



307 Father Doesn't Want Me

Eve 1

Blood in the cradle...

Blood in the cradle...

Blood in the cradle...

My baby...

Malrik.

I blinked, color leaking slowly into the blackness as my surroundings came into focus. I was back in the room I was slowly becoming familiar with again.

A pulsing pain had bloomed in the back of my skull, slowly ebbing and making sleep impossible.

I closed my eyes against the waves of haunting echoes from a life I might have known. Slapping my hand over my eyes, I let out a ragged exhale, thick with the strain of the day.

There were things to be done—things we were



no closer to accomplishing despite all the time we'd had in our hands. Darius Valmont was miles ahead, heading for the goalpost, and I was here... trying not to lose my marbles from the opposition within the very tower where we were planning our contingency.

> "Rhea?" I asked.

She didn't speak for a few moments, but I knew she wasn't resting. She was wide awake and alert. Her presence was as noticeable as her fur against my subconscious.

> "Yes, Eve."

> "The Flux was the first to call me Elysia." 1

A beat of heavy silence.

> "I know," she replied, her voice small as though she didn't want us revisiting this topic. "I called you Elysia first."

I waited for her to speak—to elaborate.

> "Who is she to you?"

Rhea seemed to take a breath.

> "Who she was to me..." Her voice cracked



under the weight of something she seemed to try and hide. Grief. "I was her wolf..." she whispered. "She was my werewolf." 2

I let silence reign, let her stew a little in the much-needed quiet.

"I failed her, all those centuries ago." Rhea bristled. The agony that had been leaking into her cadence before now seemed to drown out her voice.

> "Is that why you wanted me to escape so badly that night? No matter what it took, even though I tried to hold back?"

She let out a sad little chuckle.

> "You and her are alike. Very alike." She went silent again. "But then you were her all along. It just took Vassir's influence for it all to click."

My chest suddenly felt too small for my claustrophobic heart. I had a past life... I was truly a—

> "So I am a reincarnation of the moon goddess?"

I didn't know why I dreaded the answer to the question. It was only more complications to



contend with—another element that Hades and I would have to skirt around while we tried to survive the Fenrir's Chain.

And as much as I didn't want to sound cynical or unempathetic, I wasn't looking forward to unlocking more memories from a tragic past life. My present was already a travesty enough to last me a century. Adding to it felt like another unfair punishment from the gods. 1

> "I'm sorry, Rhea," I said. "For everything you've had to go through. Twice."

Her chuckle was watery this time. Strained.

> "Don't be. You've always carried too much on your shoulders. Even as Eve."

A pause.

Then, quieter:

> "But this time... maybe we make it through. By the way, Darius is such a perpetual degenerate, I wouldn't be surprised if he was the reincarnation of Malrik himself."

I laughed, though it choked. I wanted to believe her. Gods, I did. But my skin was tight with



exhaustion, my heart a pit of overlapping griefs—Eve's and Elysia's—bleeding into each other like ink in water. I hadn't asked for this rebirth. I hadn't wanted this legacy.

What if I didn't want to be her?

What if I just wanted to be me?

No myth. No goddess. No martyr chained to the memory of dead children and a bleeding moon.

Just Eve.

Just... me.

But the universe didn't care what I wanted. It never had.

And now the ghosts of my past were waking—slowly, deliberately—trying to fold themselves into the fractured pages of my present. The worst part?

They were starting to fit.

> "If I lose myself in her memories," I whispered aloud, "who's going to bring me back?"

Rhea's answer came without hesitation.



> "I will."

But her voice was brittle with grief.

I let the silence hang after that. Not because I doubted her—but because I didn't know if anyone could save me from what I was becoming.

Or remembering.

It made me wonder how Hades was holding up.

A knock at the door wrenched me from my thoughts, and I got up to answer.

My pulse stuttered as I took in the presence of the old man before me. Gray hair, green eyes alert as they stared back. A slight figure that belied the powerful ambassador I'd seen at the meeting—when he had stood momentarily between me and Hades.

"Hello, Lady Eve." His voice was... shaky. "I apologize for having to intrude on your evening."

"Ambassador Montegue..."

"Call me Monte. Though no one ever does," he laughed despite himself, but his expression



remained tight.

"Okay. What brings you here?" I asked, bracing slightly.

He swallowed audibly. "I know that no apology can ever suffice after all you've been through at the hands of my family." 1

A lump had formed in my throat, and I couldn't force words around it.

"I just need to ask you to help me..."

And like some trick of the eyes, Elliot stepped out from behind him. 1

My heart crashed against my ribs as I let out an involuntary gasp.

His face was red. Not just flushed—but blotched with the kind of hurt that doesn't come from crying alone, but from holding it in too long.

Tears streaked down Elliot's cheeks, silent as they fell. His tiny hands were balled at his sides, trembling.

Montegue looked as stricken as I felt. "He... he found me. He didn't say a word. Just stood



outside my door, shaking. I—I don't think he knew where else to go." 1

He looked at me with eyes too old for how lost they were.

"He's afraid, Eve. Of his father."

I knelt.

"Elliot," I whispered.

But the boy didn't speak. He didn't move. Just stared at me with those heartbreakingly wide eyes, shimmering with silent panic.

"I tried to hold him," Montague added, voice tight with guilt. "I'm his grandfather. But he wouldn't let me. He wouldn't come near me."

Elliot took a hesitant step forward. Then another.

Then, with small, jerky movements, he began to sign.

His tiny fingers shook, but I understood.

He wants to hurt me.

His voice was wrong. 2

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Scary.

Father doesn't want me. 

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