



304 I Found You

Eve ¹

For a moment, nothing moved.

Not a blink.

Not a breath.

Even the Flux seemed stunned into silence.

Then—

A sound split the air like a scream beneath the surface of the world.

It wasn't a growl.

It wasn't human.

It was the war between them—Hades and the thing inside him—breaking loose for a heartbeat of truth.

His hand trembled. Not from weakness. From refusal.

From restraint.



Blood poured freely now, but he didn't falter.

"You..." His voice fractured. The normal one.

He took a step toward me.

"You are my wife," the Flux hissed through him.

"And you..." Hades choked, still gripping his eye,
"are not hers to command."

He dropped to one knee with a grunt, breath
stuttering as if he'd been stabbed.

A ripple of unease threaded through the council.
Kael lurched forward instinctively but froze
when Hades raised his free hand.

Not in surrender.

But in consent.

"So be it," he rasped. "Let it be written in blood
and stone. If we are to bind by Fenrir's Chain..."

His eye blazed behind the veil of his palm.

"...then let her be free of me. Of us."

A single tear escaped his visible eye.

But it wasn't water.



It was black. Like oil. Like grief solidified.

Cain turned to me.

"It's done," he said quietly. "Your wish is marked."

Just then Hades released a blood curdling growl drenched in tar. All of them had tried to prove they did not fear what was happened to Hades. Others too stunned to speak.

The silence didn't last long.

It cracked—sharply—under the weight of instinct.

Chairs scraped back. Feet shifted. Growls began to build low in throats around the chamber.

Because now... they sensed it.

Not just the man.

The thing within him.

And no Alpha could sit still with that much volatility coiled in the room like a fuse already lit.

"Back," Montegue commanded, standing now.

"Everyone."



Gallinti was already halfway up, claws unsheathing without thought. Silas had one hand behind his back—reaching for something. Kael was frozen, eyes wide, every muscle in his body screaming not to flinch. But his bond with Hades kept him rooted... just barely.

Only Cain remained unshaken, but his eyes were narrowed. Watching.

Waiting.

A vein bulged at Hades' temple. His breath hitched. And the blood from his palm no longer dripped—it steamed.

That's when they truly saw it.

This wasn't pain.

This was a cage barely holding.

One twitch in the wrong direction—one emotion too deep—and the Flux would break through.

And yet... he didn't unleash it.

Hades—Alpha of Obsidian—was kneeling. 4

Voluntarily.



For a woman.

For me.

And that terrified them more than any roar.

Because if he could fall to that madness and still remain aware enough to bow...

What did that make him?

What did it make me?

I still dared to love him, I could turn this all around and forgive... like I had always done.

A chill ghosted down my spine—phantom cold—like the echo of his tendrils still curled in my mind. I could feel it, even now. The way he'd reached inside me once, fingers not of flesh but of thought, of power, of control, scraping out my memories with all the care of a butcher skinning truth from bone.

And yet...

My feet moved before my sense could catch them.

"Eve—don't!" Kael's voice cracked through the air like a whip.



But I was already off the dais.

The table behind me groaned under the force of my push-off, chairs scattering as I ran—no, reached—for him.

Hades didn't lift his head. His breathing was ragged, shoulders shuddering under the weight of what he held back.

Still, his arm didn't move when I fell to my knees in front of him and touched his wrist.

Only then did he look up.

And in that shattered, searing moment—I saw it.

Not his madness.

But his memory.

"Elysia," he breathed.

The name wasn't mine.

And yet the sound of it made the room reel.

His free hand came to my cheek, fingers trembling against my skin as his corrupted eye flared beneath the bloodied palm.



"We can be the way we once were," he whispered.

And then—

The world tilted.

Vision overtook me.

A garden. Red lilies. Blood lilies. Their petals glistening as if painted in war.

"You like them?" a voice asked—deep, rough, familiar but not oily and as taunting as the flux. "They're as crimson as your hair."

A woman laughed. I couldn't see her face—only the wild sweep of red curls and a voice like sun-warmed iron. The horned figure knelt in the flowers, kissing her hand.

Flash.

A bed.

Her skin under his. His lips at her throat. Her mouth gasping his name as they both trembled and marked and moaned beneath sheets that carried the scent of jasmine and ash.

Flash.



A child.

Red curls and wide, innocent eyes, turquoise
orbs. His laughter was bright and short-lived.
Because behind him came thunder. A door
splintering. The horned man screaming her
name—"Elysia!"—as steel cut the air and blood hit
the cradle.

Then—

Darkness.

I tore my hand back with a sob.

The vision snapped like a spine, and I fell
backward into Cain's arms before I even realized
he'd caught me.

The chamber was silent again. But this time, it
was not fear.

It was awe.

Hades still knelt. One palm to his eye. One hand
outstretched toward the ghost of me—toward a
memory he had not meant to give.

And I...

I was trembling.



Not just from what I saw.

But from the part of me that remembered it too.

"Tell me you remember," The flux whispered.

"Tell me you understand why I am the way that I am."

I scrambled back, surprisingly, Montequé came to my side and shielded me.

His neck snapped with a deafening crunch that echoed war that was being waged on Hades' body. "They stole our lives, lay waste to our love, trampled on our children. And now... you found me after a countless centuries and immeasurable lifetimes." He smiled, lips quivering in a bloody smile that reeked of black vows and anarchy. "Elysia, my love. We will be reunited." 2

