



## 151 Proof Of Death

**Hades** 1

**Jules stared at the genetic report, her eyes scanning the bolded lines again and again as if the words might rearrange themselves into something else.**

**SUBJECT: Ellen Valmont**

**PATERNITY MATCH: Darius Valmont – 99.9%**

**Her grip on the folder tightened.**

**The color drained slightly from her face, but she kept her expression carefully neutral. Almost.**

**I watched her in silence, leaning back in my chair, the smoke from my cigar curling slowly between us.**

**But I felt no satisfaction.**

**No amusement.**

**Just a quiet, unexpected sense of pity.**

**"Something wrong, Jules?" I asked, softer than usual. The edge in my voice was gone, replaced with something calmer.**

**Her jaw clenched.**

"No, Your Majesty," she replied, but the hesitation in her tone was telling.

I let the silence stretch.

She stared down at the report, mind spinning, trying to make sense of it. I could see the calculation in her eyes, the desperate search for an answer that wasn't there.

But there was nothing.

Blood doesn't lie.

Her entire investigation was unraveling.

She closed the folder slowly, almost carefully, as if it might bite her.

"There... has to be an explanation," Jules murmured, mostly to herself. "A manipulation... a forged result. Or—"

"Or?" I prompted quietly, leaning forward just slightly.

Her eyes flicked up to meet mine.

And for the first time, she looked uncertain.

"Or maybe..." she started, but the words trailed off.

I didn't press.



I watched her struggle, the weight of it pressing down on her.

And against all reason, I found myself feeling... pity.

Slowly, deliberately, I rose from my chair.

Her posture straightened instinctively, bracing for whatever I might say or do.

But I did nothing of the sort.

Instead, I moved around the desk, closing the space between us.

She didn't move.

I rested a steady hand on her shoulder.

It startled her, I could tell.

Not from fear—Jules wasn't afraid of me—but because it was so uncharacteristic.

"You've worked hard," I said quietly. "Harder than most would dare."

Her throat bobbed, but she said nothing.

"It's not easy," I continued, my voice low, "when everything you've built starts to crack." 1

I gave her shoulder a slight, almost reassuring squeeze.



Her eyes flicked up to mine again, and I saw it—the smallest flicker of something.

Hope.

Her gaze softened. Yearning.

I slowly withdrew my hand, but the pity lingered. Probably because all things were coming together. I could secure the weapon, fulfill Ambassador Montegue's condition, and finally see Danielle. 2

"There is no other living person who is Darius Valmont's offspring. There is only Ellen, so that test is perfectly accurate."

Her gaze flickered, her brows knitting. "Eve Valmont..." 1

"Is dead," I completed for her.

Her brows drew closer together. "Is she?" she muttered, more to herself than to me.

I stilled for a moment, not quite sure if I heard her correctly. "You have doubts?" I asked.

For a long moment, she said nothing, the debate raging behind her eyes before she let out a sigh. "I don't know."

"What exactly don't you know? That Ellen is the

real Ellen or that Eve Valmont is dead?"

She remained silent, biting her lip as if turning everything over in her head. "I don't know, Your Majesty," she repeated.

"It was a public, televised execution," I stated.

"That's what I heard," she murmured, but I could hear the skepticism in her voice.

It was becoming irritating, but she would soon be out of my hair. So I decided to humor her a little more. I had given her this job, and I was sure that she would never be at peace until it was proven beyond a doubt that Ellen was, indeed, Ellen. It would prove her suspicions wrong, but at least there would be closure.

I turned back to my desk and picked up my tablet. "I want to show you something."

I unlocked the tablet with a swipe of my finger and navigated to a secured folder, its contents sealed behind layers of encryption. Only a few had access to this footage, and fewer still could stomach watching it.

"Since you seem unconvinced," I murmured, turning the screen toward her, "let's revisit the truth."

The screen flickered to life, casting a cold glow between us. The video began—grainy but unmistakably real. The scene was set in a courtyard filled to the brim with people.

Standing, bound with obviously reinforced steel cuffs and bloodied, was Eve Valmont, the cursed twin.

But it wasn't the guards or executioners in the frame that commanded attention.

It was Ellen Valmont herself.

Standing only a few feet away, dressed in black, gun in hand.

Her expression was unreadable—cold, detached. She raised the gun with mechanical precision, aiming it directly at Eve's forehead.

Both sisters stared at each other, neither one looking away.

No hesitation.

No remorse.

The gunshot rang out sharply, the sound echoing through the courtyard.

