

38 Let The Games Begin

Hades~ 1

The rest of the Lunar Gala continued without a hitch. She didn't return moments before her name was announced.

"I introduce my new queen, Ellen Valmont of the Silverpine pack."

Applause rang out through the entire hall as Ellen walked up the dais to me. I wrapped my hand around her waist and felt her stiffen.

This would be quite fun—what I had in store for her. Kael had advised that I could be kinder and gentler with her, asking mundane things about how she was doing and whatnot. It wasn't my style, and that one moment I attempted it when I saw her visibly upset yesterday... it, at least in my opinion, backfired. I even patted her head.

Nerve-racking, sweet gestures were not my forté. It was mortifying, to say the least.

But when I put my own twist on it, I could just seduce her. The reason she had been so averse to me was that I had taken her away from her beloved. Wouldn't it be a delightful twist to make her fall for me? Women like her loved a prince

charming, didn't they?

Ellen was a bit of an enigma too, a puzzle that I didn't mind solving—a woman I wouldn't mind unraveling. I smirked, my grip on her waist tightening slightly. She glanced at me, ocean eyes blazing with an emotion I found amusing. Oh, she was intriguing; I hadn't lied to her about that part.

The hall was still buzzing with both excitement and wariness from the announcement, the room full of Lycans who were either curious or wary of our union. A necessary alliance, they called it. But to me, it was much more—a game, a test of wills, and I intended to win. And a countdown to a war prophesied.

As we stood there, side by side, Kael's words before the gala echoed in my mind. Be kind, be patient, he had said. Give her a reason to trust you.

Trust? I almost laughed. Why would I need trust when I could have control? Seduction was so much more effective, more thrilling. Trust would come later—if at all. I leaned down, my lips brushing against her ear.

"Smile for them," I murmured softly. "You

wouldn't want to disappoint your new subjects, would you?"

She shot me a sideways glare when I pinched her waist but forced a smile. Oh, how I enjoyed provoking her. It had only just begun, and I had so much more planned.

Soon, she would see. Soon, Ellen Valmont would be mine in every way possible, along with the powers I needed.

A subtle scent hit my nose on our way out of the event. The princess looked uncomfortable. She moved as far away from me as she could, and being in the limo helped. 3

I glanced over at where she sat. She was trying to make herself smaller, like she wanted to disappear. Her body language told me she wanted to be alone, the way her shoulders were hunched, her arms crossed tightly over her chest. Her fingers were trembling slightly, though she tried to keep them still. She avoided my gaze, staring out the window as if the world outside could offer her some kind of escape.

I let out a low chuckle, breaking the tense silence between us. "You're not much for conversation, are you?"



Ellen didn't respond at first, her eyes still locked on the passing city lights. Her silence wasn't just defiance—it was exhaustion. She was drained, emotionally and physically. That much was clear. I wondered what happened in the bathroom stall.

"I don't believe a single word you said," she finally spoke.

"What?"

She snapped her head toward me. "I don't believe a single word you said," she repeated.

"Why is that?"

"I know I seem naïve enough to fall for that bullshit, but think again," her voice was hard, and I could feel the palpable surge of emotion from her.

"Then why do you believe I'm being nice?" I asked.

Her eyes narrowed. "You're playing mind games," she replied. "Attempting to put me at ease, only to pull the rug out from under me just as I'm getting comfortable."

I raised an eyebrow, intrigued by her defiance.

"Mind games? Is that what you think of me,

Ellen? That I'd go to such lengths to toy with you?"

Her jaw tightened as she glared at me. "You already have. You've taken everything from me—my home, my freedom, my future. So no, I don't think you'd hesitate to mess with my mind too."

Her words were sharp, cutting through the air like a blade, but beneath her anger, I could sense something deeper—fear and uncertainty. She was far more affected by this situation than she let on, and that intrigued me even more. 3

I leaned back in my seat, folding my arms as I studied her. "You think too highly of yourself if you believe I'd go to such extremes just to play with you. Do you believe me to be so cruel?"

Her eyes flickered with something like doubt, though she quickly masked it. "Then what do you want from me?"

I smirked, leaning in slightly. "Isn't it obvious? I want you to accept your place by my side. To understand that resisting me is futile. You were chosen for a reason, Ellen. Us—we were always meant to be."

She scoffed, turning her gaze back to the window. "Meant to be? You're delusional. There

is no 'us.' There never will be."

I tilted my head, amusement dancing in my eyes.
"We'll see about that."

For a moment, neither of us spoke. The tension in the air was thick, but I could sense her walls cracking. Whether she realized it or not, she was engaging with me, and that was a step in the right direction. I had no intention of letting her escape this fate, no matter how much she fought against it.

"You'll come to see things my way eventually," I added, my voice softening, almost as if offering her a lifeline. "And when you do, it won't be as bad as you think."

Her shoulders stiffened again, and she glanced at me from the corner of her eye. "I won't fall for your lies, Hades. I don't care what you promise or how sweet you make it sound. I know what you are."

I smiled, dark and slow. "Oh, I never promised sweetness. What I offer is far better than that. And maybe, just maybe, something more." My eyes roved over her body.

She didn't respond, but her silence told me everything I needed to know. The war between



us had begun, and I had no doubt that I would win. I didn't doubt that the walls she had erected around herself were strong, but I would break them down until she lay bare for me to feast on.

As the car pulled up to the estate, I leaned in one last time, my voice a whisper against her ear. "Let the games begin then," she flinched as the door opened.

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