

96 His Forbidden Scent

Eve 1

"Yes?" His voice was breathy, he loosened his tie, intense eyes boring into me.

"You will apologize for hurting Kael," I told him, my voice as resolute as I could manage.

His face hardened and I braced for impact. But the tension in his eyes fell away and he shrugged. "I am sorry," I muttered a bit too quietly, like he was hesitant.

I narrowed my eyes. "It was not me that you harmed."

His mouth set into a hard line as the silence lingered. "The second one?"

My brows knitted together in confusion. "What?" I asked.

"Your second condition?"

"I don't have one," I said truthfully.

A smile curved his mouth, his dimples once again coming out of hiding. I swallowed thickly. "Red, you don't really know how to play the game yet, do you?" His tone was softer now, almost

A smile curved his mouth, his dimples once again coming out of hiding. I swallowed thickly. "Red, you don't really know how to play the game yet, do you?" His tone was softer now, almost teasing, but there was a sharpness beneath it. "You're learning, I'll give you that. But one condition? That's not how deals work. It's like a trade—give and take. You don't bring just one coin to a barter."

I frowned, my cheeks still warm from his kiss. "I'm not making a deal with you, Hades. This isn't a negotiation."

His smile widened, smug and full of knowing. "Oh, but it is. Everything is Red. Life, love, power. Even between us. Especially between us." He stepped closer again, his presence as suffocating as it was intoxicating. "You demand things of me, and I demand things of you. That's how we work, isn't it?"

I hated that he wasn't wrong. He always found a way to twist the balance of power, to make me feel like I was standing on uneven ground. But I wouldn't let him win so easily this time.

"You think you've already won," I said, crossing my arms as I tilted my chin up defiantly.

Hades chuckled low in his throat, the sound

Hades chuckled low in his throat, the sound rolling over me like a physical thing. "Not yet," he admitted, his crimson eyes gleaming with amusement. "But you're making it easy for me. One condition, Ellen? That's practically a loss in my book. Where's the fire? The cleverness? I expect more from you."

My jaw clenched, his words striking a nerve. "You think I need to prove myself to you?"

"I think you're better than this," he said simply, his voice taking on a rare seriousness. "You want to be strong, to stand on your own? Then act like it. Match me. Challenge me. Otherwise..." He leaned in, his lips brushing against my ear as he finished, "you'll always be playing catch-up."

I hated the sound of that. I hand clenched into fists at my side. "Then I have a fucking second condition," I said through gritted teeth. With him, I was never calm. It was simply not possible. Not when every gesture and every word, grated delectably on my nerves.

Hades tilted his head, a wicked smile curving his lips as his eyes gleamed with intrigue. "Now we're talking," he murmured, his voice laced with amusement. "So, what's your second condition, Red? Impress me." 1

His eyebrows rose, and for the first time, he looked genuinely surprised. "A favor?" he repeated, his tone thoughtful.

"Yes," I said, folding my arms across my chest. "You don't get to dictate what it is, and I can call it in whenever I want. No questions, no refusals. You'll do it."

Hades chuckled low and deep, the sound both dangerous and amused. He took a step closer, invading my space with the sheer force of his presence. "This unpredictability of yours, Red. I like it." His hand lifted to trail a finger along my jawline, and I fought the shiver that threatened to betray me. "That's how you play the game. Now The Hand of Death owes you a favor," he said, his voice dropping to a velvety whisper. 1

"You say that like it's a bad idea," I replied, trying to maintain my composure, though my pulse thundered in my ears.

His grin widened, sharp and predatory. "Oh, it's not bad for you. It's intriguing, even. But for me?" He leaned in, his lips brushing against the shell of my ear as he added, "It's a risk. You could ask for anything, and I'd have no choice but to oblige." 1

"Exactly," I said, stepping back to put some distance between us, my confidence bolstered by the flicker of approval in his eyes. 2

Hades watched me for a long moment, his gaze smoldering with something I couldn't quite name. Then, with a low laugh, he extended his hand. "Deal."

I hesitated, knowing full well that shaking his hand meant more than just sealing the terms. It was an acknowledgment, a challenge, and a promise all wrapped into one. Finally, I placed my hand in his, gripping it firmly.

"Deal," I said, my voice unwavering.

