

61 Time's Up, Sister

Eve~ 1

Lia left for the day, and I saw her off. I closed the door behind me and rested against it for a moment. I appreciated her help, and though I did feel a bit lighter after each session, I still felt like I was being drowned under a torrent of negative emotions.

My phone call with my mom just a day ago still had me spiraling. She had been my mother for a moment—her soft voice, her warm tone, her loving cadence—but it had all melted away in a single second, right after my father interrupted. The kindness hadn't seemed rehearsed the way her coldness had. It was almost as though she were playing a role.

The implications filled me with both hope and dread, a strange mix that left me nauseous.

Just then, my phone rang, and a lump formed in my throat. I looked around the room, not sure what I was searching for. Was it a coincidence? Was I being watched?

My gaze shifted back to the bedside drawer where my phone was ringing. I made my way to

My gaze shifted back to the bedside drawer where my phone was ringing. I made my way to it, picked it up, and, seeing the caller ID, felt my heart stutter to a stop.

Sister.

My heart began to race, the world coming to a standstill. The ringing continued, incessant and jarring. In no time, I was shaking.

Sister.

I rubbed my eyes to make sure I wasn't losing the last bits of sanity I had left.

My quivering finger found the response button, and I answered the call, putting the phone to my ear with trepidation.

"Hello?" I said breathlessly, all the air stolen from my lungs.

Ellen's voice sent a horrifying chill down my spine. "Time's up, sister."

Everything happened at once. The door slammed open, and Hades's panicked voice cut through my shock and horror. "Red!"

I turned to him, and he moved so quickly that I didn't quite see it happen.

He was in front of me in a heartbeat, slapping the

He was in front of me in a heartbeat, slapping the phone painfully out of my hand and shielding me.

The next moments felt like a blur. I watched in slow motion as my phone hit the floor, a shiver of dread creeping up my spine. Then, in a deafening crack, it exploded. The impact threw me backward, searing heat brushing against my skin as shards scattered like tiny knives. My ears rang violently, muffling everything around me. I couldn't move, couldn't think—the only thing echoing in my mind was Ellen's final, chilling word: "Time's up."

The world around me was fragmented, sounds distant and warped. My body shook involuntarily, each beat of my heart struggling to find rhythm amidst the chaos. I registered faint shouts, though their meaning slipped through the static filling my mind.

And then, arms—solid and warm—wrapped around me, pulling me against a steady chest. A hand rested at the back of my head, fingers gently stroking my hair. The touch anchored me, grounding me in the swirling storm of fear and confusion. I breathed in deeply, the familiar scent somehow cutting through the smoke and the ringing in my ears.

Gradually, the fog lifted enough to let in pieces of reality. Hades was holding me, his face tense with worry, his voice soft but urgent as he murmured something I couldn't yet understand. The shattered remnants of the phone lay scattered on the floor, twisted and smoking.

I wanted to say something—to ask if he was okay or to explain the terror that Ellen's voice had unleashed in me—but my voice wouldn't come. Instead, I gripped his shirt tightly, needing the reassurance of his presence, of his strength to hold back the terror that threatened to consume me whole.

The edges of my vision darkened, and I was swept into waiting darkness.

As the world slowly came back into focus, I felt a gentle but solid weight pressing against my arm. Disoriented, I blinked up at the dim room, piecing together fragments of memory that lingered like the smoke from the explosion. I shifted slightly and realized the weight on my arm belonged to a man—Hades.

He was sitting beside me, his hand resting over mine, his fingers loose yet grounding. As if sensing my movement, he stirred awake, his



He was sitting beside me, his hand resting over mine, his fingers loose yet grounding. As if sensing my movement, he stirred awake, his gaze snapping to mine. For a moment, we just looked at each other, a fragile connection suspended in the quiet between us. His expression was soft, almost unguarded, concern clouding his eyes in a way I hadn't seen before.

But just as quickly, the softness retreated, replaced by a cold, distant mask. He withdrew his hand, breaking the contact with a sort of hesitance, as if he hadn't meant for me to notice him there. I watched the walls go back up, his demeanor shifting into a controlled reserve, but the worry still lingered in his eyes, barely concealed.

I swallowed, feeling the words build up in my throat, but none came. I didn't trust my voice yet, nor the flood of emotions clawing their way to the surface. So I said nothing, only held his gaze, hoping he understood the gratitude, the fear, and the questions that lingered unspoken.

"Are you alright?" I finally murmured.

Only then did he show some sort of reaction. His silver eyes widened, and then he chuckled.

My heart stopped, the sound filling me with a

My heart stopped, the sound filling me with a strange pleasure. It sounded like the most genuine act of amusement I had ever seen from him. But that wasn't the only thing that left me breathless. Hades had... dimples. My husband had dimples. 2

I simply stared up at him, unblinking, before he finally spoke. "You are the only woman alive who would almost get her head blown off and then ask a guy they call the Hand of Death if he's okay."

My face flushed, and I suddenly felt foolish. I looked away.

"Hey, hey," he said, cupping my face and making me look at him again. "Look at me. Don't be shy. It's nothing to be ashamed of."

My lips parted, and his eyes fell on them. My heart dared to flutter, warmth seeping through my skin where his fingers made contact. His eyes were no longer cold, and his expression was aching charming, if not... kind.

I pulled away from him anyway. "I thought we said we wouldn't do this. You're starting again."

He had the audacity to look surprised.

"Don't do that, don't do this. Don't show me a part of you that will hurt me when it leaves."

"You almost died. On my watch," he murmured, his voice uncharacteristically soft.

"I almost died before this, and you called me a liability," I was tempted to snap.

Silence.

"I was stunned... and afraid," he answered.

My heart was beating like mad.

"Those emotions are foreign to me, Red." He gulped audibly, his Adam's apple bobbing as if he were swallowing a bitter pill.

Comment ³

View All >



Post your first comment!



Vote



Fandom



Send Gift