



## 206 Closure He Needs

Hades 1

"With three casualties and one survivor, it was a complete disaster. And then Silverpine took responsibility."

Eve stiffened, and guilt flashed across her face.

I cupped her cheek, my thumb brushing lightly against her skin. "Don't you dare blame yourself. You were not part of their insidious plans. We had to find the traitor."

Her throat bobbed as she swallowed. "Did you?"

Her voice was tight with anticipation, anxiety laced beneath it.

I exhaled slowly. "No. Because, unlike what we first believed, there was no traitor. Only trackers."

Her brows knitted together. "But the trackers would have been detected during security sweeps. I'm sure of it."

I sighed, the weight of the truth pressing against my ribs. "Not if the tracker wasn't placed on a person. Not if it wasn't a simple piece of



technology."

Eve's eyes sharpened. "Then where was it?"

"In the gasoline," I murmured. My voice was low, dark with realization. "It was in the fuel itself."

She inhaled sharply. "They tagged the fuel?"

I nodded. "A tracer. Embedded at a molecular level. A failsafe."

Her fingers dug into my arm. "That means... there was never a traitor. The convoy was doomed the moment they filled their tanks."

A bitter chuckle left my throat. "Clever, wasn't it? We spent months interrogating, searching for an informant that didn't exist, only to realize we were looking in the wrong direction."

Her expression darkened. "Who supplied the fuel?"

"Our pack," I admitted, my voice hollow. "But we later found a breach within the distillation system. Underground. Undetected. Everything checked out on paper. Nothing looked suspicious. But when we ran molecular scans after the attack..."

She inhaled sharply. "You found it."



"A signal. Embedded in the chemical compound of the gasoline itself. No traditional tracker. No physical bug. Just a coded marker that broadcasted our coordinates the moment the fuel combusted." I exhaled sharply. "That's how they found them. That's how they knew exactly when and where to strike."

Eve's hands curled into fists. "And Silverpine... took responsibility?"

I gave a sharp nod. "It was their victory. They had to relish it. The first successful assassination of not just the king but his father. Danielle was caught in the crossfire, but her death only fed their ego."

A tense silence stretched between us before I spoke again.

"After the burial of my brother and father, Montague still hadn't let go of her body."

Eve's brow furrowed. "Danielle's?"

I nodded, my jaw clenching. "He kept her. Refused to release her remains. I was not allowed to lay her to rest."

She inhaled sharply, anger flashing in her eyes. "Until you gave her justice."



"Yes," I murmured. "I needed the head of the Beast of the Night."

Eve studied me, her expression unreadable. "And then you let her go."

I hesitated. "I have but..."

She shook her head. "You haven't."

My fingers tightened around the edge of the sheets.

"You can't let her go until you have closure," she said softly.

I exhaled slowly. "Closure comes with..."

"Letting her rest," she finished for me.

I nodded, my voice quieter this time. "Knowing that she's at peace."

Eve studied me for a long moment, then shook her head. "No, Hades. That's not closure."

I frowned slightly, and she shifted closer, her warmth grounding me.      □ □   □ □

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"Closure," she murmured, "Isn't just about laying her to rest. It's about letting yourself rest too."

My jaw tightened. "I don't need rest."



She gave me a look—one that made it clear she wasn't buying my deflection. "You're carrying her like an open wound. Keeping her death alive because you haven't allowed yourself to stop living in it."

I exhaled sharply through my nose. "It's not that simple."

"It never is," she admitted. Then, softer, "It's like holding onto a shard of glass."

My gaze flicked to her, confused.

Eve reached for my hand, tracing her fingers lightly over my palm. "Imagine you're gripping a shard of glass. Tight. Because you don't want to forget what cut you. Because letting go would mean it's over." She glanced up at me, her expression steady. "But the longer you hold it, the deeper it cuts. The more you bleed. The more it hurts."

She turned my hand over, her touch featherlight. "You tell yourself that holding on keeps you strong. That if you just squeeze harder, you can shape the pain into something useful."

Her eyes searched mine. "But Hades... it doesn't make you strong. It only makes you bleed."



I swallowed, my throat dry.

She gave my hand a gentle squeeze. "You can put the glass down. It doesn't mean you forget what happened. It just means you stop letting it cut you every time you breathe."

I looked away, jaw clenched. The words settled inside me, heavy, pressing against something raw.

"Letting go doesn't mean you stop loving her," Eve whispered. "It just means you stop punishing yourself for surviving the grief." 1

Silence stretched between us.

I turned back to her, searching for something—anger, resentment, doubt. But there was none. Only understanding.

And for the first time in years, I felt something shift inside me.

A breath. A fracture. A choice.

I exhaled. "Then I need to let her go."

Eve nodded, her grip still firm on mine. "And I'll be here when you do."

I touched the emerald earring at my ear. The only piece of her I still carried.





Eve reached for it too. "Where is the second one?" she whispered.

"It was torn off her ear," I said, my voice tightening. "Maybe during the scuffle or as a sick trophy. But nothing was taken from either Leon or my father, so it wouldn't make sense. It..."

I froze mid-sentence.

Eve's body jerked violently, a shudder ripping through her like a tremor beneath her skin.

Her grip on my wrist turned vice-like.

Then—her head snapped back.

A strangled gasp tore from her throat, her entire frame seizing as if something had gripped her from the inside and pulled.

"Eve—?"

Her breath hitched—then blood.

A thin trickle of crimson leaked from her nose, sliding over her parted lips.

I lunged forward, catching her just as her knees buckled.

"Eve!" My voice was sharp, urgent, but her body wasn't responding. Her pupils dilated




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unnaturally, her fingers twitching against mine like she was trying to hold on.


"Talk to me!"

Her lips parted, but nothing came out.

Then—her entire body went rigid. 

And she fell back.

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