

68 Taken

Eve~ 1

I opened my eyes to darkness. There was not a single source of light, not even a little. The place I was in was unfathomably black. I swallowed thickly and finally attempted to move.

My heart lodged in my throat when I found that I could not. I was seated, my hands and legs bound in the darkness.

My breaths came quick and shallow as I struggled against the restraints, panic clawing up my throat. The darkness was absolute—no shadows, no flickers, nothing but an endless, suffocating black. The air was thick, pressing in on me, trapping me. I strained my eyes, willing them to adjust, but there was nothing to see, no hint of light, no edges to ground me. Just darkness.

My heart pounded so hard it hurt, every beat sending a jolt of fear through me as I tugged at the binds on my wrists and ankles. They were tight, digging into my skin no matter how hard I wrenched and twisted. I was trapped, bound, helpless.

Thoughts rushed through my mind, wild and frenzied, each one worse than the last. Had Ellen finally decided to finish the job the bomb had failed at? I pictured her cold, unfeeling gaze, her lips pressed into that cruel line, and I shivered. Or... was this another twisted scheme of Hades, another way to break me, to force me to submit?

"No," I whispered, the word a tremor in the dark.
"No, please..."

My voice cracked, swallowed up by the silence. I tried again, louder, the desperation rising in my chest, clawing to get out.

"Please! Who's there?" My voice was barely a whisper against the dense blackness, fragile and trembling. I took a shaky breath and screamed louder, "Please! Help me! I don't know what I did, but please—let me go!"

My own voice echoed back at me, hollow and distant. The darkness pressed closer, thick and unyielding, suffocating me with each passing second. I twisted again, frantic now, yanking against the binds until my wrists burned. There had to be a way out. There had to be.

"Please!" I sobbed, my throat raw, every word edged with terror. "I... I'll do anything, just... let

"Please!" I sobbed, my throat raw, every word edged with terror. "I... I'll do anything, just... let me out. Let me out!"

A dreadful silence answered, deep and mocking. I felt as though the darkness itself was listening, savoring my fear, feeding off the helplessness that was eating me alive. I could barely breathe, each gasp growing shorter, shallower, as a relentless, crushing claustrophobia threatened to consume me.

My heart hammered faster, each frantic beat a countdown. I didn't know to what, but the terror kept building, an icy dread curling through me, poisoning every thought.

"Please," I whispered again, the word broken, hopeless. My voice was all I had left in this pitch-black hell. I was alone, bound and abandoned, and no one was coming to help me.

Bright light suddenly chased away the darkness, and I shut my eyes to keep it out. My heart jumped when I heard the clinking of heels on the ground. I squinted, trying to manage the light that had become unbearable.

A figure walked forward toward me. Before I could adapt to the light, I felt fingers digging into my chin and forcing my face up.



A sultry but mature voice made me freeze. "So this is the mutt?" she sneered.

I found myself staring face to face with a middle-aged woman. Green eyes glinted with loathing. She looked familiar. Her ebony black hair was speckled with white. It did not give the effect of old age but rather of sophistication and authority.

"Very unremarkable," another woman spat. This one I recognized immediately. Felicia. "Yet, the whore is trickier than she looks." 1

By the looks of things, they were mother and daughter.

Behind them were Lycans built like trucks, dressed in suits and armed.

I swallowed. I recalled the warning that Felicia had given me. She had promised she would not hesitate to end me.

"What are you talking about?" I asked quietly.

I did not see it coming; her palm slammed against my cheek, the force of it sending my head to the side. Pain exploded in my jaw, sharp and biting. I gasped, stunned, struggling to regain my composure as my heart raced even faster.

"Don't play dumb with me, Ellen," Felicia hissed, her voice a venomous whisper.

I blinked up at her, my face stinging badly, but I could not do anything about it. I was still bound.

Then she grinned; it was all fangs and loathing. "You don't know how long I have wanted to mar that face of yours."

My eyes widened with horror when the sanguine scent of blood kicked me in the gut. My eyes shifted to her manicured hand that had transformed into her wolf's claw.

My face was not stinging because I had been slapped alone; she had scratched me. Pain blossomed fully on my face, the wound bleeding profusely, falling down my face and onto my dress.

My heart raced as Felicia leaned closer, her green eyes glinting with a cold amusement that sent a shiver down my spine. "You think you're clever, don't you, Ellen? But we both know that cleverness has its price."

"What are you talking about?" I managed to reply, my voice trembling as the sting from her slap still throbbed on my cheek.

Felicia's smile widened, predatory and unsettling. "We know about the bomb and the phone. We even have our suspicions about the missing CCTV footage. You've been busy, haven't you?"

My stomach dropped, dread pooling in my gut. "I—I don't know what you mean." The words felt weak, a pitiful defense against the whirlwind of accusations.

The other woman stepped forward, towering over me like a shadow. "You can play the innocent act all you want, but we have plenty of ways to make you talk. And trust me, they won't be pleasant." Her voice was low and threatening, each word dripping with malice.

She turned to daughter. "She is good," she scoffed. "It's not surprising that Hades with his shriveled heart is falling for it."

I could barely breathe. Panic clawed at my throat, and I fought the urge to shrink away from them. "I—I have nothing to confess." I told them.

Felicia tilted her head, a mocking glint in her eye. "But you do, Ellen. You can confess now, and maybe—just maybe—we can make this easier for you. No more pain, no more..."

Felicia tilted her head, a mocking glint in her eye. "But you do, Ellen. You can confess now, and maybe—just maybe—we can make this easier for you. No more pain, no more... misunderstandings." She pointed somewhere and I followed her hand to a mounted camera. "And I will make sure Hades hears it from your slutty mouth."

"Confess what?" I spat, desperation lacing my voice. I had to hold on to my truth, but my heart raced with fear.

"About your little plans," Felicia continued, her tone dripping with disdain. "You thought you could seduce Hades, didn't you? Play the part of the victim while you schemed in the dark."

"No! That's not—" I stammered, but the words faltered under the weight of their gazes.

Felicia's grin widened, and she took a step closer, the scent of her wolf's aura wrapping around me like a noose. "You really think you can get away with this? We know you're behind the chaos. If you don't start telling the truth, we have a lot in store for you. And trust me, you won't enjoy it." 1

I felt a wave of nausea wash over me. The room seemed to close in, the air thickening with my

Felicia's expression hardened. "Keep lying, and you'll wish you had never crossed us." Her eyes flared with anger as she leaned in closer, her voice dropping to a dangerous whisper. "You're nothing but a little mutt playing with fire. Do you really think you can survive the flames?"

The words sank deep, igniting a fear that clawed at my insides. I had to stay strong, but the pressure was building, and I felt the walls closing in around me.

"Please," I whispered, desperation threading through my voice. "Just let me go."

Felicia straightened, her laughter ringing hollow. "Let you go? Oh, sweet Ellen, this is only the beginning. You have a long way to go before any of us can think about that. I have to pay you back for what you did to my son after all." 2

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