



246 Justice Delayed but Never Denied

Hades 1

I walked through the chaos, Eve's limp body slung over my shoulder. The cleaners were already called in, repairs underway as I strode through the watching crowd—the inhabitants of the Obsidian Tower.

No one spoke. The only sound was my own footsteps echoing against marble and metal, a slow, deliberate rhythm of judgment. Kael was a silent shadow just behind me. The Montegues trailed him, their silence thick with apprehension. Not one of them dared speak.

Despite the cool facade plastered on my face, my interior was different.

Pain.

Anguish.

And an immeasurable rage that felt like molten iron branding my insides. 4



I should feel relief. I should feel victorious.

But instead—

I felt hollow.

Each step toward the higher floor was a beat in a funeral march, and I wasn't sure if it was for her or for the part of me she'd taken without permission. 1

I shouldn't have held her.

Shouldn't have listened to the tremble in her voice or the way her body melted into mine like she still trusted me.

I shouldn't have hesitated when she whispered "Please."

But I did.

And still—I injected her.

Because weakness would not bring Danielle back.

Mercy would not undo the blood she spilled.

I stepped into the corridor of the high-security wing. The biometric scanners hissed open.



White light bled from the open archway like a sterile wound.

The White Room.

The place where monsters waited.

Where hope had no entry.

I laid Eve's unconscious body on the central slab, the cold restraints already extended—mechanical arms that clicked shut around her wrists, ankles, and throat. Not to harm. But to contain. 6

Her breathing was shallow. Her lips parted slightly. Skin flushed from the adrenaline crash and sedative shock.

Even now, she looked like something sacred.

Even now, she looked like mine.

I forced the thought away and turned to Kael. "Increase the psychic dampeners. I don't want Rhea breaking through the mental seals."

"Yes, Your Majesty," he replied, not meeting my gaze.

"Is the room secure?"



"Yes."

"Surveillance?"

"Live feed. Internal only. No external transmission."

"Good." I looked at Eve one last time before facing the wall of monitors. "I want to see what happens when she wakes."

Kael hesitated. "And if she remembers everything?"

"She will."

He didn't ask more. He didn't need to.

I needed her to remember.

The syringe.

My arms around her.

The betrayal in my eyes.

The way I held her like a lover and struck like an executioner.

I wanted her to know exactly what I did. I wanted her rage when she woke. Her confusion. Her



heartbreak.

Because when the truth came out—if it came out—I wanted her to hate me enough that she never looked at me with love again.

Because if she wasn't the beast...

Then I would never forgive myself. 2

But if she was...

Then I needed her broken.

So I could do what had to be done.

Behind me, I heard Montegue's voice. "And now?"

"Now we wait," I said.

"What for?" He demanded.

I snapped my head in his direction. "For the results of memory card. I want to see what else she has been hiding." The last thing I wanted explain was that I was going that it was just a misunderstanding. I just needed probable doubt that somehow this was a sick joke.

I prayed that the goddess would drop the



punchline.

Montegue didn't reply. He just studied me, his expression unreadable—like he was watching a man unravel and wondering how many more threads could snap before he tore himself apart.

Kael moved closer, tentatively. "You know she has a twin, Hades..." he began, carefully. "Twins might have similar DNA. It could've been—"

I cut him off before the hope could settle.

"Even twins have different fingerprints, Kael," I said quietly but firmly. "Different hormone patterns. Different reactions to stress. The blood at the scene had Eve's markers—her scent, her energy signature. Not Ellen's."

He didn't argue. He couldn't.

I added, more to myself now, "They may share a womb, but they don't share everything. Not what matters."

And in this case, what mattered... damned her.

She was beast but there had to be something...

A detail that could vindicate her, absolve her of



some guilt.

She has been experimented on, this could have been a result of that. 1

Could have been...

But the lies, the secrets...

Things she hid from me, including that damned memory card with all her finger prints on it. The one that she had gotten on that date, the one she hid from me. 2

A memory card with data that had already been corrupted, on purpose to make sure no one would get access to its contents. 1

I just could not correspond the woman I loved with this... beast.

The contradiction tore at me like a jagged blade.

She had laughed in my arms. Whispered my name in the dark like it was a vow. She had stood beside me, fought beside me—made me believe, damn it, that I could trust her. That maybe, after everything, I could still build something that wasn't made of ash and blood.



But now?

Now she was a shadow of herself—no, worse.

She was the truth I'd never wanted to face.

The monster in my bed.

I stared at the monitor again. Her fingers twitched, just slightly. The sedative was wearing off.

I knew that twitch.

