



272 Weight Of Contrition

Hades 1

It hit me all at once.

Not rage.

Not yet.

Just silence.

A silence so heavy it pressed down on my ribs,
curling around my throat like a noose. I couldn't
breathe. Couldn't move.

All I could do was feel.

The paper.

The voice.

Her face.

This is why she did it. So your blood would never
match his.

The words slammed through my chest like
knives made of memory.



And I remembered.

I remembered her screaming as I pinned her to the lab table.

Her wrists bleeding in shackles she didn't deserve.

The way she begged me to believe her—hoarse and wild and broken.

And I...

Gods.

I called her a liar.

Told her I'd rip the truth from her corpse if I had to. 1

I had done this. 1

I had helped build the walls she was buried under.

My knees buckled.

I stumbled a step back, a roaring in my ears like drowning in fire.

No one moved.



Not Kael.

Not Montegue.

Not the guards who still had their weapons
trained but limp at their sides.

And then—

The first to move wasn't me.

It was her.

Eve.

She stepped forward like a predator out of
prophecy—no warning, no hesitation. Bloodied.
Limping. Shaking.

But unbroken.

And fast.

She struck like lightning.

One hand wrapped around Felicia's face—fingers
digging into her cheeks, nails pressing into bone
—and lifted her clean off the ground.

I heard it.

The crack.



Felicia's jaw fractured under the force of it.

Her lipstick smeared across her chin as her head twisted sideways under Eve's grip.

"You broke his body," Eve hissed, her voice shaking—not with weakness, but fury. "Split his bones. Filled them with foreign marrow when he didn't even understand what was happening to him." 1

Felicia clawed at her wrist, gasping—but Eve didn't stop.

"Eight times." Her voice splintered, the pain seeping through now, saturating every syllable. "Eight times you ripped him open. Drugged him. Hollowed him out."

She twisted Felicia's jaw again—another crack. Another muffled scream.

"And all to cover your fucking crimes. To keep your hands clean. To hide from your own family that you took your sister's child—and mutilated him to keep your lies breathing."

Her fingers curled tighter. Felicia's eyes rolled.

"You used your nephew. My son. Like a lab rat." 3



That was the moment the hallway fractured.

"You ripped a son from his grieving father. Not letting him know that his wife left him with a part of her. You let him wallow in guilt, loss that should not have been." Eve voice rang with an hatred so visceral that it leached into the air seeping into the skin of everyone that watched on, too shocked to full comprehend what was happened.

The flux had stopped speaking, mocking me with silence that had become rare. 2

"You were capable of all this, tell me what else you did," she drawled.

Felicia continued to squirm, her eyes meeting her father's who looked too pale to even be alone, then to Kael who looked too sick to stand, darting to me, pleading for me to intervene.

But I could only watch a coward hoping that if he simply did not ...move, it would stop.

That time would freeze.

That this wouldn't be real.

That the woman I condemned to torture wasn't



the one unraveling every thread of deceit with a voice that shook the walls harder than any war I'd ever fought.

But it was.

It was real.

And I had no right to stop her. To touch. To beg for mercy for all I done. 2

Felicia choked—something between a sob and a gurgle—and Eve's grip tightened like a noose around her chin.

"I am a monster," she spat. "But what are you, Felicia? What are you, if not the thing that monsters crawl away from in fear?"

Her nails pressed in deeper, blood pooling at the corners of Felicia's mouth. Her legs kicked, useless and wild.

"You lied to everyone. To him." She tilted Felicia's head toward Elliot, who was clinging to Kael's leg, eyes wide, face unreadable. "You made him feel wrong—like his body didn't belong to him. Like his pain was normal."

Tears were slipping down Eve's cheeks now, but



she didn't blink.

"You made him hate the only part of himself that came from her."

My stomach dropped.

Her.

Danielle.

The dead woman we all grieved, while Felicia orchestrated this behind veils of mourning and loyalty and blood.

And I—

I was there. Blind. Obedient. Focused on the wrong enemy. A dimwit. 3

Felicia wheezed out a broken sound. Her fingers scratched at Eve's wrist. Her mouth worked, lips trembling around words she couldn't form.

Eve bared her teeth.

"You want mercy now?" she whispered. "After eight transplants? After poisoning a legacy to cover your own pathetic ass?"

Felicia's body started to go slack.



It was Kael—pale and trembling—who finally found his voice. "Eve..."

She didn't look at him.

Didn't look at anyone.

Except Felicia.

"You think this is rage?" she whispered. "This isn't rage. Rage is a mercy compared to what you deserve."

She leaned closer.

And for a moment, I thought she might kill her.

Snap her neck like a twig and drop her to the floor with the rest of the lies.

But she didn't.

She released her.

Felicia hit the ground like a broken doll, coughing blood, her jaw hanging loose and mangled.

And Eve—

Eve straightened slowly.



Shaking.

Breathing hard.

Her bloodied hands dropped to her sides, but her eyes remained on Felicia. Her voice was thunder without its rumble. It was command that chilled you to bone. "Confess," She growled. "Or the next time, I pick you up..."

Eve's voice dropped, low and guttural—almost unrecognizable.

Her eyes gleaned with a madness that born of potent emotions that tore you from the inside out.

"...I'll open you from cunt to clavicle and hang your insides like garlands over your lies. I want you to see what rot looks like, Felicia. I want you to smell what you've done." 9

Everyone went still.

Even Montegue looked like he might throw up.

Kael swallowed so hard it echoed.

And I felt my pulse vanish.

Because in that moment, even the gods would've



held their breath.

Felicia was a pathetic puddle, eyes darting looking for an escape that did not exist. Nothing could escape the fury that Eve had become. She had become a force beyond my wildest calculations. ¹

Felicia went on her knees, bringing her hands in front of her, begging, mumbling jargon through her broken jaw.

But Eve was not fazed, not in slightest. "Confess," She limped forward, yet the action retained its menace. "Fix your wretched mouth and confess to your role in massacre that night."