



153 The Execution

Hades 1

I gritted my teeth as I forced the Flux to retreat. This was the last place to let the corruption creep. I kept my gaze forward, my jaw clenched as I walked among the slow inflow of werewolves.

Citizens were not allowed to bring in their vehicles, but in another area of the large historical landmark, ambassadors, governors, lower Alphas, and other high-ranking pack citizens made their appearances, stepping out of limousines and aircraft.

On another side, already seated, was the press. Each station was ready with their gear, journalists prepared, their backs straight and their eyes alert and hungry for a story.

The sea of people was guided to the outer courtyard, corralled behind high steel barricades that created a controlled funnel leading toward the execution platform. Armed guards patrolled the perimeter, their eyes sharp beneath the visors of their tactical helmets. The glint of sniper scopes from the rooftops tracked any

movement that lingered too long, ready to neutralize any perceived threat. Their platinum bullets could not subdue me, but it was better not to be sorry. 3

The courtyard of Old Valmont Castle was a brutal clash of past and present. The ancient stone walls loomed overhead, scarred by time and war, while massive LED screens flickered to life, broadcasting the event to every corner of Silverpine. High above the platform, sleek black drones hovered, their red recording lights blinking steadily.

At the far end of the execution ground, a raised stage had been erected—a cold, modern structure of steel and glass in stark contrast to the weathered stone beneath it. The platform was minimalistic, designed for full visibility. No shadows to hide in. No mercy to offer.

At the center of that stage stood Eve Valmont.

Bound in reinforced steel restraints that chained her wrists and ankles, she was forced to kneel on the execution dais. A cold, sterile spotlight bathed her in harsh white light, casting a long, thin shadow behind her. Her once-pristine royal garb had been replaced with a plain, dark prison uniform. Blood stained the fabric at her collar



and cuffs, a sign of the beatings that came before this day.

She bowed her head low. 1

A hush rippled through the crowd as the castle gates finally groaned closed.

The cameras all pivoted in unison, focusing on the polished steps of the main balcony.

Alpha Darius Valmont emerged.

He wore a sleek, custom-tailored black suit, every inch of him styled for control. A crimson handkerchief folded neatly in his pocket was the only color against the monochrome. His pale red hair, streaked with silver, was slicked back, and a single black ring glinted on his finger.

Two royal guards flanked him, their eyes hard, ready for any slight misstep.

Alpha Darius stepped forward to the edge of the balcony, the massive emblem of the Valmont family crest gleaming behind him. He waited until the murmurs of the crowd died away, until even the air seemed to hold its breath.

Then he spoke, his voice cutting through the cold air.

"Citizens of Silverpine. Loyal subjects of this



pack."

Every speaker, every screen, every device carried his voice. Its echo vibrated in every bone.

"Today, we gather not in joy but in solemn duty. This is not a celebration. It is a necessary act to protect our future."

A low murmur rippled through the masses. The cameras captured every angle, every detail.

"Eve Valmont. Once a daughter of this royal house. Once a promise to this nation. An heir." His tone hardened. "But promises can be broken. And trust, once shattered, cannot be repaired."

He turned slightly, gesturing to Eve without sparing her a glance.

"You see before you not a victim. Not a misguided soul. But a threat to everything we have built. The cursed twin. The harbinger of ruin. The one foretold to bring destruction upon our people."

The words poured out of him, every person at attention.

"Her crimes are not rumors. Not myths. They are fact. She has betrayed her blood, her kingdom,

and the very laws that keep us safe."

On the towering screens, violent images flickered—security footage from her shift just a few days ago, chaotic flashes of torn bodies, crumbling walls.

"She has chosen chaos over order. Darkness over duty. And for this, she must pay the ultimate price."

Alpha Darius paused, allowing his words to settle over the crowd like a heavy shroud.

"We do this not out of hatred. Not out of fear. But out of necessity."

His voice grew colder, sharper.

"Today, the curse ends. And Silverpine will rise stronger. And this will be done by our new heir. The blessed twin."

Ellen Valmont made an appearance, dressed in a military uniform of white and gold, a firearm in her possession. Her red hair was pulled into a severe bun. Her features were taut, and her movements mechanical.

A beat of silence. The large crowd broke into a solemn applause, echoing across the entire courtyard.

"Begin."

Ellen Valmont stepped forward, her white and gold military uniform pristine, the firearm in her gloved hands gleaming. Her expression was void of emotion, eyes cold and distant as she approached the edge of the platform. The applause from the crowd faded into a suffocating silence, all eyes locked on the two sisters.