Hades's grin turned wicked as he leaned closer, his stormy grey eyes locked onto mine. "You're learning, little wolf. But be careful," he murmured, his thumb brushing over my knuckles before he released me. "The price of a favor from me might be more than you're prepared to pay." 5

"We'll see about that," I replied, lifting my chin defiantly. But I was confused at the statement, was I not the one being owed. I should have shrugged it away but I knew better than to take any of his seemingly careless words with levity. 2

He laughed again, a rich, dark sound that sent shivers racing down my spine. "Oh, I look forward to it," he said, his voice a low rumble. "But for now..." He stepped back, his predatory smile still firmly in place. "My conditions,"

I shrugged. "We will start training..."

"Tomorrow," he cut in, "Six sharp."

I tried not to let my surprise show but the soft gasp that escaped betrayed me.

He smirked, cunning and dark. "What's wrong, Red, can't handle it?"

I scoffed, "Don't you have a pack to rule?"

"I decide that." He lowered his voice to an octave that vibrated in my gut. "No more child's play, Red. If you are to train under me, you will do it my way. So complaints, no running back to Kael for comfort." His voice hardened at the last part.

I gaped at him. What did he take me for? "I don't need comfort." I did not get comfort for years, and look at how emotionally stable I turned out. I took a step closer, tilting my chin. "Ang I certainly don't need you to go easy on me." 3

His smirk deepened, flashing those devastating dimples that made my blood simmer with a

His smirk deepened, flashing those devastating dimples that made my blood simmer with a different type of heat. "Good," he murmured, his voice soft with a menacing edge that was sharp enough to cut. "Because I won't go easy. You want to play with fire, red. Be prepared to be scorched." 1

"Six sharp," I echoed firmly.

His grin widened flashing both dimples and fangs, it was a rehabilitating combination but I tore my eyes off his face all the same. He gave a slow, mocking bow. "Let's see if you survive the first lesson." 1

I turned to leave.

"And oh Red?" He called.

I glanced over my shoulder.

"You owe me something now too. See it as an unspoken clause of our agreement." 2

"What are you talking about?" I frowned.

"You owe me your best. No holding back. No playing the fucking victim. You want to win then fight with all your got...or don't fight at all."

"Fine," I shrugged and I took another step forward.

"What?" I snapped.

"My second condition," he said. "I want his scent off you."

"Of course, your Majesty." With that I left.

The journey back to the room was nerve racking and I kept turning around expecting to see him following me. But it never happened and soon I reached the room and entered. I sniffed my clothes and indeed I caught the lingering scent of mint and aqua, ocean water. That was what Kael smelt like. 2

I stripped myself of my clothes and retired to the bathroom to do as The Hand of Death wanted. I took one look at the bathtub and made the decision to use the shower. I needed to wash away more than just Kael's scent. The tension from the encounter with Hades clung to me like a second skin, as if his words and presence had seeped into my very being. The hot water cascaded over me, scalding against my skin, but I welcomed the burn. It was grounding, a stark reminder that I was still here, still in control—at least of this moment. 2

Kael's scent faded as I scrubbed, but the memory of Hades's crimson eyes, his sharp smile, and the

Kael's scent faded as I scrubbed, but the memory of Hades's crimson eyes, his sharp smile, and the way he commanded the air around him lingered. His words echoed in my mind: No holding back. *Fight with all you've got.* It was infuriating how easily he could rattle me, how effortlessly he unraveled my defenses, yet I found myself steeling my resolve because of him.

Six sharp.

I'd be ready.

Then the door creaked open and I twisted around, my heart lurching. The hot water had caused a thick fog to fill the shower but I did not need to think too hard about who had entered.

I hugged my arms over my breasts. "Hades, what are you doing here?" My voice was high with panic.

I glanced at the intruder once and came to a shocking discovery when my eyes caught his bare shoulders. He was naked. Oh goddess... 5

"When I said I wanted to erase his scent from your body, what did you think I meant?" His voice was a seductive drawl. "You don't just erase a Lycan's scent from your body, Red. You replace it." 2

I heard footsteps and my stomach twisted as I tried to distance myself but his hand launched at the speed of light. He latched onto my hand and pulled to me. I shuddered at the heat of the contact, my mind whirling. His other hand was around my waist, holding me snug to his naked body. He was hard muscle and heat, every inch of him radiating a primal dominance that made my pulse race for reasons I refused to acknowledge. 1

My back pressed against the cold tiles, a stark contrast to the fire emanating from him. I froze when I realised that the hard, hot flesh pressing against my stomach was his cock. I could feel the ridges, the veins, the length and its girth. It was a fucking monster. My throat constricted as I struggled against him but his hold was unyielding. 1

"I want you to take a guess, Red. How exactly do I go about that?" 2