



129 Her Adorable Unicorn

Eve **1**

I wiped at my eyes, breathless. "You're telling me you can tear through enemies, run a pack, but this—" I waved at the onesie still half-hanging off him, "—is what defeats you?"

His eyes narrowed dangerously, but the color on his face didn't fade. "I swear, if you say one more word—"

"Okay, okay!" I held up my hands in surrender, still grinning ear to ear. "Come here. Let me help before you rip it apart."

Reluctantly, he stepped closer, and I crouched to tug the leg of the onesie in the right place, guiding his arm into the correct sleeve. The whole time, his gaze stayed fixed stubbornly on the far wall, his jaw tight with embarrassment. I guess this was the real reason he was stalling.

"You look majestic. Like a fearsome... unicorn." I teased softly as I zipped him up.

His scowl deepened, but the redness remained stubborn on his cheeks.

"Say it," he deadpanned.



I blinked innocently. "Say what?"

"You're dying to say something."

I dragged my gaze up and down, biting back a grin. "You are adorable."

His eye twitched but so did his lips as if he was not sure whether he liked the compliment or hated it. "You are having the time of your life, aren't you?"

"Maybe."

Hades exhaled sharply, tugging at the fabric like it was suffocating him. "You're lucky I love----" 8

I froze for a second, caught completely off guard by the words he seemed like he was about to say.

Hades seemed just as surprised, his expression flickering with something unreadable.

"I love this," he muttered.

I froze, the teasing smile faltering on my lips.

He caught it too—his eyes flickering with something unreadable, something just as startled as I felt.

Hades wasn't one to fumble his words.



And yet...

"I love this," he muttered again, tugging the zipper a little too roughly as if that would bury the slip under layers of fabric.

I narrowed my eyes. "You sure about that?"

He didn't meet my gaze, suddenly very interested in the loose thread on the onesie's sleeve. "Soft fabric. Warmer than it looks."

A pitiful excuse.

I crossed my arms, leaning against the dresser with a smug grin. "Oh, I get it now. You love it so much you spent an hour in the shower, mentally preparing to embrace your true unicorn self."

Hades exhaled through his nose, shooting me a flat, unimpressed glare. The flush on his face, however, refused to budge.

"Say what you want, but I think this is a breakthrough for you," I continued, unable to stop the grin spreading across my face.

He ran a hand down his face, shaking his head. "I regret every life choice that led me to this moment." 2

"You're just upset because you know I'm right."



Hades huffed, turning slightly to face the mirror on the far side of the room. He stared at his reflection for a long beat, lips pressed in a thin line.

I was about to say something else—another jab at his expense—but the way his shoulders dropped slightly, the subtle shift in his expression, stopped me.

He tugged at the fabric again, quieter this time. "I didn't think I'd be standing here in a unicorn onesie today."

His voice had lost its edge, dipping into something softer.

I straightened a little, sensing the shift. "Well, life's full of surprises."

Hades met my gaze in the mirror. "Yeah. It is."

I opened my mouth, ready to throw out another teasing remark, but the heaviness in his eyes pulled me back.

I needed to lighten the mood again.

"Hold on," I said, pushing off the dresser.

"Where's my phone? This needs to be documented."

His eyes sharpened immediately, the softness



from before vanishing like smoke. "Ellen, don't—" But I was already moving, patting the nightstand. Nothing.

I frowned, checking the edge of the bed, the dresser—anywhere I might've left it. But as the seconds passed, the realization slowly set in.

It wasn't here.

My hand lowered, brushing over the smooth, empty surface of the nightstand.

Right.

I didn't have a phone anymore.

I swallowed hard, forcing the memory down as it crept into the back of my mind—the explosion, the message from my sister.

Hades' voice pulled me from the edge.

"Red?"

I blinked, plastering on a smile I didn't quite feel.

"Ah, I forgot. My phone's gone."

He didn't say anything right away, his eyes narrowing slightly.

"Oh..."

"Yeah." I shrugged like it was nothing, but the



weight settled in my chest. "Guess that means no unicorn pictures today."

I tried to make it sound lighthearted, but even I could hear the hollowness in my voice.

For a long moment, neither of us spoke.