I had memorized every part of her—every tell, every shift in her breathing, every nuance of the woman I thought was mine.

My Eve.

But she wasn't mine, was she?

Not really.

Because if she had been, she would have told me.

About James.

About the memory card.

About the meeting.



About the damn truth. 1

Instead, she'd hidden it like a coward. Or worse
—like a strategist.

Like someone planning for what came after the
lies.

"Maybe she didn't mean to," Kael offered
cautiously, reading the storm behind my silence.
"The corruption on the memory card, it wasn't
advanced—could've been panicked, rushed. Not
professional."

I turned slowly toward him. "You think that
makes it better?"

Kael's jaw clenched. "No. But it might make it
make sense."

I didn't respond. I couldn't. Because what I
wanted wasn't sense.

I wanted justification.

Something that could explain how a woman like
her—who looked at me like I was worth more
than my crown, who whispered promises into
my skin like she meant every one—could also be
the same being who left my brother's lungs full



of blood.

My father's throat torn open.

Danielle's body cold in my arms.

The same being who made me hope.

"I need answers," I said, voice low. "I need to know if it was really her in control that night... or something else." But she could lie.

She had lied many time before.

Many many times to the point that her words had lost almost all credibility.

But I loved her. 1

Loved...

Kael tilted his head. "You think it was drug?"

I didn't know. And that was the problem.

Eve had been experimented on. Her file was redacted in places even I couldn't access. I'd seen her scars—some hidden, some not. She had been broken before I ever held her. 3

And sometimes... things break in ways they don't



come back from.

But if there was no justification, there would be swift justice, revenge.

My plans would commence, and I would rip into her like I had always planned. 1

Loving her had been my weakness but never again

Kael's comm buzzed.

We both froze.

He answered it instantly, voice clipped. "Kael."

A pause.

Then a woman's voice—Mara, head of Internal Intelligence—filtered through, her tone tight with urgency. "We've finished reconstructing the memory card. The data's patchy, but the core footage has been recovered. You'll want to see this."

Kael looked at me. I nodded once.

"Send it through."

Kael looked at me. I nodded once.



"Send it through."

Phones began chiming all around us.

One by one.

The sharp, sterile pings of incoming messages sliced through the silence like warning bells in a crypt. Montegue's hand shot to his pocket. Kael's device buzzed. My own vibrated against my hip.

The file had gone out.

To everyone.

A strategic move—deliberate. No secrets now. No cover-ups.

Kael opened the file first, and I caught the way his eyes widened—caught the flicker of something like dread.

I opened mine.

And my heart almost seized.

Elliot.

Not a vague reference, not a passing detail. A full dossier.



His name. His age. Four years, two months, eleven days.

His school.

His play routines.

The names of his guards.

Their shift schedules.

His favorite hiding spots.

"Under the stairwell by the east wing garden," the file noted.

My blood ran cold.

Every damn thing.

Every detail that only someone close to him—obsessed with him—would know. Notes written in Eve's handwriting. Markups. Coordinates. Surveillance photos. Audio transcripts.

She had studied him.

Planned around him.

As if—

"She's stalking my son!"



Felicia's scream cut through the room, sharp and hysterical. Her face had drained of all color. "She was watching him—planning something! That witch—that monster!" 7

She staggered back, clutched at her chest—and collapsed.

Lucinda caught her before she hit the floor, crying out, "Felicia—!"

Kael lunged forward to help, but I didn't move.

I couldn't.

Because I was still staring at the screen.

Still trying to comprehend.

Still trying to breathe.

Eve had planned around Elliot. My nephew. The boy she had saved. The boy she'd carried in her arms, trembling, after pulling him from the ruins of a feral's hideout.

The boy whose rescue had nearly killed her.

But now—this?

This wasn't protection.



This was obsession.

Or something far worse.

It slammed into me like icewater.

She hadn't rescued him.

She had set it up.

The kidnapping.

The attack.

The dramatic rescue—her hero moment.

It had all been a lie.

Every part of it—staged, orchestrated.

The monster we'd feared had been the savior
we'd trusted.

I felt myself unraveling, one breath at a time.

"First my daughter, now my grandson?"
Montegue whispered, horrified.

Kael said nothing. His jaw was locked, eyes
shadowed with disbelief.

And me?



I was shattered.

Not broken—scattered.

But underneath it all...

Beneath the grief, the betrayal, the horror...

There was anger.

No. Not anger.

Fury.

And it roared awake inside me like a second
soul.

Because she didn't just kill my family.

She played us all.

She played me.

And when she woke up—

There would be no more mercy. 5