

## 82 Martial Arts?

Hades~ 1

I stepped into the room and the first thing that attacked me was her damn scent. I took a deep breath and she filled my lungs like the euphoric smoke of an imported cigar. This was what I had been having to face since I had her moved into my room. Honey, sweet and subtle laced with lavender earthy, flora and hypnotising.

My gaze shifted to the bed but I was surprised to see that she was not snuggled against my pillow as she normally was whenever I returned to the room at well past midnight. Uneasiness gripped me as my steps became more hurried. I turned on the lights and illumination flooded the room. But she was not there. A stubborn lump formed in my throat.

My eyes fell on the bathroom door and I made my way there. My heart was beating a mile a second as I reached the door. Putting into consideration how Kael's mother had spoken so harshly to her, it could have hit hard enough for her to spiral. The last time I found myself in front of the bathroom door trying to get to her, I had found her with her wrists slit.

So this time I did not wait before I slammed the door open. 1

Ellen gasped as I stepped in, my eyes roving over her naked form in the bathtub. Her hair was wet and sticking to neck and shoulders. Her glazier eyes were widened in horror, she was panting. Her skin was delectably flushed from the heat of the bath water that hid her body.

"Hades..." She said breathlessly, shoulders tense.

It had been a false alarm but my eyes narrowed on her. "What are you doing?" I asked.

She blinked at me, wet lashes fluttering as she gulped. "What do you mean?" She asked, incredulously, her tone high. "I am bathing." She said, her voice wavered slightly. She momentarily averted her eyes and lowered them to the bubbling bath water before they flickered back to me.

Cerberus reared his head and I tilted mine. My instinct was correct, she was hiding something. "Red," I murmured, taking a warning step closer to her. She squirmed. "What are you doing?"

"Like I said before I am bathing."

I stalked towards her, my eyes boring into her.



I stalked towards her, my eyes boring into her. Her lips slightly parted and her eyes wide. She was a vision. I could feel the tension crackling in the room like a live wire as I stepped closer. Her chest rose and fell, her breaths coming quicker, betraying her calm facade. I stopped at the edge of the tub, towering over her. My eyes roved over her skin, still glistening with water droplets that caught the light, tracing the curve of her neck, her collarbone, the rise of her chest. Her lips parted on a soft gasp, her lashes fluttering.

"Red." My voice was low, barely above a growl, the single syllable carrying a weight that made her squirm. I tilted my head, studying her with sharp, unyielding focus. "You're hiding something."

Her tongue darted out to wet her lips, and my gaze dropped to the motion, lingering there for a beat too long. A rush of heat surged through me, primal and unrelenting, but I shoved it down. This wasn't about me, about that pull she had on me like a tide I couldn't resist. This was about her.

"I'm not hiding anything," she said, her voice trembling. The denial came quickly, too quickly, and her eyes flitted down to the water as if it held a secret she didn't want me to uncover.



"Liar," I murmured, my voice dark and steady. I crouched beside the tub, the movement deliberate, and her breath hitched. I could feel the heat of her skin radiating through the steam rising off the water, and her scent—honey and lavender—wrapped around me again, intoxicating and maddening.

"Hades," she whispered, a faint plea in her tone as her wide eyes met mine. She was trying to hold her ground, but her resolve was cracking, her vulnerability shining through the cracks.

I leaned in just enough to make her heart race, my gaze sharp and searching. "You don't bathe at this hour," I said, my tone deceptively calm. "You were upset earlier. And now... this?" My eyes dipped to the water, then back to hers. "Tell me, Ellen. What are you hiding?"

Her chest rose as she inhaled deeply, her lips trembling as if she wanted to speak but couldn't find the words. My patience wore thin, my curiosity and concern twisted with the magnetic pull she always had on me. I reached out, fingers trailing the edge of the tub, and her gasp was soft but sharp, her reaction giving her away even if her words didn't.

"It's nothing," she finally said, her voice barely



"It's nothing," she finally said, her voice barely audible.

"Red," I warned again, leaning closer. My voice dropped to a low, dangerous whisper, the sound curling through the air like a threat and a promise. "Do not lie to me."

"I am not ly---" Then her eyes widened in utter horror as I dipped my hand into her bathwater. "Hades!"

I ignored her protests, my hand moving through the water. Her gasp filled the space between us, a sound that sent a shiver racing down my spine. The tension in the air grew heavier, hotter, with every passing second.

"Hades, stop—" she began, but her voice faltered as my hand brushed against her thigh beneath the water.

