

445 My Son Found His Wolf

Hades 1

I couldn't move, every limb was held down by forces I didn't know. My lips felt like there were anvils on them. I tried to find something in me that would break through the void of darkness that I seemed unable to escape.

I concentrated, forcing my body to respond to the command of my mind. Yet, it was like I was pushing futilely against a transparent barrier.

When I gave up, I could hear my heart throbbing in the throbbing of my head. I was still exerting myself despite not being able to break the surface.

When my body failed me, I turned to my mind, only to find it devoid of anything, painfully empty in a way that was suffocating.

I didn't even know my name.

The forces on my limbs slid eerily over to the column of my throat as alarm took over, seeping into my veins, contaminating everything.

I tried to force myself to remember something I was forgetting, someone I was forgetting—the

knowledge alone made the forces winding themselves around my throat tighten.

Yet nothing broke through the void that I was starting to horrifically realize was a cage with bars I could neither bend nor break.

Then...

It wafted into my senses—a scent, no, a mixture of two distinct scents so achingly familiar that my hammering heart stopped for a second too long.

The earthy, fresh essence with a sharpness that made it linger long after, combined with the redolence of syrupy sweet richness that made my skin tingle with anticipation. Lavender and honey, melting together to create ambrosia that tugged at my chest to the point of agony.

My finger twitched.

Heady victory filled me, as I slowly found my fingers, one after the other, lifting one slightly after the other until I was sure they were complete.

The scent grew stronger, more intoxicating, pulling me toward consciousness like a lifeline thrown into an abyss. I fought against the

remaining tendrils of darkness, each breath bringing me closer to the surface of whatever nightmare had held me captive.

My eyes cracked open, heavy and unfocused at first. Light filtered in, soft and warm, nothing like the harsh fluorescents I'd grown accustomed to. But it wasn't the light that made my heart skip—it was the cascade of red hair that fell like liquid fire across my vision, framing a face that belonged in my deepest dreams.

Turquoise eyes. Eyes like the ocean on a perfect day, wide with concern and something else—relief so profound it made my chest ache.

Eve.

Everything came rushing back at once. The mission. Silverpine. The transformation. The pain, the fear, the desperate flight home. But most importantly—her. My wife. My Luna. My everything.

With strength I didn't know I still possessed, I pulled her to me in a crushing embrace that made her gasp and sent alarmed murmurs rippling through what I now realized was an infirmary filled with medical staff.

"Please," I whispered against her hair, my voice



hoarse and broken, "tell me you are real."

I felt her shock in the way her body stiffened for just a moment before melting into me, her arms wrapping around me with equal desperation.

"You're back home with me," she whispered, her voice thick with emotion. "You're home, Hades. You're safe."

Relief crashed over me like a tidal wave, so overwhelming that for a moment I couldn't breathe. The nightmare was over. Silverpine was behind me. I was home, with her, alive and—

Pain exploded through every nerve ending at once. My body, which had been running on adrenaline and recognition, suddenly remembered every injury, every transformation, every moment of agony I'd endured. I tried to hold onto her, tried to maintain that precious contact, but my strength abandoned me and I slumped back against the pillows.

Everything hurt. Everything. But I was home. I was alive. And she was real.

Then the rest of the horror hit me and I stiffened just as the medics began to work on stabilizing me. I straightened even as my back was one movement away from snapping. "Where are

they?" I blurted. "Kael..."

"Thea and Micah," she took their names out of my mouth.

My chest tightened at the mention of the other passengers and their fate after our catastrophic plummet.

She smiled, running her hand through my hair. "They are all fine. Even the child."

I looked at her like she hung the sun, quickly pulling her in for a kiss.

It started soft, tentative, as if I was afraid she might disappear if I pressed too hard. But the moment our lips met, something wild and desperate took over. Days that felt like months of separation, of not knowing if I'd ever see her again, of fighting just to survive—it all poured into that kiss with a ferocity that surprised even me.