Eve's body jerked before slumping lifelessly to the ground. Blood splattered across the floor.



Ellen lowered the gun slowly. 1

The camera lingered on her face, but there was nothing to read—no satisfaction, no anger. Just emptiness. Yet her eyes glistened.

The screen went black.

I let the silence settle thickly between us.

Jules didn't flinch.

Her face remained still, carefully composed.

I leaned back, studying her closely.

"You watched that without blinking," I said quietly.

She inhaled softly, steadying herself. "It's... unsettling. That's all."

I tilted my head. "Unsettling? You knew what you would see. You must have read the reports. You've heard things. Why does it disturb you now?"

Her lips parted, then pressed together tightly.

I waited.

Finally, she spoke, her voice lower than before. "Because something feels wrong. It was almost too... easy."

I raised a brow. "What does that mean?"

"I don't know." Her grip on the folder tightened.

"Maybe nothing."

But I wasn't convinced.

Neither was she.

I set the tablet down slowly. "Jules, your instinct has served you well. And you are right—there is more."

Her brows raised in surprise, her breath catching. "There's more?" she asked.

But I was already making my way to my desk drawer—the bottom one. The one that couldn't be opened without me, even with a key.

I pressed my thumb to the fingerprint scanner, and a small compartment opened. I retrieved the flash drive hidden there.

I rose. "Yes, there is more. The video of the execution was cut off," I told her as I picked up my tablet again.

Her brows creased as she stared at me, her mind doing flips, trying to comprehend what I was saying. "How would you know that Silverpine cut out part of what happened during the execution?"

"Because I was there when it happened." 6

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## 152 Day Of Execution

Hades 1

Five years ago...

***"HEIRESS TO HERETIC: THE CURSED TWIN'S EXECUTION SET FOR THE 27TH."***

I read through the rest of the morning paper that I had just bought. The buzzing of flies continue in the background as I took in the information. 1

Today was the 27th. I had it to the Silverpine capital city, Noctara just in time. 2

I moved to another headline. This time about the venue of the execution.

***"A Return to Tradition: Eve Valmont's Execution to Be Held at Ancestral Castle Grounds"***

In a move that has stirred both public intrigue and unease, the Royal Court has officially announced that the execution of Eve Valmont, the cursed twin of the Valmont bloodline, will take place on March 27th in the courtyard of the Old Valmont Castle.

Security measures are expected to be extensive, with reports confirming the presence of royal

guards and modern surveillance to manage the expected crowds. The event will be broadcast live across all major networks, ensuring the kingdom bears witness to the fall of the cursed twin.

Eve Valmont, once second in line to the throne, now stands condemned by both law and blood.

Her fate will be sealed where her ancestors once ruled.

I closed the newspaper and tossed it into the trash bin behind me.

"Come in, Beta," Leon's voice crackled through the earpiece, cold and clipped.

I leaned against the damp brick wall of the alleyway, letting the hum of the city wash over me. The distant chatter of vendors hawking their goods, the rhythmic thud of boots on pavement, and the occasional low growl of werewolves mixed with the wind. Noctara was alive in its usual way—loud, restless, and crawling with predators pretending to be civilized.

I pressed two fingers to my earpiece.

"I'm in position," I muttered, eyes scanning the crowded streets beyond the alley. The towering

glass and steel structures of Noctara glimmered in the pale morning light, but their shadows fell long over the crumbling bones of the old city. This place was a kingdom built on rot.

Leon's sigh scraped through the line, sharp and impatient. "Is that the best you can manage? 'In position'? Enlighten me, Hades—what exactly does that mean? You standing there brooding in an alleyway like some stray dog?"

I clenched my jaw. "It means I'm blending in. Watching the guards. Watching the streets. Exactly like we agreed."

"Hm. Forgive me if I don't start applauding." His tone dripped with condescension. "Security?"

I exhaled slowly, reigning in the urge to bite back. "Heavy. Guards on every corner, patrols doubling back every few minutes. The castle perimeter's locked down tighter than a vault. They want this execution flawless."

Leon made a low sound of disinterest. "Of course they do. This isn't about justice—it's theater. And you're standing in the wings, staring at the curtain."

"I'm not here to be reckless," I muttered, adjusting my cuff to hide the mark on my wrist.

Leon scoffed. "Since when? Spare me the talk, Hades. You've always had a habit of confusing recklessness for strategy. Don't let that impulsive streak of yours screw this up." 1

The corner of my mouth twitched. "Relax, brother. I'm not here to play hero."