Her sharp intake of breath made my chest tighten. I paused, my fingers resting lightly against her skin, the warmth of her body against my palm searing through the water. Her gaze locked onto mine, wide and unsteady, her lips parted as though she were caught between words and surrender.

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The sound that escaped her—a soft, unbidden whimper—stirred something dark in me. My cock hardened so fast that I had to fight the urge to free it and stroke it. If this continued, it would become painful.

My fingers grazed her thigh again, a slow, deliberate stroke, as if daring her to speak the truth. Her lashes fluttered, her breaths growing heavier, her chest rising with each one. The movement offered me a teasing glimpse of her luscious breasts hidden just below the surface, her flushed skin peeking through the water.

Her head tipped back slightly, her eyelids half-closed, and for a moment, I saw the temptation reflected in her eyes. My hand shifted, grazing closer to the sacred space between her thighs, her body tensing under my touch. She sucked in a sharp breath, her lips trembling as her fingers gripped the edge of the tub, knuckles whitening.

My gaze flickered to her chest, the gentle sway of her breath pulling me under, and then back to her face. Her lips moved as if to say something, but the words never came.

And then I stopped.

With a sharp exhale, I pulled my hand back,



With a sharp exhale, I pulled my hand back, breaking the spell that had wrapped itself around us like a cocoon. Her body relaxed, but the tension in her eyes remained, a mix of confusion and frustration.

I stood, towering over her once again, my jaw tight, my gaze a storm. "You're lucky I have control, Red," I murmured, my voice thick with restraint. "Tell me what you're hiding before I lose it."

Her lips pressed together, her hands trembling slightly as they skimmed the water's surface. But this time, I saw it—the flicker of guilt in her expression, the faint shadow of a truth she didn't want to share.

"I... I dropped it," she said finally, her voice barely audible.

"What?" My brows furrowed, and I crouched again, my hand already reaching into the water.

"Hades, no—"

But I ignored her, my fingers searching through the warmth, brushing along the slick surface of the tub until they found something hard and smooth. I lifted it, droplets cascading from my hand as I held up the object in question: A book. 3

I looked at the title and it read: The Fundamentals of Martial Arts: A Beginner's Guide.

I stared at the book in my hand, water dripping off its damp cover. For a moment, I was too stunned to react. This wasn't at all what I expected, and as I looked at Ellen, my mind spun. Her face was flushed, but this time it wasn't from the bathwater. Her cheeks were bright red, her gaze darting anywhere but at me.

"What...is this?" I asked, my tone a mix of confusion and disbelief.

She swallowed hard, clearly embarrassed.

"It's...it's a book about martial arts."

My brow furrowed. "I can see that." I held it up, tilting my head. "Why is it in *my* bathtub?"

Her shoulders sank, and she let out a shaky breath. "... I dropped it," she admitted softly, her voice barely audible over the faint dripping of water. "I thought I could teach myself."

That admission hit me like a punch I wasn't expecting. I blinked, staring at her, trying to process her words. "You were trying to teach yourself martial arts?"

"Yes." Her voice grew firmer, though her face



"Yes." Her voice grew firmer, though her face was still crimson. "Jules is wolfless, and she can defend herself because she learned martial arts. I thought... I thought maybe if I learned too, I could protect myself. I wouldn't have to rely on you or anyone else all the time."

Her words struck a nerve, not out of anger but out of sheer disbelief. My mouth twitched, and before I could stop it, a laugh escaped me. A deep, unrestrained, genuine laugh that echoed off the bathroom walls.

Ellen's eyes widened, her embarrassment replaced with shock laced with hurt.

I tried to stop, I really did, but the more I thought about her sneaking a martial arts book into the bathroom, trying to learn from it while soaking in the tub, the harder I laughed. "Red," I managed between laughs, my chest shaking, "I just—this—" I gestured at the waterlogged book, "it's so *you*." 1

Her lips pressed into a pout, and she crossed her arms over her chest, hiding more of herself beneath the water. I instantly missed the view. "I don't see what's so funny," she muttered, her tone defensive. "I was being proactive."

I exhaled a long breath, wiping a hand down my

I exhaled a long breath, wiping a hand down my face to rein in my amusement. When was the last time that I laughed so fucking hard?

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Jules is 5 years older than Eve btw, for those who are confused. I have been getting comments and it seems that some believe she is 5 years old. 3



*Sorry, if the explicit words are jarring.  
This is a warning because the spice is going to be levelled up in later*

**Lilac\_Everglade**

Creator's Thought

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