



324 Resonance

This chapter is quite technical in the lore and can be confusing. **1**

Eve

Kael didn't answer me at first.

His eyes were fixed on the stone floor like it had betrayed him. His mouth opened, closed, opened again. And then he laughed.

A single, broken breath of sound.

"Gods," he whispered. "It wasn't just some freak coincidence."

The words made the hairs on my neck rise.

"What wasn't?" I asked, pulse spiking. "Kael, what are you talking about?"

He dragged a hand down his face, then looked at me—looked at Elliot—and the weight in his gaze nearly buckled my knees.

"It's what he said in his sleep," Kael said quietly. "It wasn't just the pleading. It was the name."



"What name?"

He hesitated.

Then: "Nox."

The name hit the air like a curse.

I blinked, confused. "Who—?"

"Hades' puppy," Kael said. "From when he was a boy. Before the training, before the rituals, before the Flux ever fully woke in him. It was the only thing he loved."

I felt something cold slide into my veins.

"Nox was all he had," Kael said. "And his father knew it. So when Hades refused to follow one of his first commands—to kill and eat Nox—his father did it for him. Right in front of him. Said mercy was a weakness, and that all weakness had to be consumed."

My breath stilled.

"And Elliot... said his name?"

Kael nodded.

"That's not all," he went on, voice hollowing. "He



mentioned a test. That he passed it. But there was still no pie."

I stared at him.

"Pie," Kael echoed, wincing. "That was Hades' favorite thing as a kid. His mother made it. Cinnamon and plum. Before she vanished. Before she was—" He stopped himself. "Hades used to say, when he was little, 'If I pass the test, maybe I'll get pie.'"

My heart cracked open.

"He also talked about a cold place," Kael added. "Said the floor was hard. That he couldn't sleep because the lights wouldn't turn off."

My stomach turned.

"He was talking about the Black Room," Kael whispered. "Where Hades was taken when the Flux began to settle in. Where he was starved, tested, broken."

He looked at Elliot again.

"This isn't just inherited energy. It's memory. Echoes. The Flux isn't dormant in him, Eve. It's active. Listening. Reaching back."



My legs trembled as I dropped beside the cot.

The silence was thick, stifling.

I sat beside the cot, my hands still cradling Elliot's, but my thoughts felt unmoored—adrift somewhere between grief and disbelief.

"This can't be happening," I whispered. "This... this is too much. He's a child."

Kael didn't speak again. He just leaned against the wall like his bones were trying to give out.

The Delta slowly stepped closer, her expression grim but composed. "It is happening," she said gently. "And I think I can explain why."

I looked up at her, eyes burning.

She knelt beside the cot, her fingers glowing faintly as she ran them just above Elliot's skin—not touching, just reading.

"There's something... synchronizing beneath the surface," she murmured. "It's faint. Dormant, but alive. Like a thread caught in a current."

She glanced at me. "The Flux in him and the Flux in Hades... it's not just the same energy. It's the



same frequency. The same resonance."

"What does that mean?" I asked, trying to ground myself.

She inhaled. "Think of it like tuning forks. If you strike one, the other vibrates—even from across a room—if it shares the same pitch. That's what's happening here. Their Flux resonates. So even if they're apart, even if they're unaware... they echo each other."

"Echo?" Kael echoed, voice raw.

The Delta nodded. "Emotions. Memories. Pain. If one experiences something powerful enough, the other may feel it. And if one is fractured..." 2

She let the rest hang.

I swallowed hard, glancing back at Elliot.

Still unmoving.

Still quiet.

But his eyes—gods, his eyes were glassy in a way that wasn't vacant. It was watching. Not the room. Not us.

Something else.



"So what he said," I whispered, "what he dreamed... it wasn't just a memory."

"It was a bleed-through," the Delta said. "A moment where the resonance pierced the veil between them. And if Hades is breaking down—if his Flux is destabilizing—Elliot might be... catching pieces of it. Involuntarily."

Kael muttered a curse, dragging his hand through his hair again.

"But he's just a child," I said. "He shouldn't have to bear this. He shouldn't be carrying any of this."

