

237 Hybrids?

Hades 1

I smoothed out my expression, but every nerve sizzled beneath my skin, and the horrible, indescribable heaviness sank low in my gut.

I clenched my fist and released, the Flux rearing its head.

"Of course," I replied, still not managing to release the strain from my voice. "Her blood will be tested."

Montegue's eyes narrowed, wary, gauging my expression. "You will have no problem with that, Your Majesty?"

I managed to ensure my eye did not twitch and nodded. "Why would I be against it?"

It was not possible. It would mean...

A knock on the door snapped the taut tension in the room. Everyone turned sharply as Kael walked over to open it. Standing eagerly on the other side was a man in a coat.



The badge stitched onto his chest told me he was from the forensic lab.

He bowed nervously, seemingly noticing the tension that still lingered in the air like a sour taste clings to the mouth.

"Your Majesty, you have a message from the lab concerning the ferals that kidnapped your nephew. You have to come now."

I glanced at Felicia and Montegue, a silent message passing between us—that we would revisit the issue soon—before I walked out with Kael at my tail. They would meet us there.

The forensic lab was as sterile as any other medical facility chamber in the tower, just with a little more of a dark, clinical aura that seemed to cling to you long after you left.

I made sure to concentrate on what was at hand and the information we needed at the moment... but how could I extinguish the eerie whisper of dread that crawled up my spine like ice?

Even in the sterile brightness of the lab, the shadows of Felicia's words clung to me.



The possibility—the impossibility—echoed louder with each step I took.

She tried to kill you once before...

I shook my head sharply.

Now wasn't the time.

Not here. Not in front of them.

Kael kept glancing at me from the corner of his eye, as if he could feel the unraveling happening behind my mask. He said nothing—wisely—but I knew he was cataloguing every crack.

A young forensic aide approached, tablet in hand. "Right this way, Your Majesty," he said, voice tight, eyes darting.

We followed him into a secure analysis chamber, its air thick with a sharp chemical tang and the buzz of machines running comparative scans. Inside, the Chief Analyst stood with arms folded, lips set in a line that did not bode well.

"Report," I ordered.

Mara tapped her screen, and a set of images and genetic sequences lit up the display.



"The ferals..." she began, eyes flicking toward me, "they're neither werewolf nor lycan, Your Majesty."

The air in the room shifted.

Kael stiffened beside me. My jaw clenched.

"What does that mean?" I asked, voice low.

Mara's tone was grave. "It means both DNA sequences are present. They are... something in between."

My heart slowed in my chest. Another anomaly.

"Hybrids?" I said aloud, the word like ash on my tongue. I took a step forward, my hands curling at my sides. "That's not possible. Procreation between our kinds is rare, if not downright nonexistent. It should not be possible that hybrids have been born far back enough to be this old and trained enough to pull off such a heist. It makes no sense."

Mara didn't flinch. "These weren't born, Your Majesty. They were made."

I stared at her, my blood slowly chilling.

"Meaning?"



"They're not the result of cross-procreation. This is artificial fusion." She clicked to another screen—overlapping strands, erratic fusions, forced splices. "Forced integration of incompatible genetics. Someone designed them."

My eyes widened, my breath catching.

"Biologically altered," I muttered. "That's a violation of every known law of nature." Mixing and matching was unethical and unpredictable, especially with DNA of two very volatile creatures. There's a reason we were the only ones remaining after the moon fell.

Lycan and werewolf DNA were fundamentally different. We resembled each other—superficially—but our blood ran with different instincts, different legacies. Merging us was like mixing a cat and a dog. You'd get something grotesque. Dead—or undead, most likely.

Montegue stepped forward after slipping into the lab, his face like stone, voice clipped. "Do we know their original nature?"

"Yes. But according to what we've found, these creatures were originally werewolf. Their baseline sequence is unmistakable."



"But something's been added," Mara continued. "Something that doesn't just override the werewolf code—it bypasses it entirely. It latches onto it, hijacks it. That something—is lycan." 1

I turned to her, the words settling in like stone weights in my gut.

"You're saying it shifts between the two forms?"

"Exactly," Mara said. "It uses the werewolf form as a vessel, but the lycan strain gives it... enhanced aggression. Regeneration. Speed."

A horrifying thought crept through me, cold and slow.

"And control?" Felicia asked. "The lycan strain gives control."

Mara hesitated. "It is probable. We believe so. If this was engineered, then there is likely a command structure embedded somewhere—chemical, neural, psychic—we don't know yet. But they weren't acting randomly." 1

A long silence followed.

Kael broke it. "This changes everything."



It did.

This wasn't a random mutation or a rogue experiment. And by the way silence doused the room, the implications from the forensic analysis were clear.

"So you are telling us the person who donated the DNA that mutated the ferals was an anomaly themselves—being able to shift from werewolf to bypass DNA encryption and then shift to lycan DNA to latch onto them and alter them?" Felicia asked pointedly.

Only one person could shift like that, as the prophecy had said.

Eve was a werewolf that could shift into a lycan.

And if, because of the donated DNA, the donor could control the ferals, it would mean...

I mentally shook my head, my pulse hammering, as Mara replied.

"Yes, Your Highness. It seems so." She adjusted her glasses and shifted her gaze to me, a secret message in the gesture. "The ferals would have died anyway within a week or two."



"Why?" we all echoed.

"Their bodies..." she momentarily pursed her lips. "The fusion of lycan and werewolf DNA in such a fashion... is inherently unstable," Mara finished. "The cells begin to reject each other, triggering a systemic breakdown. They burn too hot—regenerating, mutating, adapting—but without a stable core, they collapse from the inside. Think of it like a machine running on mismatched gears. Eventually, the friction tears everything apart."

I could feel the prickle of the Montegues' eyes on me.