She kissed me back with the same intensity, her fingers tangling in my hair as if she too couldn't quite believe I was real. Every flinch of pain that shot through my battered body was worth it for this moment, for the taste of her, for the proof that we had both made it through the nightmare.

I couldn't get enough. Even as my ribs protested and my muscles screamed, I pulled her closer, deeper into the kiss that felt like coming back to life—

"DADDY!" 1

The shriek of pure joy that erupted from the infirmary entrance made us spring apart like we'd been electrocuted. Elliot stood in the doorway, his eyes wide with disbelief and elation before he launched himself toward the bed.

The medics scattered as our son barreled past them, all pretense of medical protocol abandoned in the face of a child.

I opened my arms for him, smiling even as my entire jaw protested, a heady rush of love making my head spin as he launched toward me.

Eve chuckled, the sound soothing my ears, and my smile widened...

Then it fell...

Because Elliot's bright green eyes morphed into red, from his warm beige skin sprang grey fur, his fingers enlarging and transforming into clawed paws.

Before my eyes, my son shifted into a wolf

before he landed on my lap.

Time froze, the blood in my veins slowing to an excruciating crawl.

Finding my wolf had meant losing my innocence at an early age, sharing your consciousness with a creature that saw through filtered things that children innately absorbed.

It was a rite of passage that came with puberty, with hormones and understanding, with the mental capacity to handle the duality of what he was and beast. But Elliot—my little son—was shifting before my eyes with the fluid grace of someone who had been doing this for far longer than should have been possible.

The small gray wolf in my lap looked up at me with those same bright eyes, now red instead of green, his tail wagging with pure joy as if this was the most natural thing in the world. Which, apparently, it was for him.

"When?" The word came out strangled, my voice barely recognizable even to myself.

Eve's hand found mine, her fingers intertwining with my trembling ones. "A few days after you left," she said softly. "I was in danger, and that night he just... shifted to save me. Dr. Amelia

says the emotional trauma might have triggered it early."

I stared at my son—this impossible, beautiful, terrifying miracle of a child who was nuzzling against my chest with wolf-like contentment. Every instinct I had as a father was screaming that this was wrong, that he was too young, too small, too innocent to carry this burden.

History was repeating itself.

I had found Cerberus too young too.

Was this a cycle that would never end?

I had failed him too many times to count.

But another part of me, the part that had been Vassir, that carried centuries of supernatural knowledge, whispered that this wasn't just early shifting. This was something else entirely. Something that made my blood run cold even as I held my transformed son close.

"Does he remember being human when he's like this?" I asked, though I wasn't sure I wanted to know the answer.

After I had shifted so young because of my father's training, the moment Cerberus gained consciousness in my subconscious, I changed.



Even before I was injected with Vassir's veins, before I had the flux's tendrils rupturing my heart. I became cold, unfeeling.

If Elliot was like that...

Elliot answered on his own, whining to get my attention.

I let the cowardice melt away and met his gaze, crimson eyes meeting mine, soft and puppy-like. Not like the caged, wounded wolf that I had been.

"Elliot?" My eyes roamed his form. The rich gray fur with a moderately large red marking that traced his spine.

My hands shook as I stroked the soft fur, Elliot's whining piercing my nonexistent heart.

"He's still himself. Even more playful," Eve tried to divert my emotions from the pain raking itself through me, but I could hear that even she was as heartbroken as I was.

I touched his snout and snapped back as he tried to bite me before howling at my horror. But there was nothing ferocious about his expression. He had been teasing me. 1

The realization gave some reprieve.

Then someone came running in.

"Luna," he panted, his eyes darting momentarily to me, widening. "You are awake, Alpha," he bowed.

"What is happening? What is the emergency?"

He swallowed, before his words tumbled out in a rush, all at once. "It's Lucinda Montague. She is awake and worse than before." 2

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