

## The Life and Experiences of Eleanor Keener

Planned segmentation and POV setups

Initial life: Single

Joining the recon team: Single

USS Chara: Single

Incident: Dual

Recovery: Dual

Back to Recon: Dual

Arcturus: Single

## Incident

**[Timestamp: 13:49, 1 Minute After Cascade]**

“Fuck, fuck, fuck—Ellie, fucking stay with me!” I practically yelled into the radio, my voice breaking. Silence answered me.

She can’t be dead. She can’t be. I’d never forgive myself.

I rounded the corner to the lift on Deck 5, skidding to a halt as my boots slid through a pool of blood. My breath caught in my throat.

"Fuck!"

There she was—lying crumpled on the ground, a growing pool of crimson spreading beneath her. My heart stopped. I dropped to my knees beside her, my hands trembling as I pressed two fingers to her neck. A pulse. Weak, but there.

Relief hit me like a punch to the chest, followed immediately by a wave of panic.

“Ellie?” I rasped, my voice barely above a whisper.

Her eyes flickered open, unfocused and glazed. “Viper?” she murmured weakly. “Where are you?”

“I’m here, my angel. I’m here,” I said, choking on the words. Tears blurred my vision as I brushed blood-soaked hair from her face. She was alive. That’s all that mattered.

“I... I can’t feel my legs,” she said, her voice shaky, strained. “What happened?”

I forced myself to look her over, to assess the damage, even though every fiber of my being screamed to look away. There was a deep gash across her face, blood pooling in her eyes and matting her hair. Her left hand—what was left of it—was shredded, tendons and sinew glistening where the muscle had been torn apart. But it was her legs that made my stomach churn. Burned. Shattered. The upper thighs were mostly intact, but below that—nothing recognizable. Just jagged remnants of bone peeking through what used to be flesh.

She was dying. And if I didn’t move fast, I’d lose her.

The lights flickered overhead. Backup power was failing. Once it went, artificial gravity would follow, and there’d be no getting her out. I reached for the radio on my shoulder, switching to the main crew frequency.

“This is Lieutenant Commander Damien Thorne,” I barked. “Is anyone still on board the USS Chara? Respond.”

Static crackled in my ear before a voice finally cut through. “It’s good to hear your voice, sir,” came the familiar, steady tone of Lieutenant Adrienne Wolfe.

“Wolfe,” I said, relief washing over me again. “Do you have anyone with you?”

“Yes, sir. Fifteen total, mix of engineers, technical, a couple medical staff, and a frigate in the hangar bay. Pilot’s ready, but he says he’s leaving in five minutes with or without us.”

“Tell him to hold position. I’m coming up from Deck 5, and I’m bringing Keener. How long until artificial gravity fails?”

“Fifteen minutes, maybe less,” Wolfe replied. “Secondary power bank’s still holding, but barely. What’s her condition?”

I glanced down at Ellie, my heart clenching as her eyes fluttered shut again. “Severe,” I said tightly. “Massive blood loss, avulsions on her head and legs, and her left hand’s a mess. Is Dr. Calder there with you?”

“Yes sir, she’s here with us, currently tending to some of the others, I’ll give her the sitrep” her voice still steady, I never understood how she maintained that calm air of control.

“Get Dr. Calder ready. We’ll need every ounce of magic she’s got.”

“Understood, sir. We’ll meet you at the hangar entrance,” Wolfe said, her voice growing more urgent. “Keep her alive.”

“I’m trying,” I muttered, grabbing a coagulant pen from my med pack. I stabbed it into Ellie’s thigh, just above the worst of the damage, watching as the blood flow slowed slightly. It wasn’t enough, but it would have to do for now.

The lift was gone—collapsed into the bottom of the shaft. Of course. The cables, though, were intact. I pulled out my zip-line tool, muttering a quick thanks to whatever cruel god had spared that part of the infrastructure.

