



125 His Wife's Choice

Eve 1

I smoothed my dress, not because I cared what Hades thought, but because the guards stationed outside his estate watched my every move with hawk-like intensity.

When the car door swung open, I half-expected one of them to escort me inside.

Instead, *he* was waiting.

Hades sat in the back seat, one arm resting lazily along the headrest, his silver eyes already on me. His presence filled the space, coiled and ready to snap and for a second, I hesitated.

I hid it quickly, stepping forward. "I thought you'd back out and ask for a rematch."

His jaw flexed at the words. "I'm a man of my word." His voice was clipped, and if the tension in his shoulders said anything, it was that he deeply regretted that fact.

I slid into the seat beside him, letting the door click shut. "Relax, your majesty. You almost look constipated." 1

His head turned toward me with slow,



deliberate. I guess he was trying to be as intimidating as he much as he could no longer manage the feat.

The glare he fixed on me could have stopped a charging wolf in their tracks.

"If I were you," he said in a voice low enough to be dangerous, "I'd choose the onesie carefully. Because the second this week is over—"

I leaned closer, cutting him off with a grin. "I know. War." 3

His eyes didn't leave mine as I entered and took a seat, far, far from him. It was a big car after all.

The tension in the car thickened, stretching out between us like a live wire.

Hades didn't say anything else, but his gaze lingered—too heavy, too sharp. I could feel the weight of his scrutiny, like he was peeling back layers I hadn't realized I was wearing. 1

I shifted slightly, leaning into the corner of the seat to put more space between us. His eyes followed the movement, but he didn't comment.

The silence wasn't uncomfortable exactly, but it buzzed—something unspoken simmering beneath the surface, coiling tighter with every



second that passed.

I glanced at him out of the corner of my eye. "You're awfully quiet for someone about to be draped in glitter and rainbows."

His hand twitched against his knee. "I'm mentally preparing."

"For what? The emotional damage?" I teased.

A muscle in his jaw jumped. "For surviving the next seven nights with my pride intact."

I smirked. "I hate to break it to you, but pride's the first thing you're losing."

His silver gaze flicked to me, and even in the dim light of the car, I could see the faint twitch at the corner of his mouth. "Keep talking, Red. You'll be the next one in a onesie."

I raised a brow. "I look great in pastels. You, on the other hand..." I let the words trail off, biting back a grin. 2

He didn't rise to the bait this time, but the smirk he gave me in return was pure arrogance. "I am sure you do," his eyes gazed my body and I squirmed. And by the way his smirk widened, that was exactly what he had wanted. 1

The rest of the ride passed in tense silence,



interrupted only by the hum of the tires against the road. Every time I shifted, his gaze flicked in my direction. Subtle. Calculated. Did he think I was going to run or something?

By the time the car slowed to a stop, I was practically itching to get out.

The door opened, and I stepped onto the sidewalk, blinking at the boutique in front of me.

It was empty.

Not just quiet—completely deserted. The large glass windows reflected only the soft glow of the street lamps, and the inside lights bathed the empty space in warm tones.

I crossed my arms. "Let me guess. You booked the whole place out."

Hades stepped up beside me, hands sliding into his pockets as he surveyed the building with a bored expression. "Naturally." 1

I shook my head, lips twitching. "Of course you did."

The last time he pulled this stunt, he'd emptied out an entire gallery just so we could wander the exhibits alone. Now, I couldn't tell if it was arrogance or his personal brand of mischief at



work. But I had to admit that I welcomed it. I could not imagine shipping along other Lycans. It was unnerving and I was not sure if I would ever get over the feeling. 1

A security guard inside unlocked the door, stepping aside to let us through.

I glanced at Hades as I walked in, the warmth of the boutique wrapping around me. "You do realize this is overkill, right?"

His gaze swept lazily over the racks of clothes, the soft mannequins positioned like silent sentinels. "I disagree. The fewer witnesses, the better."

"You're that embarrassed?" I teased, nudging him lightly with my elbow.

His hand brushed the small of my back as he guided me further inside, his touch brief but lingering long enough to make my breath catch.

"Not embarrassed." His voice dropped, soft enough that I almost thought I imagined it. "I just prefer keeping things... intimate." 4

I ignored the innuendo and looked around. My head buzzed with excited as memories flashed in my head like lightning, sharp enough to leave

an after image. I saw Ellen, my mother and I walking until a boutique just weeks before our 18th birthday fiasco. We had been there to pick out dresses for the event and of course among other things. 1

The sounds of their voices resonated in my head, sweet but haunting. My throat tightened with emotions that I tried to shake away. That had been the last time that I had been in an establishment like this in over five years. It was surreal, nostalgic but painful. I bit my quivering bottom lip as I tried to hold back the tears that suddenly threatened to spill.

