



271 Regrets Has Her Eyes

Hades 1

I didn't remember moving.

One second, I was turning from Eve. The next I was sprinting past stunned Gammas, her screams echoing behind me like ghosts clawing at my ears.

"Pull the feed from the east quarter now!" I barked into my comm. "I want the locked room on live stream. Do it now—"

"Signal's scrambled for now due to the lock down," came the grim response. "Control team's tied down containing Subject E. All left wing feeds rerouted. We're locked out."

I swore violently and shoved past the techs in the hall, boots slamming the floor with every step. I could hear the elevator stuttering open behind me. I didn't care. I took the stairs.

Three floors up, Kael was already there, shoulder braced against the reinforced door.



"I've tried everything," he said without turning, sweat glinting on his temple. "Door's not budging."

"Override it."

"I did. It didn't work. Control's locked out. I tried hacking through right-wing access since the left's completely down due to the containment breach, but..."

He trailed off and kicked the wall. The sound was ugly. Desperate.

"I got here when I saw the alerts from Eve's cell," Kael continued, voice low. "But then I saw Felicia running. I thought she was panicking, but something about the way she said Elliot's name—something felt off. I checked and tried to access feed—nothing. Ordered control to unlock the door. They confirmed it. But when I tried it again..."

He slammed a fist against it. "It won't move."

A thick silence spread.

The flux hissed in my mind.

>"Burn it down. Use your strength. Tear through



it." If you want to.

>"And what?" I snapped back mentally. "What if he's right behind it?"

He couldn't tell me.

Not through the door.

He couldn't tell us anything.

Because he couldn't speak.

Because he was still inside.

Alone.

And we didn't know what the hell waited on the other side.

>"You're the reason this happened," the flux taunted. "All of it. He watched you cage the one he trusted. He watched you break what he believed in. And now—now he pays the price for your choices." The flux seemed to want me to spiral. 1

"Shut up," I growled aloud.

Kael turned to me. "What?"



"I said shut up."

I didn't explain.

Couldn't.

Felicia appeared seconds later, dragging her father beside her. Montegue looked pale—too pale—supported by two Gammas flanking him like they were holding a corpse upright.

"You shouldn't be here," I bit out. My eyes cut toward Montegue. "If he knows what's good for him, he'll stay out of my way."

Felicia bristled. "He's not even the issue right now—"

"Isn't he?" I hissed. "He nearly got her killed. And if you think I won't break his mind like I did Morrison's, you're wrong."

That shut her up.

The air was thick with tension, electricity crawling over every breath.

Kael moved toward the wall panel, hands flying across the auxiliary keypad. "I'm rerouting power from the west hallway. See if I can force a



link."

My pulse roared behind my eyes.

Seconds passed.

Then the tablet buzzed to life.

The screen flickered once. Twice.

Then stabilized.

And my heart stopped.

There was no hostage.

No captor.

No signs of struggle.

Just Elliot.

Alone.

Sitting in the centre of the room, knees tucked
to his chest.

And around his throat—

A bomb.

Cables twisted like metal vines against his small
frame. The timer on the chest plate blinked in



violent red.

4:59.

4:58.

Kael staggered back. "Is that a—"

His voice failed.

Felicia screamed.

I couldn't move.

My body locked.

Like every muscle knew that if I even breathed wrong, he'd explode.

Kael's voice cracked through the silence. "Is that a detonator in his hand?"

And it was.

Small.

Clutched tight in his trembling fingers.

Elliot's eyes met the camera.

Wide.

Afraid.



And yet—

Resolved.

Like he thought he had to do this.

Like someone convinced him, it was the only way.

"I fucking knew it!" Felicia screamed. "Her trying to escape was a diversion. This was her real card, she made him do this." 1

I shrugged her off trying to get my wits about myself.

I calmed my raging nerves, telling myself that I needed to get my shit in order if Elliot would survive this again.

I looked down at the tablet watching the time tick off on the bomb. It was the same bomb that had been around his neck the first time around.

My heart stopped.

Fuck. What the hell was this? 1

"Distatch the bombsquad," I ordered Kael. 1

"I already on it," he was shaking slightly as he

spoke. 1

Hades

I slammed my fists into the door.

"Elliot!" I barked, hoping—praying—he could hear me. "It's me."

On the screen, his small shoulders jumped. The bang had startled him. His eyes flicked toward the camera again, wide, glassy.

Kael flinched beside me. "Careful. If he panics—"

I already knew.

I stepped back from the door, chest heaving.

Felicia moved in next, pressing her face toward the steel and shouting, "Elliot, baby! It's me—open the door, okay? Just let us in!"

On the screen, he flinched again.

Harder.

Retreated slightly toward the corner.

"No," I growled. "Move."

I stepped forward again, lowering my voice.



He looked back at the camera.

"I can see you," I asked. "Can you hear me?"

He nodded. Small, but sure.

"Are you okay?" Another nod. Hesitant.

"I need you to open the door," I said softly.

He shook his head.

Vigorously.

My throat tightened.

"Kael?"

"The bomb squad's almost here," he replied, watching the countdown tick into the threes.

"3:41... 3:40..."

I glanced toward the Gammas stationed around Montegue.

"Survey the perimeter. Sweep every hall, every vent. I want to know how this happened and who got in."

They moved instantly, dragging Montegue back as he muttered under his breath.



Felicia started crying beside me.

"This isn't happening," she kept saying. "It was her. I told you—Eve did this. She manipulated him. Made him—"

"Enough!" I snapped, and the boy on the screen jumped again.

I turned back to the feed. Forced calm into my voice.

"Elliot... did you do this alone?" The question left my mouth like stone. 2

He nodded again.