“Hold on, Ellie,” I whispered, hooking the line to the cable. “We’re getting out of here.”

I secured her to me, her small frame limp against my chest, and began the climb. Every second felt like an eternity, every sound of groaning metal a reminder of how little time we had left.

**[Hanger Bay]**

**[Timestamp: 13:52, 3 Minutes After Cascade]**

The hangar was a war zone—scrap metal and bodies strewn across the floor, fires still burning in pockets where fuel had ignited. The frigate, Argos, loomed in the distance, its ramp lowered and engines humming, ready for a quick escape.

Wolfe and Calder met me halfway across the bay. Wolfe's usually calm demeanor cracked as her eyes landed on Ellie. "Fuck," she muttered, rushing to take some of Ellie's weight. "Glad you found her. She wouldn't have lasted much longer."

"No time for pleasantries," I grunted, shifting Ellie into Wolfe's arms as I adjusted my grip. "Let's move."

Calder stepped in, her face pale but determined. She jabbed Ellie's arm with a yellow auto-injector, muttering something under her breath. The blood flow slowed further, but her breathing was still shallow, her face ashen.

We pushed through the wreckage, every step a struggle. The Argos loomed closer, its engines roaring as the pilot prepared for takeoff. Inside, the space was cramped, filled with wounded crew members—engineers and technicians mostly, their faces etched with pain and exhaustion.

Calder and Wolfe took Ellie from me, laying her carefully on a stretcher. I lingered for a moment, watching as they worked, before stepping back to check on the rest of the crew.

"Is everyone accounted for?" I asked Wolfe, who was already shouting orders to the remaining engineers.

"All we've got," she said grimly. "No one else answered the last call."

I nodded, my gaze drifting to the viewport. The Chara's remains hung in the void, a twisted skeleton of steel and fire. The secondary power bank gave out as we breached the initial debris field, I watched as the artificial gravity fields collapsed and the hanger's containment fields failed. Debris and bodies spiraled into the vacuum of space, a morbid ballet of destruction.

I turned back to Ellie. She was pale, barely clinging to life, but alive. For now, that was enough.

"You're safe," I murmured under my breath, more to myself than to her. "You're safe, my angel."

## Recovery

*Eleanor:*

The first thing I noticed was warmth—a steady heat radiating from somewhere close, paired with the faint crackle of firewood. I inhaled slowly, the sharp tang of antiseptics mixing with something softer—pine, maybe. The air felt heavier than I remembered, but not unpleasant.

I blinked, my eyes adjusting to dim, golden light filtering through wooden beams above me. This wasn't a medbay. The ceiling was warm, rustic, with the faint glow of a fire flickering across it. I turned my head slowly, every movement sluggish but deliberate. A large window caught my attention, framing snow-covered trees outside, their branches heavy with frost beneath a pale winter sky.

"Ellie?"

The voice pulled me away from the window, a voice I knew well. "Damien—" quickly snapping my head to the direction of his voice, wrong choice, it hurt like hell. I see Damien sitting beside me. He leaned forward, his forearms braced on his knees. His face was rougher than I remembered—shadowed by exhaustion and darkened by a scruffy beard that hadn't been there before. But his eyes held something else. Relief. And maybe... something softer.

"You're awake little phoenix" he said, his voice low but steady. His hand hovered over mine for a moment before it finally settled there, warm and solid. A steady anchor in the haze.

I flexed my fingers under his, testing the edges of my awareness. That worked fine—good. But when I shifted my legs, the sensation was... different. Not absent, just unfamiliar. An inaudible hum coursed through me, subtle but present. It wasn't fear that I felt. It was curiosity. I glanced down, lifting the blanket draped over me.

My legs were there. Functional. Natural-looking. The polished lines and subtle seams of cybernetics caught the light, if I didn't know what I was looking for, I wouldn't see them. I ran my fingers along the edge of my left thigh, tracing where synthetic skin met flesh. It was smooth, warm—nearly indistinguishable from my own.

