

## 508 Shivering

HADES 1

The painstaking hours that passed were the longest of my life, and all I could do was hold her. She didn't stir—not once. My heart remained perpetually lodged in my throat. The world blurred into nothing; all that existed was her and her fading heartbeat.

My heart didn't race—it beat slowly, in sync with hers. Everything about her was fading, dwindling. Her scent. Her presence. Her warmth. I gripped her tighter as if I could pull her back together, as if she were slipping through my fingers.

Hours later, still, none of the Deltas spoke. Not that I could have heard them anyway. The only update was that more Deltas had arrived—most of them from the Shadowhunt division. The last time I had managed to pull myself out of the haze in my mind, they were healing the other Gammas.

I stroked her fur. She had been unable to shift back to her usual form. I was sure Rhea was keeping her alive—maintaining her in her larger

wolf state because a wound that massive in her smaller, human form would have been catastrophic. She never would've survived it.

Her healing had slowed drastically—barely 0.5% progress—because of the strain and the platinum embedded in the Verdantin. She was still part werewolf; she wasn't completely impervious to its effects.

If it had been any other Gamma or Commander, being that close to an explosive would've blown them to smithereens. And Eve knew that. It was why she shielded Gallinti the way she did.

"I'm sorry," a distant voice murmured. It was so faint I wasn't sure I heard it at first.

Numbly, I tore my gaze from Eve for the first time in hours. I met Gallinti's contrite stare.

He swallowed hard, sinking to his knees beside Eve's massive form. "She saved me. It should have been me," he whispered.

I didn't respond. I didn't know how. My mouth felt like it weighed a ton. Maybe a part of me was breaking. I looked away from him.

I heard him swallow again. "She's truly so strong," he muttered, voice trembling. "She will



make it." He didn't sound convinced.

"Done," a Delta finally announced. "We've regenerated the damaged tissues, formed new ribs, woven new muscle fibers, and closed the wound." I knew she listed each step to reassure me, but it only made the anvil in my stomach double in weight. Eve had lost so much of herself in this war—and it was only the first day.

She still didn't stir. She remained limp in my arms, but slowly—now that the gaping hole in her back had closed—she shifted back. Fur receded into red hair. Her olive skin was now a cadaverous gray. Her cheeks were sunken; her breathing shallow.

I bit the inside of my cheek to keep from screaming like a madman. Instead, I gathered her closer, searching for heat at her core.

All I found was the whisper of a breath leaving her as she twitched. Relief washed through me so violently that my head went light for a second and a tear slipped down my face.

I feathered a kiss onto her clammy, gray forehead, my tears dripping onto her skin. I shook with the fragile relief of knowing that there was even a shadow of a chance that I

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wouldn't lose her.

"Alpha—there's something else." A Delta hesitated. "The pups are alive. Her body refused to let us touch them. It's a miracle, but her body is keeping her alive as well as the pups. It will slow her regeneration, but all three of them could survive." 3

I stared at the Delta.

"What?"

She smiled—tired, but genuine. "The pups, Alpha. They're still alive. We tried to divert energy to stabilize the Luna, but her body fought us. Kept routing healing energy to them. We've never seen anything like it." She paused. "She's protecting them. Even now. Even unconscious."

My throat closed.

I looked down at Eve—gray, skeletal, barely breathing.

But fighting.

Still fighting.

"How long," I rasped, "until she's out of danger?"

The Delta's smile faded. "Days. Maybe a week. Her body is prioritizing the pups, which means

her own healing will be—" She stopped. "Slow. Very slow. But if we keep monitoring her, if we keep supporting her vitals, all three of them should survive. But like always, she could still well surprise us." 1

Should.

Not will.

Should.

I nodded, unable to speak.

The Delta squeezed my shoulder briefly, then moved away.

I sat there, Eve's head still cradled in my lap, my hand in her hair.

"You stubborn, reckless, impossible woman," I whispered. My voice broke. "You saved them. Even when I—" I stopped, swallowing hard. "Even when I chose you. You chose all of us."

I leaned down, pressed my forehead to hers.

"I love you," I whispered. "I love you, Red. So come back. Please. Just—come back."

She didn't stir.