Then, without a word, Hades slipped his hand into his pocket and held something out to me. 5

His phone.

"Take mine."

I stared at it. "What?"

He didn't move, arm still extended. "Take the picture. If it makes you smile, do it." 3

I hesitated, eyeing the sleek black device as if it were some dangerous artifact. "You really think I'm going to trust you with those photos on your phone?"

His lips curved faintly. "What's the worst I could do?"

"Delete it?"

He chuckled, but the phone remained between us.

I wanted to brush it off, to make another joke



and let the moment pass. But there was something in his eyes—something patient and unspoken.

Slowly, I took the phone from his hand.

"Just this once," I mumbled, flicking to the camera. "But I'm not keeping these on your phone for long."

Hades arched a brow. "I can get you a new one, you know."

I snorted, raising the phone. "Not happening. I'm not about to owe you for something like that." I lied. I just could not imagine holding another bomb to my ear again. At least for the time being.

"You wouldn't owe me anything."

His voice was soft, quieter than before.

But I brushed past it, focusing the camera on him. "Alright, unicorn. Say cheese." 1

He sighed, resigning himself to the inevitable, but not without tugging the hood lower in a poor attempt to hide.

I snapped the photo, biting my lip as I admired the image—the King of Lycans, draped in fluffy pink fabric, with a unicorn horn flopped over his

forehead like a broken crown.

"Perfect," I murmured.

Hades leaned against the bedpost, watching me with an unreadable expression. "I hate you."

"Liar," I held up the phone triumphantly. "You can't live without me."

His gaze lingered, something warm flickering behind the usual sharpness.

"Yeah," he said softly. 2

I lowered the phone, my heart doing something strange and unwelcome in my chest.

His eyes hadn't left mine.

I swallowed, clearing my throat. "Alright, majestic unicorn. What now?"

Hades smirked. "We could go for round two in the shower. Reflect some more."

I groaned, launching a pillow at his face.

"Absolutely not." 8



130 The Test Results

Eve **1**

The pillow hit him square in the face, and Hades laughed softly, the sound rumbling through the room as he let it drop to the floor, those demonically adorable dimples making an appearance.

I was still grinning, holding the phone like it was the crown jewel of my victory, scrolling back to admire the photo one more time.

"You really pull off the unicorn look," I teased, flicking between shots. "Might want to make this your official portrait. The pack would love it. It would be all over the headlines."

Hades arched a brow, arms crossed as he leaned against the bedpost. "You'd enjoy the chaos that would cause, wouldn't you?"

I shrugged. "Maybe."

The screen dimmed slightly, and I tapped it to keep the photo from disappearing. But just as my thumb brushed the glass, a notification flashed across the top.

"The LSI results are out, Your Majesty."



My hand froze.

I blinked, reading the words again as confusion settled deep in my stomach.

LSI results?

I wasn't sure why that struck me as odd.

But something about it—something about those letters—didn't sit right.

The message vanished as quickly as it appeared, leaving me staring at my reflection in the dark screen.

Hades shifted, noticing the way I had gone still. "Everything alright?"

I forced a smile, turning the phone in my hands. "Yeah. Just..." I hesitated, fingers grazing over the side as I thought about asking. Did I really want to know?

"Just admiring my photography skills," I finished lightly, passing the phone back to him.

His eyes lingered on me for a second longer, as if he could tell I wasn't being entirely honest, but he didn't press. "Well, let me know if you want copies."

I snorted, dropping onto the bed and hugging a



pillow to my chest. "I'll frame them. And have them placed right in the front lobby of the tower."

"Sounds about right." Hades sat down on the edge of the bed, glancing briefly at his phone as he tucked it away.

But the weight of that message still lingered in the back of my mind.

I wasn't stupid. I knew what LSI stood for.

Lunar Synchronization Index.

A mate test.

Hades had taken one.

I didn't know why that unsettled me. It shouldn't have. It wasn't unusual for Lycans of his rank to take the test. Werewolves did them too, especially after their previous mates passed. My uncle Greyson had done the same after Aunt Cecilia died during labor. I was not Hades' mate, so of course, he would be looking for a rebound mate, another she-lycan preferably. 3

My place here was temporary. He would soon find his second chance mate, and I would be history at some point. It was good news that he was already looking for someone else—someone



he would be able to torment, bond with, and... love.

