

101 Implied But Not Explicit

Eve 1

As I pounced, Hades easily dodged me and circled me like a predator once more, his sharp eyes glinting with an unsettling amusement. "Strength is only half the battle," he said, his tone as cold and detached as ever. "Endurance determines who stays standing when the fight drags on. Let's see if you can handle the real thing."

I barely had a moment to prepare before he surged forward again but this time, he was more unrelenting. He didn't give me space to think, didn't allow a single breath of reprieve. His attacks came in a flurry—strikes aimed at my sides, sweeps toward my legs, and quick feints to throw me off balance. It reminded me of the men that he had fought when he had brought me here. I had never thought to think that I would be at the receiving end of his onslaught.

Sweat trickled down my temples as I dodged, twisted, and blocked to the best of my ability. My muscles burned, my lungs felt like they might collapse, and my sliced palms stung with every impact. Still, I gritted my teeth and pushed

Sweat trickled down my temples as I dodged, twisted, and blocked to the best of my ability. My muscles burned, my lungs felt like they might collapse, and my sliced palms stung with every impact. Still, I gritted my teeth and pushed through, refusing to give him the satisfaction of seeing me falter.

"Good," he murmured as I narrowly avoided another strike. "But you're slowing down."

His words sliced through my focus, and that brief distraction was all it took. His foot swept out, hooking around my ankle, and I crashed to the ground with a force that rattled my bones.

Pain shot through my knees and elbows as I landed awkwardly, the breath knocked clean out of me. For a moment, I just lay there, dazed and humiliated, the world spinning around me.

Above me, Hades loomed, his shadow falling over my prone form. His expression was unreadable, but the faintest flicker of something of a not so satisfied expression crossed his features. He extended a hand, his voice hard. "Get up."

I stared at his hand, my pride warring with my exhaustion. Every fiber of my being screamed to take it, to let him pull me up, but the memory of his smirk, his taunts, his maddening arrogance,

Pushing against the ground with trembling arms, I forced myself to my knees. My legs wobbled as I stood, the sting of raw pain fueling me more than anything else. I kept my eyes locked on his, defiance in my gaze.

"I don't need your help," I added, wiping the sweat from my brow with the back of my hand.

Hades's lips curved into a faint smirk, but this time, there was no mockery in it—only a trace of approval. He crossed his arms, stepping back to give me space. "Good," he said. "Lesson one of endurance: no one is going to save you. You stand on your own, or you don't stand at all."

I squared my shoulders, rolling the tension out of them as best I could. My legs still felt like jelly, and my chest heaved with labored breaths.

"Ready to go again?" he asked, his tone almost amused.

"Always," I bit out, planting my feet firmly on the ground. I cringed as my ankle began to ache. Luckily, if he noticed he did not show it.

Hades's smirk widened just a fraction, and then he moved. This time, I wasn't caught off guard. This time, I was ready. And as the grueling session continued, I vowed that no matter how

Hades's smirk widened just a fraction, and then he moved. This time, I wasn't caught off guard. This time, I was ready. And as the grueling session continued, I vowed that no matter how many times I fell, I would rise again. Maybe I would be able to look at myself in the mirror again.

Hades

I watched her walk into the dining hall, Jules trailing dutifully behind her. Despite the bruising session earlier, she carried herself with a composed elegance that belied the exhaustion she must have felt. The only visible evidence of our training was the faint bruise on her cheek—a stark contrast against her pale skin. She hadn't tried to hide it, hadn't bothered with makeup or excuses.

It struck me, unexpectedly, that her refusal to cover the mark was something indeed, It was a statement. A silent declaration that she wouldn't shy away from what she endured, no matter how painful or humiliating.

As she approached the table, her eyes briefly flicked to mine, her expression neutral but guarded. I had seen that look before—on new

Kael sat straighter in his seat. He glanced at me but I did not meet his gaze, I kept my eyes on Ellen.