But her heartbeat—faint, fragile, but there—beat steadily beneath my palm.

And I held on.

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I didn't know how much time passed.

Minutes. Hours. The world beyond the tent had ceased to exist. There was only Eve—her shallow breathing, her cold skin, the faint pulse beneath my fingertips.

The tent flap rustled.

I didn't look up.

"Hades."

Victoriana's voice. Quiet. Careful.

I still didn't move.

She stepped closer, and I heard her breath catch when she saw Eve—gray, skeletal, barely recognizable.

Victoriana's jaw tightened. "There's been a lull. Morrison's forces scattered after he died. We've had some passive exchanges—sniping, small skirmishes—but nothing major. Not for the past few hours. We're almost done clearing the field."

I finally looked at her. "Casualties?"

Victoriana's expression darkened. "Fifteen



percent of Dawnstrike didn't make it. Forty-three dead. Sixty-two wounded, twelve critical." She paused. "But we're holding. The division is battered, but intact. And it's because of her."

Her gaze shifted back to Eve.

"She charged Morrison alone," Victoriana continued, her voice tight. "Gave us the opening. Led the assault. And when Gallinti was caught in the blast radius—" She stopped, her throat working. "She didn't hesitate. She threw herself over him. Took the full force of the explosion."

"I know," I repeated, my voice breaking.

Victoriana reached out, hesitated, then placed a hand on my shoulder. "Hades. She's alive. That's what matters. She's alive, and the Deltas say she'll survive."

"They said she should survive," I corrected, my voice hollow. "Not will. Should."

Victoriana's grip tightened. "Then we make sure it's will. We don't let her die after everything she's fought for."

I closed my eyes, feeling the weight of her words settle over me.



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The vines destroyed.

A lull.

And Eve—broken, barely breathing, but alive.

Carrying our children.

Our children.

I looked down at her, at the faint rise and fall of her chest.

"You're going to be a mother," I whispered.

"We're going to have twins, Red. A family. And you—" My voice broke. "You have to wake up. You have to meet them. You have to—"

I stopped, unable to continue.

Outside, I heard voices. Soldiers moving. Equipment being shifted.

The war wasn't over.

We still had a little over two days left.

But for now—just for now—there was peace.

And I held her.

And I waited.

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55:30:09

**Frostfang**

Maera and Silas remained reeling from the news of the Luna's condition and pregnancy, even almost five hours later since the news had been relayed to all of the division.

She was critical, a miracle she had survived as well as her pups. But it was an understatement to say that it was not a huge setback for the war efforts, Silas thought warily. Though the others would never admit it.

According to the reports relayed from the command centre, Eve had been a tank on the field, fighting right in the front lines. With her accelerated cell regeneration, size and agility, some that Silas had seen and heard of months ago, she was the type of Soldier a commander would pray never to lose.

And that was not even talking about the downright reckless but brave strategy she had used to defeat Morrison.

Then there was Gallinti whom she had pulled back straight from the claws of death let it take a bite of her instead. She had remained everything the prophecy had spoken of, and even more. Losing her would tilt the scales.

But beyond that, Silas found himself downcast for her...

Pups...two pups

Yet, she remained a force to be reckoned with but beneath all that was still a person now fighting to survive. He could not imagine how Hades felt, probably lost, like he always was without Eve.

It has taken months, countless trials and endless challenges but the werewolf princess has earned his respect.

Silas looked out of the tent where he stood with Maera whose sharp eyes remained on the radar, watching and waiting. The scar on her face had healed by Delta revealing an aged woman who bore a striking resemblance to Silverpine's beta and Darius's ankle-biting lap dog.

They had barely spoken a word to each other since the Bloodmoon descended over their world seventeen hours ago. Just like Ironwall, Frostfang had not engaged in combat with any enemy force.

Silas speculated that it had something to do with the chilly weather and snow. But Silas was used to the chill, it was his territory after all, but

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Maera was different. She might not have realised it, but she had begun to shiver.

Silas got up slowly and picked up a coat, before bringing it to her and draping it over her trembling shoulders.

Her eyes snapped up as she flinched, her eyes widening.

"You were cold," he said simply before going back to his position.

She blinked, looking at it then at him. It took a long while before she spoke. "Thank you." 2

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