No hesitation.

Felicia gasped like she'd been shot.

I could barely breathe.

I knelt beside the screen, matching his level.

"Why, Elliot?"

He didn't respond.

Instead, he reached beside him, slow, careful.

Unfolded a paper.



Held it up to the camera.

My chest locked.

A child's drawing.

Crude lines, but unmistakable.

Red hair. Bright turquoise eyes.

It was Eve.

Eve as only a child could remember her.

Gentle. Smiling. Alive.

I staggered back like I'd been struck.

Felicia lunged for the screen. "She did this to him! She brainwashed him—do you see? She's infected his mind, Hades! He's not thinking for himself!"

The more she screamed, the more Elliot pulled away from the camera, clutching the detonator tighter.

"Felicia," I warned.

She kept going.

"—we need to sedate him, now, before he does



anything. We can use gas—" 2

Elliot raised the detonator as if threatening to trigger the explosion.

My heart lunged into my throat.

"Felicia. Shut. Up."

She stopped.

Her breathing ragged.

I turned back to the feed. Met Elliot's eyes through the lens.

"Will you open the door," I asked slowly, "if she tells you to?"

Elliot nodded.

Tears slipped down his face as if in relief.

"Get Eve," I said. "Now."

Kael was already moving.

And I stood still.

Watching the boy who trusted a girl the world wanted dead.



And praying to the gods I no longer believed in...

That she would save him again. 1

In minutes that felt like a lifetime, Eve had been brought in Kael's arms. The moment she was placed down, she limped towards the door without me speaking.

"I already filled her in." Kael informed.

"You..." Felicia began,

but I slammed my hand on her mouth and looked her right in the face. "Shut the fuck up or I am ripping off your jaw." I pushed her down.

Eve did not even glance at the tablet before pressing herself to the door. "Ellie, darling, I am here."

I watched his reaction, my eyes widening as the boy's eyes brightened, he sat straighter, his mouth opening as he seemed to try and speak. There was 1:45 minutes left.

"First, can you turn off the bomb?" She asked.

"Please..." Her voice was calm, soothing but with a desperate undertone. She trembled a little, still bloodied.



The boy nodded and like some magic trick, he clicked a fucking switch and the blinking light went off.

"Done, Eve." Kael informed her.

She nodded and went back to speaking to Elliot. "Can you come out for me? I want to give you a big hug." Her smile was shaky.

In an instant, Elliot moved faster than I had ever seen towards the door. First, he crouched down, but the camera did not catch his action. Probably removing whatever had not allowed us to open the door.

The moment the lock disengaged, it was as if the entire hallway stopped breathing.

The steel door creaked open like it was exhaling the truth we hadn't been ready for.

And there he was.

Small.

Silent.

Alive.

Elliot blinked up at us like he was still in a dream



—then he saw her. And the hesitation cracked.

He bolted.

Straight into Eve's arms.

She dropped to her knees as if her entire body gave out, and he collided with her chest, the bomb still slung around his throat. She didn't care. Didn't flinch. Her arms wrapped around him like she'd been dying to breathe, and he was the only air left in the world.

She held him tightly, whispering something I couldn't hear.

I looked away.

Because watching them was agony. 1

Because it hurt in ways I didn't know I could still feel. 1

Felicia stood frozen, lips white, trembling. I could see the fury building behind her teeth.

Then Elliot pulled back—just enough to reach into the pocket of his small hoodie.

He withdrew something.



A folded piece of paper.

He handed it to Eve. 1

Slowly.

Eve took it without question, brows knitting as she unfolded it.

The moment she read it, her entire expression shifted.

Her hands tightened.

Her lips parted.

A whisper left her mouth like a curse carried on air.

"Eight bone marrow transplants... since infancy..." 2

The words sank into the air like stones dropped into a still lake.

Kael tilted his head. "What?"

Felicia stepped forward. "What is that?"

Eve didn't answer.

Didn't hand it over.



She just read again, her voice slightly louder now.

"Elliot has undergone eight bone marrow transplants since infancy."

I stiffened.

"What the fuck does that mean?" I asked.

Felicia started laughing—dry and sharp. "It's fake. She planted it. Probably gave it to him to make us look—"

"Then why," Eve snapped, her eyes full of disgust, "is your signature on the bottom?"

Everything stopped.

Felicia's face drained of color. 8

And Montegue—silent until now—took an uncertain step forward, his gaze fixated on the paper.

He squinted.

Then his body locked like a blade being drawn.

"That's... your signature," he said, voice low.

"That's your goddamn signature."



He looked at her like she was a stranger.

"Why would a child need that many marrow transplants?" he demanded. "Two a year? For four years? Where are the records? Why didn't we know about this?"

Felicia didn't answer.

Couldn't.

She just stood there, shoulders shaking.

But I wasn't looking at her anymore. 1

I was looking at Eve.

Because her mind was still spinning. I could see it—the way her eyes darted, lips pressing together, trying to connect the dots.

And then her face went still.

Completely.

Utterly still.

Like something terrible had clicked.

Her voice came out like thunder in a whisper.

"This is how the paternity tests were tampered

with." 3

I didn't breathe.

Eve turned her head toward me, her expression hollow.

"This is why she did it. This is why she needed those procedures. So that your blood would never match his."

My knees nearly buckled.

Kael voice was grave as he added. "She used those transplants to rebuild his blood—erase the paternal markers. Bone marrow is where red blood cells are formed. Replacing it...every time his cells started reverting, she forced another transplant." 1

The air was gone.

Like the whole hallway collapsed into vacuum. I collaborate my knees. 4

>"Ain't fate a bitch," the flux almost chuckled cruelly. 5