She took a seat. Her movements were careful, deliberate, as if every muscle in her body screamed in protest but she refused to let it show.

"Your Majesty," she greeted.

I gritted my teeth at her formal tone as she addressed me.

"Good morning, Beta Kael," she turned to Kael and offered a small smile, one that I read as some sort of reassurance that she was alright.

"Good morning, your highness," But the concern in his voice as clear as day. My knuckles turned white from gripping the edge of the table. Yet, leaned back in my chair, swirling the glass of wine in my hand as I studied her. "You're late," I said casually, though I had no real intention of chastising her.

"I apologize, your Majesty," she replied but the iciness in her eyes could freeze over both Silverpine and Obsidan. There was no warmth for me in those icy depths, none at all.



Her reaction usually filled me with an odd sense of satisfaction—her defiance, her pride, her refusal to yield. But today, the frost in her tone and the hollow emptiness in her eyes struck a nerve I couldn't quite place. For the second fucking time. Breakfasts were beginning to be my least liked event of the day.

"It won't happen again," she added, her voice smooth but clipped, as if she were addressing a particularly disagreeable superior rather than me.

Kael cleared his throat, cutting through the charged silence. "Perhaps a bit of leniency is in order, your Majesty. After all, Ellen just survived one of your sessions." His tone was light and a bit jovial, but his underlying message was clear: Ease up.

I shot him a warning glance but said nothing, my gaze drifting back to Ellen. Her posture was perfect, her chin held high despite the subtle tremor in her fingers as she reached for a glass of water.

"Tell me," I said, setting my wine down with deliberate care, "how do you find your training thus far?"

Ellen took a slow sip of water before answering, her composure unsplintered. "Challenging, your Majesty. But necessary."

The food was brought to the table and her hands shook as she began to dig in.

But I could not forget the way she spoke those words—calm, detached, almost robotic—grated on me more than I cared to admit. Where was the fire, the spark of rebellion I had grown accustomed to? Was this calm exterior her way of shutting me out, or was she merely biding her time, waiting for an opportunity to strike back? I might have gotten her away from Kael and warned Jules away from letting her be too attached but it seemed like she was slipping like sand from my grasp. For the first time in my life, I had accomplished nothing. The knowledge made my eye twitch. 2

Kael leaned forward, breaking the tension once more. "Ellen, if you keep this up, you'll be taking down Lycans in no time. Maybe even Hades himself." He grinned, clearly attempting to lighten the mood. Being too damn friendly. Again.

Ellen's lips twitched unable to keep the amusement from her expression. "I'll take down

Ellen's lips twitched unable to keep the amusement from her expression. "I'll take down a mutated bear before I take down him," she said, her tone even. "But that does not mean that I won't try." Her eyes met mine at that moment and she stabbed her stake with entirely too much force. 2

Kael chuckled, seemingly oblivious to the charged undercurrent of her words. I, however, wasn't.

"You'll need more than effort to take me down," I said, my voice low. "But by all means, try. It will be entertaining." A dare.

For a fleeting moment, her mask cracked. A flash of anger lit up her features before she schooled her expression back into neutrality. "I live to amuse, your Majesty," she replied, her words laced with sarcasm.

Kael, despite his distress at her appearance, stifled a laugh, clearly enjoying the exchange. I, on the other hand, felt a bizarre mix of irritation and some admiration. She was exhausted, bruised, and likely in a world of pain, yet she still refused to cower. Was she always this way? This was the same woman who looked crushed when I called her wolfless. 1

As the meal continued, I found myself watching her more closely than I intended. She interacted with Kael, her responses measured but polite, her smile faint but present. She was trying to be less friendly with Kael to protect him from me but of course, she could not completely pull away.

Jules simply stared at me from where she sat. Once in a while she would look between Ellen and me, a strange expression on her face. 1

Comment

View All >



Post your first comment!



Vote



Fandom



Send Gift