A heavy hand grasped my shoulder and I startled at the sound of Hades' voice. He nodded toward the far wall. "There. That looks ridiculous enough for you."

I turned—and there it was.

Hanging proudly on display was the onesie.

Pink, fluffy, and decorated with stars that shimmered obnoxiously under the light. The horn was golden and glittery, standing tall in the center of the hood like a beacon of pure cuteness but on the King of Obsidan it would be one of unfiltered humiliation.



I clapped a hand over my mouth to stop the laugh threatening to escape.

Hades crossed his arms, eyeing it like it might attack him. "Go on. Pick it."

I grinned. "Oh, I don't know. Maybe we should keep looking. See if there's one with wings."

His gaze slid to mine, narrowing slightly. "Choose, Red. Or I will."

I smirked, stepping toward the onesie. "Fine. But this is just one. We need a new one for every day of the seven days." When his jaw locked, I laughed. "A whole king can't be repeating outfits. It's atrocious." I grumbled teasingly. 1

"Do what you want." He snarled.

I only smiled..I wandered deeper into the boutique, letting my fingers drift lightly over the fabrics as I walked. The quiet hum of the space, coupled with the soft glow of overhead lights, made the place feel distant—like I'd stepped out of time.

Hades trailed a few paces behind, his presence unmistakable even when he wasn't speaking. I could feel the weight of his gaze on my back, but for once, he didn't push or prod. Maybe he



sensed something in the way my shoulders tensed. Or maybe he was just brooding silently the way he always did.

The boutique smelled faintly of lavender and something floral—something familiar.

It hit me like a freight train.

The last time I'd stood in a place like this, Ellen had been twirling in front of a mirror, her long hair cascading down her back as our mother laughed. I'd been standing off to the side, wearing a ridiculous tiara she insisted I try on, scowling at how the rhinestones pinched my scalp.

The memory made my throat close up.

I forced a breath through my nose, blinking rapidly as I brushed past a row of delicate dresses. They swayed gently as I passed, the movement almost enough to make me believe I wasn't completely alone.

"See anything else that would ruin my reputation?" Hades' voice, low and rough, cut through the fog in my head.

I smirked, thankful for the distraction. "Not yet. But don't worry, I'm thorough."



I kept searching, running my hand along the clothing racks as I pretended I wasn't unraveling at the seams.

It wasn't until I turned the corner, reaching the farthest wall of the boutique, that I stopped cold.

Hanging innocently on the rack was the onesie.

If the first one was ridiculous, this was on an entirely different level.

It was as if a unicorn had violently exploded over the fabric. Bright, swirling colors—pink, blue, purple—blended together in a chaotic mess of glittery stars and rainbows. The mane along the hood was fluffier, almost obnoxiously so, and the horn spiraled higher than the last.

But that wasn't why I stopped.



126 A Flash From The Past

Eve **1**

I knew this design.

Knew it because I used to have one just like it.

My fingers brushed the soft fabric, and a strange, almost breathless laugh escaped me.

This was the same onesie I wore when I was nine —the one Ellen and I had begged our mother for during a winter market. We'd worn them for weeks, even after they became too small, refusing to let them go.

It felt like staring at a ghost.

I swallowed the lump forming in my throat, gripping the edge of the onesie a little tighter to ground myself.

Behind me, Hades stepped closer, his gaze burning into the side of my face.

"That one?" His voice was quieter this time, less teasing.

I nodded, but I didn't turn around. "Yeah. This one."

There was a long pause, heavy and unspoken.

I could feel him watching me, but he didn't press.

After a few moments, I forced a smirk, shifting the onesie over my arm. "You're going to hate it."

"I already do," Hades muttered, but there wasn't much bite to his tone.

I glanced over my shoulder, catching the way his eyes softened—just slightly—as they flicked between me and the onesie in my arms.

"You're not backing out now, are you?" I teased, raising a brow.

His smirk returned, though it didn't quite reach his eyes. "I wouldn't dream of it."

I nodded toward the rack. "Good. Because we still have five more to find." I tightened my grip on the fabric.

He caught the action, his eyes narrowing. "What's wrong?" He asked, his gaze flickered from the onesie to my eyes. "Red?"

