



265 Unable to Communicate

Hades 1

My head was throbbing as I stepped out of the holding sector, the iron scent of her still clinging to my skin like rot. My pulse thundered behind my eyes, an arrhythmic drumbeat that made it hard to walk straight. My feet carried me forward, but the rest of me—the rest of me was fractured.

I was counting down to the moment my brain would implode.

> Weak, the flux hissed in my skull. Still shaking. Still spiraling. You touched her, and your hand trembled. You think she didn't notice?

I grit my teeth so hard my jaw ached. My fingers twitched by my side, itching to turn around. To go back.

To tell her—

I would never let it happen.

To tell her that despite everything, despite what



she had done—or what I believed she'd done—I
couldn't stomach the thought of her in pain. 1

But I didn't.

Because my feet stopped before I could.

Because a memory hit me.

So vivid, it was like I was living it again.

Danielle.

Laughing under the pale moon.

Her belly round with life—our life.

I knelt in front of her, pressing my lips against
her swollen stomach, whispering words I could
never say out loud to anyone else. Promises.
Dreams.

Then she got into the car.

And that was the last time I saw her with our
dreams still thinking her eyes.

The memory split open in my head like a fresh
wound. 2

I staggered, one hand slamming against the wall



for balance. My lungs seized. My heart spasmed. My vision blurred again—but this time, it wasn't just the flux. It was grief. Intertwined in a way that ripped into me like a silver dagger.

> She is the beast that took that away from you, the voice oozed. She knew. Lied. Hid. And when it suited her, she used your nephew to play savior and gain favor in your pack. You call that love?

My breathing turned ragged.

> Danielle has not even been buried yet.

And still, you walked into that room and let your heart ache for another.

When was the last time you entered her painting room?

Touched the earring still on your ear?

When was the last time you visited her, where she waits?

I squeezed my eyes shut, gripping the bridge of my nose. The pain lanced through my head like ice picks. The flux wasn't just feeding on my rage anymore. It was feasting on guilt.



And I... I was letting it.

Because it was easier.

Easier to hate Eve than face the hollow place where Danielle's voice once lived. Easier to believe Eve was the monster than admit I'd let myself hope again. Love again.

> She took her from you, the flux whispered. And now she gets to take your mercy, too.

"No," I rasped, my voice barely audible. "Stop it."

> You're already stopped, Lucien, it said, mockingly soft. The moment you let her in, you sealed your fate. I'm just here to clean up the mess.

I straightened slowly, every bone in my body aching like it had forgotten what it meant to stand.

I didn't turn around.

I didn't go back.

Instead, I walked the opposite direction, jaw clenched, every step heavier than the last.

Because the truth I couldn't outrun—the one the



flux kept stabbing into me—was this:

Danielle had died in my arms.

And now, Eve was about to.

And maybe that was justice.

Or maybe it was just history repeating itself.

Either way, I didn't stop walking.

Because if I did—

I'd turn around.

And I couldn't afford that.

Then I heard commotion as I made a turn out of the holding section, my head snapped towards the direction to see security agents, speaking to... Elliot.

Why was he here?

So close to the holding sector, without his mother?

He kept gesturing about something as the security agents try to make sense of what he was trying to communicate.



His hands went up and down in swift frustrated movement, his eyes wide with desperation, his lips trembling slightly telling me he had been trying to convey a message to them to for a while and had grown distraught with his inability to make them understand him.

He was using sign language, I stepped towards them only to remember that I didn't understand the language, instinctually I turned on my heel to get Eve who I knew would understand him.

Only to freeze as I realised that I couldn't.

I made my way to them, my head still ringing like a fucking gong.

"Hey, little man," I tried to speak like Kael, taking into account his obvious frustration. The words tasted forced but I smile, crouching down to his level.

"Your Majesty."

I ignored the security agents greeting me.

Elliot's eyes found mine, his eyes speaking for him. He signed to me and hurt to let him down when I did not understand.



His emerald depths begged me to understand him but it was no use.

I placed an awkward hand on his shoulder, only for him to recoil and shiver.

For what ever reason it felt like a punch to the gut and maybe the observant little boy realized, he went on his tiptoes and patted my head in an apology.

I stayed their stunned for a minute before picking him up."

I glanced toward the guards. "Where's his mother?"

Blank looks. A shrug.

Useless.

I turned back to Elliot, whose eyes were still wide, still flickering with something sharp and insistent—urgency wrapped in panic. He signed again. Swift, repetitive motions. His fingers stuttered like he was trying to scream without a voice.

I crouched lower. "What is it? You looking for something? Someone?"



His hands shot out again.

Then pointed.

Once.

Toward the holding sector.

I didn't speak.

Couldn't.

My throat closed as the realization hit me like a collapsing ceiling.

Eve.

He wanted her.

He'd followed her scent. Or guessed. Or sensed something was wrong. He had made it all the way here—alone, in silence, begging to be understood, and none of us saw it.

None of us heard him.

My heart twisted violently in my chest. Because despite it all—despite the betrayal, the pain, the doubts that were eating me alive—I realized something else.



He still trusted her.

Still needed her.

Even after everything.

Even when I couldn't.

And the worst part?

I wanted to bring her to him. I wanted to let her hold him, reassure him, give him the comfort I knew I couldn't.

But I couldn't do that.

Because I had made a decision.

And Eve's blood was already marked.

"I can't," I said softly.

Elliot tilted his head.

"I can't take you to her."

His face crumpled—not into tears, but into something quieter.

More grown.

More painful.



He folded his arms across his chest, lips pressing into a pout that wasn't childish—it was restrained fury. His shoulders curled in as if to say, You're supposed to protect us.

I swallowed hard. "It's complicated, Elliot."

He didn't move.

Didn't blink.

Didn't forgive.

And that, somehow, hurt more than if he'd cried.

I looked away, unable to meet his eyes anymore.

"I am sorry..." I whispered, genuinely. He turned hesitantly towards me.

"You must have been so scared."

His eyes widened, his eyes filling with a silent realization that I could not decode.

"Eve is a..."

Suddenly, he reached for the pocket of his overalls, and I saw a flash of white paper.

A voice pierced the tension like a blade.



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"Elliot?!" 2

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