

321 Her

Eve 1

Felicia's smile didn't fade. If anything, it sharpened.

"My first shot," she said, "was a blade to the stomach. Straight in. Deep enough to bleed, but not kill—not yet. I planted Leon's fingerprint on the hilt while I still had strength. Just in case no one would care enough to bury him with me."

I stiffened. What?

"But that was only part of it," she went on, her voice silk-wrapped rot. "Because Leon wouldn't fall just from one blow. He was too polished. Too loved. So I set the second shot in motion."

"What second shot?" I asked warily.

Her smile stretched wider.

"Danielle."

I blinked.

"I had been feeding her breadcrumbs," Felicia

said. "Soft, trembling words. Looks that lingered too long. Subtle cracks in the perfect-wife act. Not enough to alert her, but enough to plant the seed. Gave her the key to his shrine for her. Knowing that she would investigate."

She leaned forward.

"Because when the time came—when I 'died'—Danielle the saint would push for justice. She would take it to Hades. And Hades... would take the rest especially after finding out that the murderer wanted his darling wife."

Silence thundered between us.

"If things had gone the way I wanted," she whispered, "Leon's reputation would've shattered. Hades, the man he envied most, would have taken everything. His rank. His name. His future. His place. Because knowing Hades, he would rip him to shreds for what he had done. And looking at what he did to the woman he loved for a crime she did not commit, I was right on track."

The words hit me like a slap.

"You planned to kill yourself," I breathed, "and

frame him."

She gave a slow nod. "Wouldn't have been hard. Just needed to die the right way."

Pity coiled inside me like a slow-turning blade. For her to consider that—it must have been hell. Even for her.

"I thought you didn't want to die."

Felicia blinked, then smiled—soft, too soft. "I didn't. Not forever. I just wanted to become something unforgettable. A name. A ghost with a cause. Like how Danielle now haunts the narrative even though she is not even buried."

Then she asked it.

Her voice almost childlike.

"Is Danielle dead?"

The question made me pause. My mouth opened. Closed.

"Yes..." I said slowly. "She's dead." where was she going with this?

Felicia tilted her head. "But is she really? Truly dead?"



"What are you talking about?"

"The dead never really die," she murmured. "Not when they go the right way. The unfair way. The tragic way. That kind of death lingers. It stirs grief. Pity. Vengeance. It moves the living to act."

Her eyes glittered now. Unblinking.

"For dead Danielle, Hades tore your love to shreds and made you eat the pieces. That's power. That's permanence."

I swallowed, ice crawling up my spine.

"If I had died like I planned, I'd be the face of the abused. The wronged. I'd have a memorial in every women's ward across the region. My mother would have built a foundation in my name. And Leon's world?"

She leaned back, smile widening.

"It would rot. Slowly. Publicly. While his father, Lucas, watched his favorite son unravel."

She chuckled, the sound too light, too amused.

"Crazy, right?"

I didn't answer.

Because it was.

But also... it wasn't. It was Felicia after all. After what she had done to Elliot...

Yet, I could not help but feel for her. They were far more villains in the story but just like she was abused unfairly, she had abused a child as well, stolen his mother's life and separated a child from his only living parent.

For a long moment, I said nothing. I just stared at her—this woman, this wreck of history and venom and heartbreak.

Because gods help me, I felt something.

Not forgiveness. Not understanding.

But empathy.

A flicker of it. A tremble beneath the steel in my spine.

Because what she described wasn't madness—it was pain. Rotting, unrelenting pain twisted into performance. Into myth. Into legacy.

And still...

"You must be surprised," Felicia said suddenly,



voice light. "That had been my plan."

I looked at her sharply.

"But that's not how it ended."

Her eyes flashed, and for a second, the madness cleared.

"I know," I said. "You killed them instead. And you used me."

The smile that touched her lips this time was almost rueful. Almost.

"But I wouldn't have been able to do it if she hadn't reached out."

I froze.

She.

The word hit me like a stone to the ribs.

"Who?" I asked quietly, my voice barely a breath.

Felicia's gaze lifted. And for the first time since I'd entered the cell, her eyes locked on mine with startling clarity.

"She claimed to be a friend," she said. "From

Silverpine. From the Lunar Heights."

