

94 Between My Husband and I

This chapter is dedicated to Bailee_Nelson and J_Iva, your golden tickets don't go unnoticed.

Thanks for taking a chance on my story 🍷,🍷 1

Eve

Kael caught me right on time before I fell flat on my face. His hands were light as my face flushed with embarrassment.

"Maybe I am a drunk swan after all," I said in a small voice.

"A drunk swan but a swan all the same," he said in a dramatic voice.

I could do nothing but look back at him and we both burst into laughter. He let me go and I resumed the stance that he had taught me.

Kael took a step back, his arms crossed, a satisfied smirk tugging at his lips. "You're getting there, Red. One day, you might even give me a run for my money. Might." 4

I rolled my eyes, adjusting my footing just as he'd shown me. "You mean the day you get old and slow?"

He chuckled, the sound warm and unguarded.

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I groaned dramatically, earning another laugh from him. Despite the teasing, Kael's patience and encouragement were a balm to the insecurities I'd carried into this endeavour. He wasn't condescending, nor did he push me beyond what I could handle. He let me struggle, let me learn, but was always there to catch me before I hit the ground—literally.

"Alright," he said, stepping forward and dropping into a defensive stance. "Let's try it again. This time, don't think. Just move."

"Easier said than done," I muttered, but I squared my shoulders and readied myself. Kael was right, of course. Overthinking had always been my downfall, whether it was in training, making decisions, or... dealing with Hades.

Hades.

The thought of him sent a shiver down my spine, though I wasn't sure if it was from frustration, fear, or something deeper I didn't dare to name. I could almost feel his presence, the weight of his gaze, the tension that always seemed to follow him like a shadow. He had forbidden me from training, from learning to fight, as though I

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Kael lunged without warning, snapping me out of my thoughts. I dodged clumsily, my instincts taking over as I tried to counter. My movements were messy but purposeful, a reflection of the stubborn determination that had driven me here in the first place. Kael nodded approvingly, his grin widening.

"Better. Again."

We continued for what felt like hours, each round pushing me further, testing my limits. My muscles burned, my breath came in short gasps, but I didn't stop. I couldn't. Every stumble, every misstep only fueled me. I would prove to Hades—and to myself—that I was more than the woman he thought he needed to protect.

Kael stepped closer, his hands brushing mine as

But the moment shattered like glass when the door to the training ring slammed open, the force of it reverberating through the space. Kael and I both froze, turning toward the sound.

Hades stood in the doorway, his expression a storm of fury and restraint. His presence was a tangible force, the air crackling with the barely contained power of the Lycan king. His wolf burned in his eyes, crimson, like glowing blood, the creature's rage mirrored in the sharp line of his jaw and the tension in his frame.

Kael straightened, his casual demeanour slipping away as he met Hades's gaze.

"Your Majesty," I said evenly, though there was a slight edge to my voice—a challenge, subtle underneath the bundle of nerves.

Hades didn't reply. His focus was solely on Kael, his eyes dark and unreadable. I swallowed hard, my heart pounding as I took an instinctive forward

"Leave us," Hades said, his voice low but commanding. The words hung heavy in the air, leaving no room for argument. The bruises on Kael's neck flashed in my mind and kept my feet glued to the floor.

"Ellen..." Kael muttered. "You should---"

I stood directly in front of him, between him and Hades, shielding him. "If you have a problem, your majesty. It is with me." I ground out.

Hades' eyes widened before they fell on me. "This is your last chance, Red," he drawled. The intensity enough to slap the air out of my lungs.

"And this is the last time, I will tell you that I am staying." I shot back with a glare.

He glowered, his side shoulders bunching. "Don't be naive, just because I have been lenient with you does not mean that I will let you undermine me!" He barked. He pointed towards the door. "Leave now."

"So you can kill him this time?" My countered, my entire body trembling, not from fear but anger.

Hades' brows knitted together before his eyes snapped to Kael, accusation written in them.

I moved closer to Kael, "He did not tell me. I figured it out myself. Who else would be capable of leaving bruises on him?"

He smirked but it was all teeth and venom. "So you have been tending to his bruises?" He demanded.