The Delta looked down at Elliot, then slowly back at me. Her expression had shifted—less clinical now. More reverent. Like she was staring at a sacred wound.

"There's something you need to understand about how the Flux behaves," she said gently. "It's not just a power. Not just a substance. It's a tether."

Kael's brow furrowed. "A tether to what?"

"To pain," she said simply. "To memory. To survival. When it embeds in a host, it learns



them. Adapts. But when it's inherited..." She looked at Elliot. "It comes in raw. Untamed. Like a current with no riverbed."

I blinked, the words sinking in too slow to stop the ache rising in my chest.

"In Elliot's case," she continued, "he was born carrying someone else's resonance. Hades' resonance. And children..." She paused, searching for the right word. "Children dream more openly. Their minds haven't learned how to seal the doors yet. That makes them vulnerable—but also uniquely receptive."

"You're saying Elliot... what? Accesses Hades' mind in his sleep?"

"No," she said carefully. "He feels it. Like a fever. Like a memory trying to relive itself through him. Especially when Hades is fractured. Especially when that resonance is screaming across the bond, looking for something—someone—that understands."

My pulse thudded in my ears.

Kael shook his head slowly, voice faint. "So he wasn't just dreaming. He was remembering for



him."

The Delta nodded. "Elliot's Flux is echoing Hades'. That's how he saw Nox. The test. The Black Room. His sleep makes him more open to those echoes because his body is at rest... but the Flux never sleeps."

I stared down at Elliot.

His lashes didn't even twitch.

"But he doesn't understand what he's seeing," I said quietly. "He's just... absorbing it."

I gathered Elliot into my arms again, holding him tighter this time. His little body—so warm, so heartbreakingly familiar—hung limp in mine. Not asleep. Not unconscious.

Just... flaccid.

A kind of stillness born from fear so deep, it became silence. The kind of silence that warps a child from the inside out.

His fingers didn't twitch. His chest rose, but barely. And his eyes—glassy, unfocused—just stared.



And then it clicked.

The way the Delta had described it—tuning forks, resonance, bleeding memories—it hadn't been just metaphor. It was chemistry. Physics. Soul-deep gravity.

The Flux wasn't a power. It was a substance.

And like any substance—if two bodies held the same form of it, the same viscosity—they could interact. Merge. Carry sound. Memory. Thought.

Like water into water.

A ripple into a tide.

And if Elliot had inherited Hades' resonance...

He could reach him.

I stiffened.

My gaze shot to Kael, who still stood near the quartz wall, eyes dimmed like he hadn't surfaced from the thought of the Black Room. Of Nox. Of pie never served.

"You said he's lost," I said, breath catching.

Kael blinked, slow. "What?"



"You said Hades was lost in his own mind. That the Flux has buried him under his own memories. That it's using them—looping them—incapacitating him."

His brows pulled together.

I swallowed thickly and looked down at Elliot. My thumb brushed his temple. No reaction.

"But Elliot... if this is all true—if the resonance he carries is strong enough to pull the echoes of Hades into his dreams—then maybe... maybe it can go the other way too."

Kael straightened, tension sparking.

"You think—"

"I know," I cut in, my voice firmer now. "He's the only one who shares that same frequency. The only one who can walk those corridors and not be consumed by them. Because they're not foreign to him. He was born with them inside him."

Kael didn't respond, but I saw the truth hit his eyes like a slow dawn.

Elliot wasn't a bystander.



He was a key.

"And if he can find Hades," I continued, eyes burning, "I can anchor them both. I can bind to Hades—soul to soul—and when Elliot finds him in that dark place, I'll pull him back."

I looked at Kael like it was the only truth that mattered now.

"Together," I said. "We can bring him to the surface."

Kael's throat worked like he wanted to argue. But he didn't.

Because he saw what I saw:

The gods hadn't sent Elliot as a weapon.

They'd sent him as a lighthouse.

And Hades—no matter how far he'd sunk—could still follow that flicker of light home.

But that was if... Elliot could do this without getting hurt.

Even with the blossoming of new hope, the dread remained unsurmountable as looked at him.



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He was a child... how could I do this to him?

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