



## 127 Distractions

Eve 1

Hades took an extra-long look in the shower tonight, but I couldn't help grinning. Did he really think that stalling would deter me? I looked up at the clock and sighed. He had been "freshening up" for forty minutes.

I got up from the bed and stood by the bathroom door. I listened for any sound. I heard water and... humming. I pulled back, just a bit stunned. Did the Hand of Death sing in the shower? I tried to create a mental image and couldn't help but burst out laughing.

"Hey," I called out, knocking on the door with my knuckles. "Are you planning to set a world record in there, or are you trying to write a musical?"

The humming abruptly stopped, replaced by silence. Then came his low, gravelly voice. "Some things are worth taking time for, Ellen."

I rolled my eyes, even though he couldn't see me. "Well, unless you're planning on becoming the next opera sensation, I suggest you hurry up. I'm not waiting all night for you to make an appearance."

There was a pause, and then the sound of water stopped.

"You were laughing," he said through the door, his tone a mix of curiosity and suspicion.

I froze. "No, I wasn't."

"You were," he insisted, and I could almost hear the smirk in his voice.

I crossed my arms, standing firm. "What if I was? Is humming in the shower a new intimidation tactic I should be worried about?"

The door cracked open just a sliver, and Hades' head appeared, damp hair falling over his sharp, chiseled face. I gulped as I took him in. There was something so disarmingly attractive about the way he looked in this moment.

"You find my humming funny?" he asked, raising a single brow in mock offense.

I played it off and tilted my head, giving him a mischievous grin. "Hilarious, actually. I never pegged the Hand of Death as a fan of shower concerts."

He leaned against the doorframe, his towel slung low around his hips. My eyes went down to his Adonis belt, his happy trail leading to the place



clad by the towel. My gaze trailed down, only to be greeted with a bulge. My head snapped up.

I met a knowing look in his eyes. He opened his mouth, but I was quick to cut him off.

"One word, and you will have to gallivant all over your tower in your onesies."

"Your challenges and punishments don't work like that, but I won't push."

"Yeah, right. As if I don't know you."

"There are many things about me you don't know, Red."

I raised a brow, refusing to let his unshaken confidence rattle me. "Clearly. But I think I'll survive without the soundtrack of your shower symphony."

He let out a soft chuckle, low and rich, the sound sending a ripple of heat straight to my core.

"Careful, Ellen. You're venturing into dangerous territory."

I shrugged, unbothered. "I've been living in dangerous territory ever since I met you."

"Good point," he conceded. "But if you want to join me, you're free," he said, turning around. "If you're interested in a duet, I have a microphone



you can use." His last statement was low and sultry. 4

I stared at the door, blinking as realization dawned on me as to what he implied. 5

*\*Oh, for the love of—\**

I grabbed a pillow and tossed it at the closed door, even though it did nothing but bounce harmlessly to the floor. "You're a damn pervert!" I called out, but the laugh I heard from the other side only confirmed that he was thoroughly enjoying himself. 3

Hades always knew how to toe the line between teasing and temptation, and he walked that line like he owned the damn thing.

I flopped back onto the bed, glaring at the ceiling as if it could shield me from the sudden flush burning up my neck.

A few moments passed, and the bathroom door finally opened.

Hades stepped out, steam billowing around him like some divine entrance straight out of a forbidden novel. His damp hair dripped down his broad shoulders, and the towel hung precariously low on his hips—lower than it had



any right to. I had no doubt he was doing it on purpose.

I averted my gaze, focusing intently on anything that wasn't him. The bedside lamp suddenly became the most fascinating object I had ever seen.

"You're awfully quiet," Hades mused, his voice light but edged with amusement. "I thought you had a lot to say just a minute ago."

I sat up, fixing him with a glare that I hoped masked the embarrassment lingering beneath.

"I'm just trying to protect your fragile ego. I figured if I said too much, you might start thinking you're irresistible."

He smirked, crossing the room with slow, deliberate strides. "Oh, I don't need you to say it. Your eyes do the talking."

I scoffed, standing to put some distance between us, but Hades had a way of closing gaps without ever really trying. Before I knew it, I was backed against the headrest, his arms braced on either side of me, trapping me without even touching.

The heat from his body was maddening.

"And what exactly," he asked, his voice a soft



rumble near my ear, "were your eyes saying, Red?"

I swallowed hard, refusing to let him win this battle of wills. "That you should invest in a longer towel. Or at least wear pants like a normal person."

Hades chuckled, the sound reverberating through the space between us. His breath brushed against my neck, and for a brief, torturous moment, he lingered there—close enough that I could feel the tension humming in the air. "Thought you would be interested in seeing your microphone," he muttered.

"I don't—"

Suddenly, his mouth descended on my neck, tracing its curve with his hot mouth. I gasped at the contact, my core tightening around nothing.

His hand slithered over my thigh, the heat of his palm searing through the thin fabric of my nightgown as if it were nothing.

A shiver rippled through me, but I stubbornly bit down on the gasp threatening to escape. I refused to give him the satisfaction.

Still, my body betrayed me—hips tilting forward



127 Distractions



just slightly, chasing the warmth of his touch before I could stop myself.

Hades' mouth curled into a smirk against my neck, and I hated how easily he noticed.

"See?" His voice was a low, dangerous murmur against my skin, each word sending a delicious vibration down my spine. "You say no, but your body..." His fingers pressed into the soft curve of my thigh, trailing upward with agonizing slowness. "...it's begging for more."