I quickly turned around. "Come on," I said lightly, brushing past him before he could pry any further.

But I felt his presence linger at my back, like a shadow that refused to be shaken off.



The boutique was vast, but the air between us felt smaller somehow. I kept moving, one hand steady on the soft fabric as I searched through racks of loungewear, hoping the distance would quell the sudden ache in my chest.

It didn't.

Hades followed a few paces behind, as if he knew—knew that if he pressed too hard, I might shatter like glass.

His silence was louder than anything he could have said.

I hated that he noticed.

"Just five more?" he asked after a while, his voice cutting through the quiet. "I thought you would have preferred to torture me with more horrendous options to assassinate my honor with."

I smirked without turning around. "I'm feeling merciful."

"That's a first."

I glanced at him over my shoulder, catching the faint flicker of humor in his eyes. His usual arrogance was still there, but something else lingered beneath it—something assertive,



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something knowing.

It was strange to see Hades like this. Relaxed wasn't the right word, but the sharp edges he usually carried seemed dulled, as if the weight of the world he carried on his back had been lifted just for tonight.

I held up a particularly offensive onesie—a dragon, bright green with a tail that trailed to the floor—and raised a brow. "This one screams 'King of Lycans,' don't you think?"

He gave it a once-over, deadpan. "Absolutely. Nothing inspires fear like lime green and polyester wings and were not looking for *unicorn onesies*?"

I laughed, surprising even myself with how natural it felt. "Thought I should have a little more mercy."

Hades' gaze lingered for a fraction of a second longer, and I felt it—like he was memorizing the sound. 1

I looked away first.

The boutique felt warm and familiar and as ridiculous as this errand was, part of me didn't want it to end.



Because the moment it did, reality would come crashing back down.

And I wasn't ready for that.

"Ellen."

I stiffened at the sound of his voice. Not because it was harsh, but because it wasn't.

I turned slowly, meeting his gaze.

He wasn't smiling anymore.

"What?" I tried to sound annoyed, but it came out softer than I intended.

Hades studied me, his silver eyes searching for something I didn't want to give.

I gripped the dragon onesie tighter, bracing myself for whatever lecture he was about to throw at me.

But it never came.

Instead, he stepped forward, close enough that I could feel the heat radiating off him.

Then the faintest smirk tugged at the corner of his mouth.

"You know," he drawled, circling me like a predator stalking its prey, "I can't imagine a



world where lime green dragon onesie doesn't scream sophistication."

I raised a brow, turning the garment toward him. "Oh, I'm sorry—were you hoping for something subtler? Perhaps in hot pink with sequins?"

He took a step closer, inspecting it with exaggerated thoughtfulness, his fingers grazing the fabric at my shoulder as if he was seriously considering it. "Tempting," he mused, "but I think the wings really sell it. They say 'fear me'... in the most endearing way possible."

I huffed out a breath of laughter, shaking my head. "Well, I think you'll look adorable."

I caught the surprise in his eyes at my statement but with a blink his gaze had darkened playfully. "Careful, Red. I might take that as a challenge."

"Oh, I'm counting on it."

I moved to hang the dragon onesie over my arm, but before I could, he plucked it from my hands with that same effortless grace he always carried.

"What are you doing?" I asked, narrowing my eyes as he turned it this way and that.

"I'm helping you." His voice was too smooth, too



innocent. "Clearly, your taste is questionable at best."

I crossed my arms, watching him parade the onesie like some kind of fashion critic.

"Questionable?" I echoed. "This coming from the guy who owns twelve black suits that are *identical*." 1

Hades flashed a sharp grin, holding the dragon onesie against his chest. "Twelve? I didn't realize you'd been keeping such close tabs on me. Should I be flattered?"

I rolled my eyes. "You wear the same thing every day. It's not exactly hard to figure out."

He held the onesie up higher, aligning the hood with his head as if imagining himself in it. "I'm just saying—if you're going to humiliate me, at least make it memorable."

"Oh, I will," I shot back, snatching the onesie from his hands before he could make a bigger fool of himself.

The brief touch of his fingers against mine lingered longer than I expected, but I ignored it.

He stepped aside with exaggerated deference. "By all means, continue your noble quest for the



most ridiculous outfit." All the animosity seemly melted away and I could not help but feel that he only pulled out his sour mood because he had detected my own emotional duress. If I did not know better, I would have thought that he was trying to cheer me up. 1

I couldn't help but smile, shaking my head as I wandered towards the next rack. He had really improved in making jokes especially ones that I actually enjoyed. 1

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