Eve slowly lifted her head, bloodied and pale, her eyes locking onto Ellen's. There was no fear, her expression was blank as though she was not fully there. 7

Ellen raised the gun.

No hesitation.

A single, deafening gunshot tore through the air.

Eve's body jerked violently as the platinum bullet glinted before embedding itself in her head.

Gasps tore out from some; others simply had no reaction. And then...

Silence.

Then Eve collapsed, the bounds clanking as her body slumped to the cold steel platform.

The LED screens zoomed in, broadcasting the

lifeless body of the cursed twin. Blood slowly pooled beneath her head, her mouth hanging open, her eyes anything but shut. They were widened in horror and bloodshot.

Alpha Darius stood motionless on the balcony, his expression unreadable.

Ellen lowered the gun slowly, her face impassive, though her hand trembled just once—so slightly it went unnoticed.

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The crowd erupted into controlled applause, a hollow, mechanical sound echoing through the courtyard.

The crowd watched as Eve's corpse was placed onto a cold, steel stretcher by two royal guards. The metallic clang of the chains still bound to her limbs echoed unnervingly in the courtyard. Her blood left a dark trail smeared across the execution platform as they carried her body away, disappearing behind a set of steel doors at the back of the stage.

The LED screens faded to black, erasing any trace of what had just occurred. The applause dwindled, replaced by murmurs and hushed conversations, some laced with relief, others with unease.

Alpha Darius remained still on the balcony, surveying the crowd with cold indifference. His voice once again sliced through the air.

"It is done." He wiped his strangely wet face. "Eve Valmont, the cursed twin, is dead." ⁴



Those three words were final. Heavy.

Only then did people fully react. Some began to clap again, hooting and cheering, while some—more than a few—all but burst into silent tears. It was a stark juxtaposition of raw emotions: jubilation and mourning.

"Princess Evie..." an old woman whispered. "I can still remember when they announced her birth." Tears crept down her face, her hand shaking.

"She did not deserve such a callous death... not after all she has done," another woman whispered, her voice filled with grief.

"We are in a modern world; she should not have died over some foolish prophecy."

"I could never believe that she would try and kill her sister."

The murmurs grew until Alpha Darius's voice tore through the cacophony again. "Now," he turned to the press, who were waiting anxiously, "your questions?"

The press surged forward, microphones and cameras angling toward the towering figure of Alpha Darius. Their questions came like rapid gunfire, breaking the uneasy silence that



lingered after Eve's execution.

A bold reporter from Silverpine Daily stepped forward, her voice steady despite the tension.

"Alpha Darius, is the prophecy truly credible? Many believe it was manipulated to justify Princess Eve's execution." 2

Darius's cold eyes locked onto her.

"The prophecy has guided this kingdom for centuries. To question it now is to question the foundation of Silverpine's safety. Its warnings are clear, and today, we ensured they will not come to pass."

Another reporter, younger, his face pale but determined, raised his mic.

"How do you feel about the death of your daughter?"

The question cut through the air like a blade.

For the first time, Darius's expression shifted—only slightly. His jaw tightened, but his tone remained steady.

"My duty as Alpha and king outweighs personal grief. The safety of this kingdom demanded sacrifice. I did what was necessary."



A journalist from The Noctara Herald leaned forward, her voice sharper.

"Was it hard to come to this decision? To execute your own blood?"

Darius's eyes narrowed, his tone turning frostier.

"Leadership is not measured by sentiment. It is measured by action. This decision was made for the greater good. Personal feelings have no place in matters of survival." 1

A ripple of unease passed through the crowd.

Another hand shot up. This time from an older man in a dark coat, a journalist from The Lunar Tribune.

"If the prophecy is true, what about the so-called second verse? Rumors say it foretells redemption, not ruin. Why has it been hidden from the public?" 1

For a split second, Darius faltered. It was barely noticeable—a flicker in his otherwise stone-like composure.

"The second verse is myth," he said curtly. "A fabrication created by those who seek to sow doubt. Do not be misled by half-truths and

conspiracies. The prophecy that matters has been fulfilled."

The murmurs among the press grew louder. Doubt spread like wildfire.

A woman near the back, her press badge barely visible, raised her voice above the chatter.

"If Eve was a threat, why was she denied a public trial? Shouldn't justice be transparent in a kingdom like ours?"

Darius's eyes darkened.

