



## 52 As It Should Be

Eve- 1

Dinner the next day was less tense, especially with the Beta, Kael, conversing with me. Felicia was scowling as usual, but she did not speak. Elliot, on the other hand, was simply watching. Each time my eyes went to him, he would look away. I hoped he didn't believe I was mad at him.

"How much to commission a painting?" Kael asked. "I need one that can capture my prowess."

I had come to like the blond man with the infectious laugh.

"Of course, but it's gonna cost ya," I replied.

Kael grinned, leaning back in his chair with a smug look. "Name your price, princess."

I chuckled. "I'll need some supplies, and your full cooperation for those long, grueling hours of posing."

Felicia scoffed from her seat. "You mean you're going to spend hours staring at him?"

Kael shot her a look, unfazed. "Can't blame her for wanting to capture this perfection." He gestured to himself dramatically, making me laugh again.

"Don't flatter yourself," I said, but my smile

lingered. "I'll do it on one condition though."

"And what's that?" Kael asked, leaning forward now, intrigued.

I glanced at Hades. He was silent, as always, but his gaze was fixed on me, piercing and unreadable.

"I want to paint the king too," I said, my voice steady as I attempted to bring him into the conversation.

Kael's brows shot up, and Felicia's scowl deepened, but I ignored them. Hades hadn't moved, hadn't reacted, but I could feel the shift in the air between us.

He tilted his head slightly, as if considering my offer. His cold, calculating eyes locked onto mine. "I am not interested," his tone was curt.

Something sharp pierced my chest, and my face burned with embarrassment as Felicia burst out laughing.

Each time Felicia laughed, Hades would tense up further. After greeting me, he hadn't spoken to me at all or even looked at me. I bit my lip, guilt and shame washing over me. It must have been my abrupt kiss that had caused this distance between us.

When he began being civil, I hadn't trusted it. I believed he was playing games with me because

I could easily imagine someone like him doing just that. But his actions... Was it possible that someone could fake it to this extent? Hiring a therapist for me, the night of my heat, trying to make amends for not believing me, taking me out to my favorite place, and gifting me the art supplies. Along the way, I had let myself get carried away. I needed to apologize.

Hades stood abruptly, the scrape of his chair against the floor startling me. His face was a blank mask, the cold, distant persona slipping back into place effortlessly. Without a word, he turned and left the dining hall, his long strides carrying him away as if he couldn't bear to be in the same room any longer.

I froze, shame and frustration bubbling up inside me. I glanced at the others—Kael was frowning, confused by the sudden shift, while Felicia wore a smug smile. She seemed to enjoy the sight of me wilting under Hades' rejection.

I couldn't just sit there. I needed to make things right, even if it meant facing more of his cold wrath.

Excusing myself hastily, I hurried after him. My heart pounded in my chest as I followed him down the corridor, the distance between us seeming to grow with each step.

"Hades!" I called out, my voice trembling slightly.

He paused at the end of the hall but didn't turn to face me. His back was rigid, shoulders tense. I took a deep breath and gathered my courage before approaching him.

"I... I'm sorry," I said softly. "About the kiss. It was wrong of me."

He still didn't turn around. His silence was like a wall, impenetrable and heavy. I waited, hoping for any kind of response, but none came.

"I didn't mean to make things uncomfortable between us," I continued, my voice barely above a whisper now. "I just... I don't know what I was thinking."

Finally, Hades spoke, but his voice was ice. "You weren't thinking. You were reckless, as always."

The sting of his words hit hard, and I bit my lip to keep the hurt from showing. "Hades, I—"

"Don't." He finally turned to face me, his eyes colder than I'd ever seen them. "Don't misunderstand this arrangement between us, Ellen."

Him not using my nickname hurt more than I expected. I didn't want to hear my sister's name coming out of his mouth. "Red" had started to grow on me, I realized.

His words cut deeper than I could have imagined, and I flinched at his cruelty. It was like

we had returned to the beginning—to that cold, distant place where he saw me as nothing more than a tool.

"I thought..." My voice faltered as I tried to find the right words. "I thought we were starting to understand each other."

Hades' lips curled into a bitter smile. "Understand each other?" He let out a sharp laugh, devoid of warmth. "I am trying to be civil because I don't like us being at loggerheads every moment. It is not appropriate. And it seemed to have worked," his eyes darkened. "A little too well."

I blinked back the sudden rush of tears, hating how vulnerable I felt in front of him. "But... the things you did—"

"Were nothing," he interrupted, his tone final. "They were meant to make you feel better. Not make you feel anything else."

I stepped back as if he had physically struck me, the weight of his dismissal sinking into my bones. He wasn't just rejecting me—he was erasing everything I thought we'd started to build. What was I thinking we were building? What was wrong with me? Was I so starved for care and attention that the moment a man I was supposed to hate offered me some, I tossed my common sense out? It seemed that was so.

"I see," I whispered, my voice barely audible.

Hades didn't give me another glance before turning away again. This time, I didn't follow. I stood frozen in the hallway, feeling the crushing weight of defeat. The walls I thought were starting to come down between us had just grown taller, thicker, and more impenetrable. Like they should have been.

It was like everything I had believed, every glimpse of warmth or understanding, had been an illusion. And now, the distance between us was unsurmountable. Like it should be.

Comment

View All >



Post your first comment



Vote



Fandom



Send Gift

Swipe left to continue >