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## 128 The Defeated King

Eve **1**

I shoved against his chest, harder this time, forcing space between us. "I knew it," I snapped, breathless. "You're distracting me."

Hades barely budged, only rocking back a step with infuriating ease. His eyes gleamed with something dark and knowing. "And here I thought I was just enjoying the moment."

I crossed my arms, narrowing my gaze as heat still simmered low in my stomach. *Damn him.* "You're trying to derail my plans."

"Am I?" he replied smoothly, his fingers trailing along the edge of the headboard as if he hadn't just pressed me into it moments ago. "I'm not sure you seemed all that eager to punish me a second ago."

I scowled. "Don't play coy, Hades. You're stalling. You were in the shower for close to an hour not and now.. " I gestured vaguely at his towel-clad form, "*this*."

His smirk deepened, eyes flicking over me with slow, deliberate intent. "You didn't seem to mind





*this* all that much."

My face burned hotter. I grabbed the nearest pillow and launched it at him. He caught it effortlessly, his laugh vibrating through the room.

"Fine," I huffed, planting my hands on my hips. "You don't have any excuse for these things so I'll just assume the Hand Of Death was hiding from me."

Hades arched a brow, intrigued. "Hiding?"

"Yes." I crossed the room, brushing past him to sit on the edge of the bed. "You're not as mysterious as you think, you know. I bet you were avoiding your punishment. Maybe it's fear."

His gaze darkened. "I don't fear anything." His voice took on a whole nother timber. It almost didn't sound like him.

My stomach dropped. I had gone too far. "Or responsibility." I glanced at him, I easily. "Or maybe..." I leaned back, giving him a slow, dramatic once-over, "you were just admiring yourself for forty minutes."

To my surprise, Hades tilted his head, considering, his expression softened. "You're not



entirely wrong."

I blinked at his sudden change. "Wait, what?"

He shrugged, tossing the pillow back onto the bed. "I was reflecting."

"Reflecting?" I repeated, narrowing my eyes in disbelief. "In the shower?"

"Best place for it. Quiet, warm. And no one barges in demanding answers." He shot me a pointed look.

I scoffed. "Well, clearly that didn't work out for you."

His gaze lingered on me for a moment too long, and I could see the teasing flicker behind his eyes before he spoke again. "I wasn't just reflecting, you know."

I froze.

The way he said it—the weight behind the words—made my pulse quicken.

I swallowed, then I gasped. He was at it again. I straightened my spine and pointed at the bags that were yet to be unpacked. "Get in that onesie or else."

Hades' gaze flicked toward the onesie crumpled



on top of the suitcase, and his entire body sagged as if I'd just delivered the harshest possible sentence.

"You can't be serious," he muttered, crossing his arms over his chest. "Ellen, I'm the King of Lycans. You really think this—" he gestured vaguely at the offending piece of clothing, "—is appropriate for someone of my status?"

I arched a brow, my smirk widening. "I think it's perfect for someone who took an hour-long shower just to avoid putting it on."

His jaw clenched. "That was... strategic."

I snorted. "That was cowardice."

Hades narrowed his eyes, stepping closer. "Careful, little wolf. You might provoke me."

"Is that a threat or a promise?" I shot back, refusing to let him intimidate me.

For a moment, his lips quirked like he was going to take the bait, but then his gaze flickered toward the onesie again, and the battle visibly drained from him. "You know, some mates show love by cooking or giving massages," he grumbled, rubbing the back of his neck. 3

I grinned. "I show love by holding you



accountable." 2

He muttered something under his breath, but to my surprise, he finally grabbed the onesie and held it up like it might bite him.

"Just get it over with," I prompted, resting my chin in my hand, fully prepared to enjoy the show.

Hades glanced at me warily. "Turn around."

I blinked. "What?"

"I'm not giving you a free show," he said, as if that was the most logical response.

I scoffed, but his glare was unwavering. "Fine," I huffed, rolling my eyes as I spun around to face the opposite wall. "But don't think for a second this is saving you from humiliation."

Behind me, I could hear the rustling of fabric and the soft zip of the onesie being opened. A long pause followed.

Then, "Ellen."

I smirked to myself. "Yes?"

A beat of silence.

"...How the hell do you put this on?"



I froze. Slowly, I turned around, expecting to see him in the middle of tugging the onesie over his head or struggling with the zipper.

What I did not expect was the sight of Hades holding the onesie upside down, one leg stuffed awkwardly into an armhole, while the rest of the outfit sagged around him like a deflated balloon. **2**

I stared.

He glared. **1**

"You're kidding," I blurted, covering my mouth to keep from laughing outright.

"Stop looking at me like that," Hades growled, tugging his leg free with a sharp yank that made him stumble slightly. "This thing's a death trap."

I couldn't hold it in. Laughter bubbled up and spilled out of me as I leaned against the dresser for support. "You—" I gasped between breaths, "you don't even know how to wear a onesie?"


His ears turned red.

Actual red.

It was the first time I'd ever seen him flush, and for a moment, I thought I might pass out from sheer delight.



"I've never worn one," he muttered, as if that excused everything. His gaze dropped to the soft, fluffy material in his hands, clearly betrayed by the absurdity of the situation.

I could have died from the impossibility of it all but instead I burst into another bout of laughter. 

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