



447 His Hypothesis

Hades 1

As the elevator doors closed around us, Eve's voice was quieter, more vulnerable. "Where is Ellen now? Is that why Cain isn't here? Did you have him watch over her?"

"She's safe," I assured her quickly. "Do you know about the Eclipse Rebellion?"

"Of course," Eve replied without hesitation. "The rebel group fighting against my father."

"They've been rescuing people from the Cauterium for years. They saved Ellen when she escaped, and she's under their protection now. But Eve, we have a deal with them—I promised to find a way to get them supplies. We're all racing against time, and—"

My words were cut short by a disembodied howl that echoed through the elevator shaft, so raw and primal it made my blood freeze. The sound was barely recognizable as coming from anything that had once been human.

The elevator doors opened, and immediately we were hit with the cacophony of shouting voices,



rattling chains, and another bone-chilling howl. Through the reinforced glass of the containment area, I could see her.

Lucinda had shifted, but her wolf form was almost too feral to believe—massive, grotesquely muscled, with eyes that held no trace of human intelligence. Heavy chains wrapped around her limbs as multiple guards struggled to restrain her thrashing form.

Gone was the poised older woman that I knew.

And there, hunched in despair at the edge of the containment area, was Montague. His frame was bent with grief as he tried desperately to speak to the monster his wife had become.

"Lucinda, please," his voice cracked. "I know you're still in there. Please, just listen to my voice..."

But the creature that had once been his wife only snarled in response, foam flecking from her muzzle as she strained against her bonds.

I froze in place, but no one else seemed shocked by the bizarre scene unfolding before me.

Eve stroked my hair to calm me just as a bomb of truth exploded, ripping through my very concept



of nightmares and reality, warping it into something that made my stomach churn.

"She was tricked by Felicia and got marked when she was transported to what I now know without a doubt was the Cauterium. She was marked and ordered to steal Elliot, by Darius."

I tensed, every nerve recoiling from her words. **"She was the one that Elliot saw. The one that hurt Kael and took him." My voice was strained.**

"Yes," she replied, still somewhat calm even as Lucinda let out disembodied howls and growls, snapping the chains that held her back. "Now the mark is doing this to her." Eve's frustration was disheartening.

"Have you tried to remove the limb where the mark is?" I glanced between her and the macabre chaos in front of us.

Eve's face fell. "It's on her chest."

My stomach dropped.

Eve left me to be by Montague's side as a medic updated him, his face a mask of horror, words spilling out in a terrified rush.

The Gammas that held Lucinda down struggled, gritting their teeth, sweating to ensure she



stayed restrained.

I could only watch.

Still too weak to even stand on two legs.

Elliot snuggled close to me, his nose against my chest as if trying to nudge me away from the despair he detected in me. He morphed back into the green-eyed little boy that I recognized.

"I missed you, Daddy." His expression was strangely contrite. "Are you angry at me?"

I blinked. "What?" I cupped his chin, tilting my head to assess him properly even though the action paid me back with more pain. "Why would I ever be? I missed you so much too."

He wrung his fingers together, looking uncertain. "Because I shifted too early. That was the only way to save Mommy from Grandma."

My brows knitted together. "What are you talking about?" I asked.

"I needed to stop her, but I was so scared of Grandma. Then I heard a voice in my head. It told me it would help, and I allowed him."

"Your wolf," I muttered.

He nodded. "Then when I opened my mouth and



told Grandma to stop, it wasn't my voice—but she heard it and stopped quickly. She finally listened to us and not to the voice of the bad man who was making her do all those bad things. But because I'm not strong enough, it came back. And now..." He pointed in Lucinda's direction. "She is worse. The bad man has her again."

I took in all he said, looking between them as realization dawned on me slowly. The last few moments before I dropped from the sky with Kael, Thea, and Micah played behind my eyes.

The way my roar had stopped Kael in his tracks—the effect could not have been some lucky coincidence. Even the vampire that reacted, freezing enough for us to get a head start.

But that hadn't been the only time. It had happened at the Cauterium too. When Cain had told me to leave him behind with the ferals we'd encountered in the first level of the place, a roar similar to the one that had subdued both Kael and the vampire had subdued the ferals.

But not only that—the facility itself had recognized me from the sound alone and let us into the next level after tagging me as LYCAN PRIMUS. Then there had been the retina scan



that had rejected us before—until I shifted. Only then did it release us, after tagging me as an unknown anomaly and a HYBRID PRIMUS.

It was all connected. Though I didn't fully understand or unravel the complex nature of the connection, I was sure the reason Elliot could bypass Darius' control over Lucinda was because I could bypass the control as well. He had inherited the ability from me. 1

My gaze cut to the scene, watching Lucinda continue to struggle. I had an idea so outlandish that it just might work and prove my hypothesis correct.

I picked up my son and placed his feet daintily on the ground. "I am going to help Grandma."

He nodded hesitantly. I leaned down to plant a kiss on his forehead, ignoring the grinding of my bones because of the action.

I pulled back and gave him a reassuring smile before turning back to my target, my stomach twisting with unease but my veins pumping with adrenaline.

I glanced at Eve, eyes narrowing. I had to do this before she noticed, or she would tie me down to stop me.



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"I am sorry, Red," I whispered.

My bones screamed in protest as I began to rise from the wheelchair, every fractured piece grinding against its neighbor like broken glass. The pain was beyond description—white-hot agony that threatened to steal my consciousness with each infinitesimal movement.

"Cerberus, you ready?" I whispered internally. "This is going to hurt like hell." ²

"Like we've ever shied away from pain," he scoffed, and I felt the familiar pull of the shift beginning to take hold. ¹

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