blood.

I knelt, jaw clenched so tight my teeth hurt. The casing had been torn off, wires twisted, fried from the inside. Whoever did this didn't want him calling for help. Didn't want us tracking them.

Eve stood frozen by the door, her arms wrapped tight around herself, Rhea's power pulsing under her skin like a storm barely held at bay. Her eyes were wide. Glowing.

Her voice was paper-thin.

"They were here."

Eve

My legs buckled again.

My mind couldn't grasp it—Kael was gone, and Elliot— 1

My baby.



He was just a boy. Our boy.

Not a soldier. Not a pawn.

Not a piece on some blood-soaked board.

"Elliot," I whispered, and suddenly I couldn't breathe. My hands dug into my chest, desperate to hold something together before I shattered entirely. "Elliot..."

My voice cracked into a sob.

Rhea surged under my skin, ready to tear the walls apart, ready to kill anything that dared touch my son.

Hades turned to me, voice low, trembling with fury. "We will find him. I swear to the gods, we'll bring him back."

"He's five," I choked out. "He's five, Hades! He sleeps with the light on—he can't even finish his soup without someone sitting next to him! He draws wolves with crayon teeth—"

I crumpled to my knees, the blood soaking into my clothes like ink, like accusation.

"They took our baby."



Hades was on the verge too—his hands curled into fists so tight I heard his claws crack through skin. He turned and punched the wall hard enough to splinter stone. The force echoed like thunder.

That was when the Gammas arrived.

They poured into the room—eyes scanning, mouths open in shock, one of them visibly swaying at the pool of blood by the door. The silence that followed was broken only by the static from Kael's destroyed comm.

But then—

I heard it.

The faintest sound.

A whimper. Muffled.

My ears twitched. So did Rhea's.

I stood slowly, my eyes narrowing, head cocked.

There it was again.

Soft. Broken.

Crying.



"Did you hear that?" I whispered.

Hades went still. "What?"

"That." I moved toward the far wall. "Behind—something."

I stalked across the chaos, every hair on my arms standing. My gaze locked onto Danielle's painting. .

I placed my ear to the canvas.

There.

A sob.

A child's voice.

I gasped. "He's behind here."

Without waiting for confirmation, I reached up and touched the moon painted at the center—

Click.

The wall shifted.

A low mechanical groan echoed—and the painting slid to the side, revealing a small hidden chamber, dark and cramped.



362 Where is The Beta?



Inside—

Curled in the shadows, his cheeks streaked with tears, was Elliot. 3

He looked up, trembling.

Eyes wide.

And the first words out of his mouth came in a snifle.

"They hurt Uncle Kael" 1

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