My blood turned to ice.

"She sounded young," Felicia continued. "As young as you. Pretty, I think. Sweet voice. Smart, too. She had a plan. Said she wanted to end my enemies. That all she needed from me... was blood."

My heart began to pound.

No.

No, it couldn't be.

"She asked for their blood," Felicia murmured. "Said it would help her 'mark' the ones responsible. That's what she called it—marking."

My stomach dropped.

My knees threatened to buckle.

A vial.

A girl.

A plan that had already begun to unwind everything.



"She knew," Felicia whispered, her voice almost reverent. "She knew about the beatings. The chains. The miscarriages. She said Leon wasn't the only monster in the Obsidian court. She said she could fix it."

She looked at me again, and there it was—calm, eerie sincerity.

"She gave me hope."

My throat was too tight to speak. My lungs too heavy to breathe.

Because I knew.

I knew.

The vial. The blood. The propaganda. The whispers. The timing.

It wasn't just anyone.

It was Ellen.

My sister.

The one who had watched me fall. Who had stood beside the ones who rejected me after framing me.



She had been the one feeding Felicia's fire.

She had been the one who started this war long before I even knew I was part of it. Or maybe she was simply a proxy for something more convoluted.

Felicia tilted her head.

"A werewolf helping a lycan?" she mused.

"Preposterous, right?"

Then her voice dropped to something solemn. Something cruel.

"But she said she knew what had happened. She knew about everything."

The cell spun.

My vision darkened at the edges.

Because somehow, somehow, Ellen had found her way into Felicia's shadow.

And together—they had torn everything apart.

Felicia's eyes didn't soften.

If anything, they sharpened. Cleared.

"She helped me end them," she said quietly. "That woman. Whoever she was. She gave me the fire. The blood. The map. All I had to do was follow the ruin."

A cold sweat broke along my spine.

Felicia's voice dropped, thick and full of something darker than grief. "Killing Danielle... that wasn't part of the original plan. Not really. But depravity has a way of rising to the top when you let it simmer long enough."

Her hands twitched against the manacles, slow and small, like the echo of a ghost gesture.

"All those years of jealousy," she murmured. "All that resentment. Watching her glide through life, untouched. Even when she broke—she broke beautifully."

Then she looked at me.

And what I saw in her expression wasn't madness.

It was envy.

Bitten raw and unrepentant.



"You," she said, a quiet accusation. "A drugged, raving animal. A beast. And even you pulled her from the wreckage of that car."

The memory punched through my chest.

"I saw you," she continued, voice tightening. "Saw you shift and bleed and tear your body apart to get to her. And she—she reached for you. She touched you. She petted you."

Her laugh was low and joyless.

"And you let her."

I said nothing. Couldn't.

Felicia leaned forward, chains rattling as she did.

"She gave birth alone, you know. I watched from the where I hid. She didn't scream. She didn't cry. Like how did when I lost my babies. She just did it. Like it was nothing. Like it was a privilege."

She spat the next words.

"It was too easy for her. Everything was too damn easy for her."

The weight of her hate was suffocating.

"The gods," Felicia whispered, "they gave her everything. Beauty. Devotion. Protection. Power. A family who wept for her, mourned her, worshiped her. They could not even bury her. She was never punished. Not really. Not like me."

Her eyes locked on mine again.

"Tell me, Eve. Why should she get all of that? Why should she get everything I never got?" 1

I swallowed hard, rage and horror crawling up my throat.

Because I knew what she was about to say.

"I had to end her," Felicia said. "I had to. If I couldn't be Danielle, then I would make sure no one else ever saw her shine again."

My stomach turned.

She smiled.

"That was the only way I could matter."

And suddenly, I understood why she'd asked if Danielle was truly dead.

Because for Felicia, death wasn't the end.

It was the crown. The monument. The weapon.

She hadn't just wanted Danielle to die.

She wanted to steal her afterglow.

But even in death, Danielle still glowed in the way death unraveled all those involved. In the way Hades broke, in Montegue's devotion to her, and even in Elliot's watchful green eyes and his haunting silence.

"So tell me," I finally found my voice, firmer than I thought I could muster in the moment. "What did you do to her son?" 3