"How long?" I croaked, noticing the IV drip in my right arm, my voice was dry.

Damien shifted slightly, his grip on my hand tightening just a bit. "Almost four weeks," he said. "You've been out since the incident aboard the Chara."

I nod faintly, my memory stirring like a distant storm. The core cascading. Being thrown against the wall on deck 5. The heat emanating from remnants of the core. "The crew?" I asked, though I already knew what the answer would be.

His jaw tightened, his gaze dropping briefly to the floor. "We got as many out as we could," he said quietly. "But not everyone..." He trailed off, exhaling sharply before meeting my eyes again. "We're still waiting on the final casualty report."

I let the blanket fall back over my legs, though my gaze lingered on them. Flexing my toes experimentally, I watched as the movements matched my intent almost perfectly, the cybernetics—calibrating, responding.

"The augmentations," I murmured, running my fingers over the smooth surface of my left leg again. "They're... incredible."

Damien blinked, caught off guard. "You're not... upset?"

I tilted my head toward him, raising an eyebrow. "Damien, I signed the consent form. I knew what I was agreeing to." My lips tugged into the faintest smirk. "Besides, I wasn't planning to stop walking anytime soon."

That drew a laugh out of him, short and soft, but genuine. He leaned back in his chair, rubbing a hand over his face. "I should've known better than to worry about you."

"Yeah," I said, letting the smirk linger for a moment before turning my focus inward. "How bad was it?"

His expression sobered, the humor fading as quickly as it had appeared. "Bad," he admitted. "The medic said there wasn't much left to salvage. Your legs... your lungs... your hand... you gave them one hell of a fight." He paused, his voice quieter when he continued. "They wanted to go with standard models, Mary and I made sure they followed your request. Natural-looking. As close to you as possible."

He paused for a moment before continuing, "Mary threatened to toss one of the medics into a vortex field if he didn't follow the request form." He chuckled to himself.

I nodded, satisfied. "Good. Remind me to thank her for that." I flexed my legs again, marveling at the smooth precision. "It's strange," I murmured. "They feel... almost normal. Like they've always been there." I glanced back at him. "I'll need specs, though. If something's going to be part of me, I should know exactly how it works."

He chuckled, shaking his head. "You just woke up, and you're already thinking about mods. Classic."

"Can't let a good upgrade go to waste," I said, grinning faintly. A flicker of my old self, maybe.

The silence that followed wasn't uncomfortable. I let my head sink back into the pillow, my gaze drifting to the window again. Snow was falling softly now, the kind of stillness that demanded patience.

"Is this your place?" I asked after a moment, my mind drifting to the world around me.

"Yeah," Damien said, glancing at the window. "Figured you'd need somewhere quiet to wake up. A medbay didn't feel right for you. Too sterile. And here... well, it's safe." There was something else there, hesitation, but now was not the time.

I nodded again, letting my eyes close as exhaustion pulled at me. "Safe," I echoed, the word settling over me like a blanket. "Thanks, Damien."

"Always," he said softly. His hand lingered on mine until my breathing evened out, the steady crackle of the fire and his warm hand in mine, steady and grounding, sleep was quick to pull me back under.

I woke to find Damien missing from the chair beside my bed, the faint impression of his weight still visible in the cushion. A glass of water sat on the bedside table, condensation beading down its surface in the warm room. Tentatively, I reached for it with my left hand—the reconstructed one. To my surprise, everything worked perfectly. My fingers curled naturally around the glass, my wrist rotated without hesitation, and the cool texture of the glass registered in vivid detail. I could feel again.

The sound of a door closing downstairs pulled me from my thoughts, followed by the dull thud of something heavy being dropped. A bag? Groceries, maybe?

"Damien?" I called out, my voice hoarse but steady. I pushed the blanket off my body, the warmth of the room brushing against my bare skin. Swinging my legs over the side of the bed, I braced myself on the bedside table and attempted to stand.