My frustration flared, my veins filling with the urge to say something horrendous. "The fact that you don't get the point, is why we are in this situation. You only see what you want to see. You see betrayal when there is none. You see weakness in me when all I'm doing is trying to be stronger—for myself, for you! But you don't listen, do you? All you care about is control, not understanding."

Hades stiffened, his face hardening further, but for a brief second, I thought I saw a flicker of something else in his eyes. Regret? Pain? It was gone before I could be sure, replaced by the simmering anger of his wolf just below the surface.

"Watch your tongue, Ellen," he said, his voice dangerously low, but it no longer intimidated me.

"No," I said, my voice rising. "You watch yours. I'm not your puppet, Hades. I'm not some fragile thing you can hide away while the rest of the world fights her battles. You don't get to make decisions for me without even trying to understand why I'm doing this."

Kael shifted behind me, and I could feel his tension radiating like heat. "Ellen—"

"I've got this," I said sharply, not even turning to look at him. This wasn't his fight. It was mine.

Hades stepped forward, and for a moment, I thought he might close the distance between us entirely. His towering frame loomed, his presence suffocating, but I didn't flinch. If anything, I straightened my spine, meeting his gaze. "Kael," I muttered. "You are dismissed." I softened my tone. 3

"Yes, your highness," he said before walking out. It was counterintuitive to let myself be alone with the raging bull that Hades was but this was between me and Hades alone. There were things that I wanted to say that were meant for his ears only.

"You disobeyed me," he said through gritted teeth. "You will have to pay for that."

I shrugged. "It won't be the first time. But you will not touch a single hair on Kael's head."

His gaze narrowed, he took a step towards me. "And if I do?" The threat was heavy in his low tone.

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A shiver ran down my spine. That was his beta but it seemed like he lacked too much respect or morality to see him other than a rival or a threat. My jaw tightened, and I held my ground, even as his imposing figure closed the distance between us.

"If you do," I said, my voice steady despite the storm raging inside me, "then you lose me. I have checked out of this messed up shit we call a marriage of convenience a while ago but if you hurt him again, there will be nothing left to salvage. I'll walk away, Hades. Not just from you, but from all of this." My words were a dangerous gamble, one I wasn't entirely sure I could back up. But I needed him to hear me, to see me as more than just his disobedient prisoner wife.

I stared him down, the words hanging in the air between us like a blade poised to strike. Hades didn't flinch, his crimson eyes boring into mine with an intensity that made my knees weak, though I refused to show it.

"You won't leave," he said, his voice low and unyielding, a dangerous promise in the undercurrent. He took another step forward, closing the distance between us until I could feel the heat radiating off him. "You can't leave, Ellen. We both know that"

My breath hitched, but I steeled myself, refusing to give him the satisfaction of seeing my fear. "You're right," I said, my voice sharper than I intended. "I can't leave. But that doesn't mean I'll stand by while you act like a tyrant. You don't own me, Hades, no matter how much you want to believe it."

His jaw tightened, and his eyes darkened further. The wolf within him stirred, an almost tangible presence pressing against my skin. "You are mine," he growled, the words rumbling deep in his chest. "My wife. Whether you like it or not."

I scoffed, though my heart hammered in my chest. "You don't treat me like a wife, Hades. You treat me like property. Like a prisoner." Because they were what I was but it did not mean I would not try to break out of my cell. "Don't touch Kael, Your majesty."

His hand shot out, gripping my chin gently but firmly, tilting my face up to meet his. The move was so sudden, so commanding, that I forgot to breathe. "Kael," he spat his betas name with so much venom that my stomach lurched. "Why Kael?"

I blinked up at him like he had grown a second head. Was he serious? I pulled away from his



"Tell me, Red," he demanded. "Why him?" His wolf's crimson grew more intense. He was not letting go without an answer.

"Because he took a chance on me!" I blurted. "He did not see me as nothing but a fucking *weakness*." I tossed his words right back at him with as much poison. "To him I am not a *whimpering distraction*. He sees something that your ego refuses to let you see," I finished, my voice trembling with the force of my anger. "Kael sees my strength, Hades. He believes I'm worth more than a pawn in your twisted game of control." 6

He flinched like I had struck him.

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Don't hurt Kael, Hades ಧ_ಧ

I created a character aesthetic collage for Hades. it's in the review

Lilac_Everglade

Creator's Thought