



## 273 The Facilitator's Confession

Hades 1

The sound of Felicia's breathing was wet and uneven—half choking, half sobbing—as she crawled on her knees across the cold marble, arms trembling like they couldn't bear the weight of her guilt. Her hands reached up to her face—twisted, mangled, leaking blood. She hesitated.

Then—

Crack.

The sound echoed through the hallway like a curse as she pushed her jaw back into place. Her scream was muffled. Her whole body convulsed. But she did it.

She forced herself upright and met Eve's eyes, a trembling wreck of the woman who once stood so high above the rest.

"P-please..." she whispered, barely coherent.

Eve's expression didn't change.



Her voice was frostbitten steel.

"Shove it back. No one needs your pleading."

Felicia flinched like she'd been slapped.

Then she looked down.

At herself.

At the blood on her hands.

At the red stain on the floor.

And something inside her... broke.

The grandeur. The delusion. The  
self-righteousness. All of it shattered with the  
next breath.

"I did it," she whispered.

The hallway froze.

"I gave Silverpine the blood to track the vehicle  
that night. Danielle's blood. Your blood. I leaked  
the route—because I knew you would survive it.  
I needed it to look real."

Air lacked oxygen.

Eve didn't move.



Felicia kept going, her voice fraying with every word.

"I gave you the last dose of the trigger serum when you refused to kill them. You had snapped out of it... you were calming down... and I..." Her eyes brimmed with tears. "I injected you through the car roof anyway. I needed them to die. They all had to die. I needed those bastards dead." 5

Her knees hit the marble again, this time like penance.

"I was the facilitator."

The words were barely audible. Like the confession itself was cutting her throat open.

But we heard them.

All of us.

The air snapped.

And then—

Eve laughed.

A sound like glass and agony.

It clawed through the silence, too loud, too



ragged to be real. A sound born of too much pain, too much betrayal, too much truth.

It echoed off the walls like a funeral hymn rewritten in madness.

She clutched her ribs as it shook her. Her knees wobbled.

Then, mid-laugh—

She collapsed.

I was under her before she hit the ground.

"Eve—!"

Her eyes fluttered, her body limp in my arms. Her skin was ice. Blood soaked her shirt. Her breath came shallow, uneven.

"No, no, no—"

Kael dropped beside me, panic written across every inch of him.

Elliot broke free from his shock and ran to her side, his small fingers grasping at her arm, his lips parted in a silent scream. His shoulders trembled.





He didn't make a sound.

Just wept.

Shaking.

Clutching her hand like it was the only thing  
anchoring him to this world.

I caught her before she hit the floor.

But it didn't feel like catching.

It felt like collapsing.

Like the world cracked under her weight—and  
took me with it.

Eve's blood was warm against my hands, but her  
skin was cold. Her body was limp, too limp. And  
her eyes—

Her eyes fluttered, like a light about to go out.

I sank to my knees with her in my arms, but I  
didn't call her name. I didn't dare. I didn't  
deserve to speak it.

Because this wasn't just blood loss.

This wasn't just exhaustion.



This was the weight of a war I let happen.

A war I built.

Elliot clung to her side, pressing his small hand to her arm, silent tears streaming down his cheeks. Kael crouched nearby, trying to assess her injuries, trying to help. But I didn't move.

I couldn't move.

Because the shaking in my hands had nothing to do with fear.

It was shame.

Rotting. Infectious. Final.

I didn't speak.

I didn't beg.

What was there to say?

That I was sorry?

That I didn't know?

That I had believed everyone but her?

That I had taken the word of a traitor over the trembling hands of a woman who only wanted to



protect what little was left of her life?

No.

No, there was nothing I could say.

Not without it tasting like rust and cowardice.

I wanted to touch her face.

But I couldn't.

Because these hands had pinned her down.

Had bruised her wrists.

Had fed her to monsters.

These hands were not worthy of her skin.

So I just... held her.

Beneath the weight of every word I'd flung like a  
weapon.

You're lying.

You're manipulating me.

You killed them.

Gods.



Gods, what had I done?

My breath came ragged.

I couldn't look at Kael. Couldn't look at Elliot.  
Couldn't look at anyone. The floor blurred. My  
lungs shriveled.

You said you loved her.

And you watched her bleed alone.

You watched her rot in chains while you told  
yourself it was justice.

And now—

Now you wanted to grieve?

No.

No, this wasn't grief.

This was consequence.

This was the price of believing a lie because it  
was easier than facing the truth that I'd failed  
her.

Utterly.

Irrevocably.





I pressed my forehead to the crook of her neck  
and said nothing.

Because monsters don't get to mourn. 3

They only get to remember.

And I would remember this silence for the rest  
of my goddamn life. 2

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Eve

My eyes snapped open, raising to sit and  
immediately the agony hit like slash to an  
achille's tendon. 1

Pain.

Sharp. Deep. Crippling.

It tore through me the moment consciousness  
returned, like someone had driven a blade  
beneath every rib and twisted. My spine arched  
instinctively, breath hitching in my throat before  
I collapsed back, gasping.

Every inch of my body screamed.

But I was alive.



That thought shouldn't have comforted me—but it did.

The scent of blood and smoke was thick in the air. The silence felt heavy, pressed in by too many eyes, too many truths.

Then—

Tiny arms wrapped around me.

Soft. Shaking.

"Ellie..."

I opened my eyes fully and found his face buried in my chest, his small hands fisting the front of my ruined shirt like he couldn't bear to let go. His eyes were red. Puffy. His lips trembled.

But he didn't cry.

Not this time.

I smiled—weakly—and reached up to wipe the tear tracks from his cheeks.

"Ellie," I whispered, voice shredded. "You are the bravest boy I know."

His chin quivered. He nodded once.



The weight of his silence crushed me more than any scream ever could.

I held him to me as long as I could manage, ignoring the burning in my ribs, the metallic taste in my mouth. The ache in my bones had nothing on the hollow in my chest.

I felt the others watching.

I didn't look.

I wouldn't give them that.

"Where did you find the bomb?" I asked, voice rough but even.

Kael cleared his throat.

"It was from Felicia's mansion," he said grimly. "There was a pile of them... we found them in a hidden crypt beneath the main estate. Same design, same signature. We believe that's where the first bomb around Elliot's neck came from."

My jaw clenched.

"She wanted to kill you with him," Kael added quietly. "You were both meant to die."

My stomach turned.



I looked down at Elliot.

He was so small.

So quiet.

So whole—despite everything.

And still, he'd tried to protect me.

I felt Hades' stare like a brand on my skin.

But I didn't meet his eyes.

Not yet.

Not when I wasn't sure if I'd survive seeing  
whatever it was I might find in them.

Guilt?

Sorrow?

Or worse...

A love that had waited too long to matter. 3