Still... something about it left a strange, hollow feeling I couldn't quite explain. I was adapting to this life, but it seemed I was going too far. I needed to remember both my place and my role. I was nothing to him, and I would always be nothing to him. 1

He made it clear with his threats that day he had confronted me about the curse I had spoken about. If he found out about the deceit, he would burn Silverpine down. He would not consider our experiences together because they simply meant nothing to him.

I had to remember that before I fell too deep into his illusion. I had to snap out of it. 3

I shifted, hugging the pillow a little tighter.

"You're quiet," Hades said suddenly, his voice soft as he stretched out beside me.

I looked over, finding him watching me carefully. "Just thinking," I replied, brushing it off.

"About?"

I hesitated but shook my head, pushing the thought down.



It's not important.

"Nothing," I said with a small smile. "Just wondering how long I can get you to wear that onesie before you tear it off in frustration."

Hades chuckled, letting it slide. "You've got about five more minutes."

"Noted."

But even as we slipped back into that easy banter, my mind kept circling back to that message.

I didn't know what the results said.

I didn't want to know if he had already found my replacement.

At least, that was what I told myself.

Hades shifted suddenly, and before I could react, he pulled me into him, rolling us both across the bed with infuriating ease.

I yelped in surprise, the pillow tumbling from my grip as he wrapped his arms around me from behind, locking me against his chest like a vice.

"Hades!" I squirmed, trying to pry his arm loose, but it was like wrestling with stone. "What are you doing?"



His voice hummed lazily against my ear. "Getting comfortable. You looked like you needed it."

"I—no, I didn't!" I twisted again, but his arm only tightened.

"You're always fighting, Red." His breath was warm against the back of my neck, and I felt him nuzzle closer, his lips grazing the sensitive spot just below my ear. "Can't you just enjoy this for once?"

I froze, breath hitching as the faintest brush of his fangs dragged along my skin—slow, deliberate.

He wasn't serious. He was teasing. He always teased.

But tonight, it felt different.

The playful edge was still there, but the weight of his body against mine—the casual way he held me like I belonged there—had my heart stammering in a way I didn't like.

I pressed my palms against his arm, trying to push him off. "Hades, I'm not in the mood—"

"You say that now," he murmured, lips barely skimming the curve of my neck. "But you don't really mean it."



I did.

I had to mean it.

But the words tangled somewhere between my throat and the ache blooming quietly in my chest.

He didn't know.

He didn't understand the storm his touch stirred inside me—the sharp, sinking weight that came with the realization that none of this would last.

I was temporary.

He would find his second chance mate, and I'd be nothing but a fleeting presence. A shadow in his past.

"You're tense." Hades shifted, one of his hands slipping beneath my shirt to rest flat against my stomach, his palm warm against my skin.

I stiffened at the contact, and his lips curled faintly against my neck. "I know that song you're playing, Red. Stop pretending you don't like this."

I swallowed hard, eyes fixed on the wall as I clenched the sheets beneath my hands. "I'm not pretending."

The words sounded weak.



Hades only chuckled, brushing his nose along the curve of my jaw as if he hadn't heard me at all.

"I can hear your heartbeat," he whispered, fangs grazing along the hollow of my throat.

How can you so easily unravel me?

How quickly he could pull me under and drown me in this... whatever this was.

But I had to stop it.

I forced my hands between us, prying his arm loose just enough to twist and face him.

He arched a brow, clearly amused by my effort. "Giving up so soon?"

I didn't answer right away.

Because when I met his gaze—when I looked at him, really looked at him—I realized something I hadn't wanted to admit.

He wasn't teasing anymore.

His eyes lingered too long, too soft. The playful spark I was used to seeing was still there, but underneath it, there was something else.

Something I couldn't place.



And it scared me.

Because it felt too close to hope.

I lost the strength, and he pulled me gently to his chest. He stroked my hair.

"You've had a long day. Sleep. You're getting cranky."

He didn't tease. It was like he really saw me.

It felt good.

But it only made me feel worse.

Because all I could feel was the weight of that message—the quiet reminder that I was only holding a space that wasn't mine to keep.