"Oh, I'm relaxed." Leon's voice turned cold. "Because if you so much as slip, there won't be a kingdom left to save. Or you, for that matter. So keep your head down and your mouth shut. Can you manage that, or should I send someone more competent?"

I ignored the jab, stepping out of the alley to merge with the flow of the crowd.

The city's pulse was steady but tense. Voices overlapped in an endless hum.

"...they say she tore a guard apart with her bare hands..."

"Did you see the footage? Didn't even blink when they chained her up."

"Serves her right. A curse like that shouldn't exist in the bloodline."

The scent of sweat, iron, and fear thickened the air.



But not all voices were venomous.

"I heard she begged for a trial... and they refused."

"They're scared of her. That's why they're rushing this."

"I heard that the prophecy about the twins has two verses. We don't know the full context," a man with glasses murmured. "Prophecies are quite tricky."

"Oh, stop with the conspiracy, Thaddeus. The second verse is a hoax. That girl is our ruin. She needs to die," the man's wife said snidely. "And darling please don't go around telling people lies. The Bloodmoon does not exist."

"There is no greater evil than her."

"She is just a child," an older woman muttered, her voice solemn. "She was supposed to be our Luna."

"A child that will be our demise if she is not neutralized."

"She deserved a trial at least," another woman muttered. "I can't believe she will be murdered just like that. Evie was a good princess. She would have been a great Luna."

"It's better she goes out like this for the sake of Silverpine. Hopefully, she will be dealt better cards in her next life."

Some people scoffed, others sighed. It seemed like the citizens were torn despite the prophecy. Eve Valmont was loved, it would seem. 3

I keyed the mic again. "Not everyone's on their side. Some of them are starting to doubt this execution."

Leon's silence stretched before he gave a dry chuckle. "Oh, how brilliant. The people are whispering. What a revelation. Shall we join them, or do you actually have something useful to report?"

I ground my teeth. "I'm moving toward the castle. Slowly. Guards are too tight to rush it." The scanners were used to detect if one was a Lycan, but I was not a Lycan—luckily, at least not fully anymore. 2

"Be alert, and I want clear digital evidence of her death. Don't fuck up." 2

"Understood."

He cut the call.

It was time for me to concentrate. As I walked



through the droves of people, already seeing the castle gates in the distance, I began to let myself morph from the inside. 2

I could see the guards now, stationed like statues at the gates, armed to the teeth. Their polished armor gleamed, and the handheld scanners in their grips flickered with pale blue light—Lycan detectors, designed to catch anyone who didn't belong.

**That included me.**

**I kept my pace steady, hands tucked casually into the deep pockets of my coat. But beneath the stillness, something darker stirred.**

**Flux.**

**It coiled within me, restless and waiting. A blackened corruption pulsing through my veins, twisting through bone and sinew. It wasn't something I called on lightly, but today wasn't offering many choices.**

**I inhaled slowly through my nose and let it bleed in.**

**The change was immediate.**

**A slow, grinding ache began in my chest, spreading outward like wildfire. My skin**



prickled, every nerve alight with cold fire. Muscles tightened and burned as the Flux slithered beneath the surface, shifting things that weren't meant to shift.

I could feel it—it—pulling at the seams of what I was. Stretching. Tearing.

But my face remained still.

No wince. No grimace.

I simply adjusted the collar of my trench coat, pulling it tighter against the cold, even as my insides burned.

Stay steady.

My bones creaked faintly under the weight of it, but the Flux began to settle, cloaking the parts of me that would trigger the scanners. It wasn't a perfect mask, but it would be enough to slip past unnoticed.

The corruption pulsed once, a deep, slow throb in my skull.

Not now, I warned it.

It retreated, barely.

I flexed my fingers, testing the control. My reflection in a shop window flickered, just for a



second—eyes darker than they should be,  
shadows too deep beneath the skin.

Then gone.

I joined the flow of bodies inching toward the  
gates.

The guards scanned each person in turn, the pale  
blue light passing over their chests, their throats.  
One man was stopped, dragged out of line—his  
scream was cut short by the crack of a rifle.

No hesitation. No warning.

I didn't blink.

The line moved forward.

Closer.

The scanner hummed as it passed over the  
woman in front of me. She was cleared.

My turn.

I stepped forward, letting the cold light wash  
over me.

Thrum.

The Flux pulsed once more, suppressing the  
scent, the signature, the beast beneath my skin.



The scanner gave a soft beep.

Clear.

The guard barely glanced at me before waving me through.

I slipped past the gates without a sound.

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