"She was given every chance to prove her innocence. Her actions spoke louder than words. A public trial would have endangered more lives. Swift justice was the only course."

Before the next question could be fired, a commotion rippled through the crowd.

Someone shouted from the civilians corralled behind the barricades.

"Liar!"

All eyes snapped toward the voice.

A man, older with gray streaks in his hair, was being dragged away by guards, thrashing against their grip.



"She was innocent! This was all built on fear! The Eclipse Rebellion will rise! The Bloodmoon—"

Another shot rang out as screams of horror tore through the crowd. The man slumped, his mouth open, his eyes suddenly glazed as another platinum bullet found its mark in his skull. 2

Screams erupted through the courtyard like a tidal wave, swallowing the thin veil of order that had barely held the crowd together. Panic rippled outward as people stumbled over one another, desperate to put distance between themselves and the lifeless body of the man, now sprawled in a pool of crimson that spread across the ancient stone.

The sharp tang of blood filled the air.

Guards barked orders, their weapons raised as if daring anyone else to speak out.

"Stand down!" one roared, his voice drowned beneath the chaos.

But it was too late.

The carefully orchestrated display of control had cracked, exposing the raw fear and dissent festering beneath the surface.

"Did you see that?" someone shrieked.



"They just shot him!"

"It was a public execution! A warning!" another cried, clutching their child to their chest.

I thought of Danielle, knowing what she would say at the sight.

"An execution is no place for a child," she would grumble disapprovingly while rubbing her own swollen belly.

"No... no, this isn't right." A young woman trembled, staring at the blood seeping between the cobblestones.

I didn't move.

My eyes were fixed on Darius.

For a fleeting moment, Darius stood frozen, gripping the balcony railing as if it were the only thing keeping him upright. His face was blank, but his pale knuckles betrayed the tension in his grip.

Then, his cold mask snapped back into place.

"Silence!" his voice boomed, amplified to crush the rising hysteria.

The crowd faltered, caught between terror and obedience.

"This disruption will not be tolerated. The execution was carried out for the safety of Silverpine. Any attempts to undermine our security will be dealt with swiftly."

His words were ice cold; they should have settled like a chill in their bones.

But they did little to calm the tremors of fear pulsing through the masses.

My jaw tightened. I pressed my fingers to my earpiece.

"Leon," I growled, low and dark.

Static. Then, Leon's sharp tone. "What the hell is happening out there?"

"They're covering something up. Something is amiss." 3

Leon exhaled slowly, his patience thinning.

"You've confirmed the execution. Pull back."

"No," I snapped. My eyes flicked to the steel doors where Eve's body had been taken.

"Something's not right." I could feel it.

A long pause.

Then Leon's voice dropped, cold and deliberate.



"Fall out." The two words were drenched in an unspoken threat.

I opened my mouth, but I was cut off by a sound that tore through the air—an ear-splitting, bone-rattling roar that silenced everything.

It wasn't a wolf.

Every instinct in me locked up for a split second, something primal screaming in the back of my skull. 3

The crowd froze. The guards did too.

All heads snapped toward the steel doors at the back of the stage, the very ones where they'd dragged Eve's lifeless body.

Boom.

The reinforced steel doors buckled.

Boom.

They crumpled inward like paper.

And then, it tore through.

A massive Lycan. 2

But not like any I'd ever seen.

Its blackened fur rippled like smoke, veins glowing faintly beneath its skin like molten

cracks. Eyes burning crimson, wild and untamed. Its jaw—split wider than it should be—clamped around the mangled, bloodied body of a guard, armor crushed like tin.

It tossed the corpse aside like trash.

My breath fractured, my senses becoming heightened as I locked in.

Eve. 2

It was her.

This wasn't a wolf. It was the Lycan. A werewolf had truly shifted as a Lycan. 5

Her steel restraints still hung from her limbs, twisted and broken, swinging loosely with each slow, deliberate step forward. Blood clung to her claws, dripping in thick streams onto the stone.

Gasps, screams, and sheer disbelief rippled through the crowd.

"By the Moon..." someone whimpered.

Guards scrambled to react, raising their weapons.

"E-Engage! Take it down!"

The first shot rang out.

Then another.

Platinum rounds lit up the air.

They should have slowed her.

They didn't.

Eve moved—no, lunged—and the nearest soldier was in pieces before he could scream, his blood painting the execution stage.

Her roar split the sky again, louder this time, shaking the walls of the castle.

Panic erupted.

The crowd broke like a dam, people trampling each other in blind terror.