

Chapter 23

~~~Just a head's up that this chapter gets intense and more descriptive. If you aren't comfortable reading it or it will be a trigger please don't. I can message you what happens in less detail.~~~

ᵃ<sup>25</sup>

I said nothing. I couldn't even think of how to form words with my tongue. The shock felt like a fatal blow to my gut. I just stared at him as he sank down onto my bed. His eyes had reverted back to their normal amber colour rather quickly and the rage vanished with it, leaving behind a broken shell.

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There was a moment of nothing, me watching him as he gazed ahead vacantly.

Then I swung out and struck him. It wasn't a brutal punch from a balled fist like I had wanted. If anything, it was a feeble slap on the shoulder that startled him more than hurt him. Tears gushed down my cheeks, an unrelenting river, but I was livid and I wanted him to pay.

ᵃ<sup>6</sup>

"How dare you say that? How dare you accuse Caleb of such awful things?!" I screamed. "That man was nothing but a saint!"

ᵃ<sup>178</sup>

I wanted those bloody eyes and jagged fangs. I needed to fight. I didn't care if I couldn't take him, if he was so much larger and stronger than I was. I wanted his blood and I wouldn't settle for anything less.

ᵃ<sup>2</sup>

Hades didn't even flinch at my words.

"I saw it all," he whispered, almost to himself, his eyes still distant. "But I always see it too late. I couldn't stop it from happening. I would've given anything to prevent it, but it always comes a er."

ᵃ<sup>32</sup>

"He would never do that, not to anyone," I denied with a shake of my head.

"I saw her, Charlotte. Fuck, I saw her little face and those confused eyes. She didn't even understand what was happening, why he was doing what he was doing. But she trusted him and she didn't know any better so she let him. She let him and he took advantage of a child," he continued, not even hearing me. He placed his hands on his knees and leaned forward like he was about to vomit. His eyes shut and he repressed it.

ᵃ<sup>56</sup>

"You're making up some deranged story and I know it!" I accused venomously.

ᵃ<sup>5</sup>

"He kept telling Abby it was okay over and over again. I think, to some degree, she knew it was wrong, but he kept telling her to trust him; he was the future alpha and he would always take care of her."

ᵃ<sup>62</sup>

Abby. The name struck me so hard that I lost my balance. I had to grab onto one of the posters for my bed and leaned against it, letting the wood support my ill body. A wave of nausea slammed into my gut but I shut my eyes and fended it o with thoughts that this couldn't possibly be true. Hades was nothing but a lying murderer.

ᵃ<sup>2</sup>

Caleb would never do that. He was young and handsome and powerful. He could have any woman in the pack he wanted. He was so kind and sweet, he would never take advantage of someone who was vulnerable and trusting. He couldn't, he wasn't the type. I would've seen it. I would've had to see it at some point. I knew him so well...

ᵃ<sup>32</sup>

But Abby's mother had cancelled on me repeatedly because of uncharacteristic issues. Abby was a smart girl. She should have been capable of going to the washroom by herself and waking up at night when she needed to. Yet, her bedwetting was persistent. And she had started sucking her thumb, a habit she had broken a long time ago. Weren't those both signs?

ᵃ<sup>94</sup>

But that didn't mean it was Caleb. It couldn't be.

ᵃ<sup>31</sup>

"It wasn't just once either. The first time I saw it I couldn't find him in the morning. I wasn't shown enough to know where he was. Then he kept going back to her, kept touching her. And every time it got worse. He got braver. He felt like he had the right to take away a little girl's innocence. Finally, I was able to see some of the buildings outside the house. I searched up the businesses and found Abby's school records in your pack. I didn't waste a second."

ᵃ<sup>5</sup>

"This isn't possible," I gasped, feeling like I was su ocating. "He would never do that."

ᵃ<sup>39</sup>

I said the words but I couldn't be so sure anymore. Hades knew the girl's name and I knew the signs that I had seen and ignored in her. I knew that Caleb had access to her, that Caleb had always been very a ectionate towards her when we babysat her. My God, I was the reason they had met in the first place!

ᵃ<sup>40</sup>

And I was so in love with him that when I saw him tickling her I could only think of having children together. In that moment I had only been pleased that he got along so well with kids. I thought he couldn't possibly get any more perfect.

ᵃ<sup>3</sup>

Hades spoke again, pulling me back to the bedroom where I was still clinging to the wooden post. "I know that you don't understand what I do and you think I'm evil, but he had to die. Sometimes I can fight it and I do when I don't think the actions require that kind of justice. But a man like that, someone who does something like that repeatedly, they need to be taken care of. He needed to die."

ᵃ<sup>72</sup>

I didn't want to hear anymore. I couldn't.

I stared at Hades, saw how broken he was, like the truth had damned him instead of set him free.

And I ran. I ran out of that bedroom, tears pouring down my cheeks. I raced through the house like it was the problem, like I would get outside and these vile thoughts would leave my mind. But when I burst through the front door they still haunted me.

ᵃ<sup>6</sup>

I shi ed into my wolf, shredding my clothes. I would run until I didn't remember what I was trying to escape from.

ᵃ<sup>56</sup>

~~Question of the Day~~

If anything was an Olympic sport, what would you be most likely to win?

ᵃ<sup>198</sup>