Big mistake.

"FUCK!-" I yelled as my body crumpled to the floor, my legs refusing to hold my weight. Pain lanced through me—not from my legs but from the sheer humiliation of the fall. I tried to claw my way back onto the bed, but before I could make any progress, Damien burst into the room, his expression a mixture of concern and exasperation.

"Ellie, my phoenix," he said softly, crouching beside me. "You're pushing yourself too hard. It's going to take time before you're fully recovered."

His arms slid under mine, and in one smooth motion, he lifted me off the floor and settled me back on the edge of the bed. I scowled, my pride stinging worse than the impact.

“I was fine,” I muttered, though the wobble in my voice betrayed me.

“Oh, sure. Fine. That’s exactly what I’d call it,” Damien said, raising an eyebrow. “Is this the new recovery method? Face-planting onto the floor?”

I glared at him, but the corners of my mouth betrayed me, twitching upward. “I didn’t think my legs would just give out like that,” I said, shaking my head. “They look fine, so I figured they’d work.”

“They’re cybernetics, Ellie, not magic,” he replied, brushing a strand of hair from my face. “It takes time for your nervous system to adapt. You’ve been out of commission for weeks. You’re not going to get up and run a marathon on day one.”

“Well, I wasn’t planning to run,” I quipped. “Maybe just walk to the window or, you know, not crash onto the floor.”

“Right,” Damien said with a soft laugh. “We’ll work on that, but not by testing your durability on the hardwood. You’ve got nothing to prove, you know.”

I rolled my eyes, my fingers fidgeting with the edge of the blanket. “I hate feeling useless, Damien. Four weeks just lying there while you—you’ve probably been running yourself ragged taking care of me.”

His expression softened, and he crouched in front of me again, resting his hands on my knees—right where flesh met synthetic. “You’re not useless, Ellie. You’re alive, and that’s all that matters to me.” He paused, his dark eyes locking with mine. “And for the record, I don’t mind running myself ragged for you. You’re worth it.”

I didn’t know what to say to that. His sincerity was a lot to take in, and my chest ached with something I couldn’t quite name. I reached out, my reconstructed hand curling around his wrist. The touch was small, but it said everything I couldn’t.

He smiled at me, the tension easing from his shoulders. “Now,” he said, standing up and pulling me gently with him, “how about we try this again? This time, with a little help?”

“I’m not made of glass, you know,” I grumbled, leaning into him for support as he steadied me on my feet.

“Maybe not,” he said, his tone teasing, “but you’re certainly fragile right now. So let’s keep you in one piece, yeah?”



I scoffed but let him guide me around the room. Every step was a reminder of how much work I had ahead of me. My legs moved, but each motion felt sluggish, disconnected. It was frustrating, to say the least. Still, I focused on the progress I was making, no matter how small.

By the time we made it back to the bed, I was exhausted, my arms trembling from the effort of keeping myself upright. Damien helped me sit down, his grip firm and reassuring.

“That’s enough for now,” he said. “We’ll do more tomorrow.”

I groaned, leaning back against the headboard. “Tomorrow can’t come soon enough. I feel like a toddler learning to walk all over again.”

“A very stubborn toddler,” Damien said with a grin, earning him a glare. “But hey, at least you’ve still got your sense of humor.”

“Barely,” I muttered, though a faint smile tugged at my lips. “Now, are you going to feed me, or am I supposed to survive on IV fluids forever?”

He laughed, standing up and leaving the glass of water on the bedside table. “Don’t worry, my angel. I’ll whip up something edible. Just don’t expect it to be fancy.”

“Edible is good enough,” I said, settling back into the pillows. “But if it’s terrible, I reserve the right to throw it at you.”

“Noted,” he said with a mock bow, his grin widening. “I’ll make sure it’s at least passable. Sit tight.”

As he walked out of the room, I let out a slow breath, moving to pick up the glass of water and have a drink, the cool liquid hitting my tongue and relieving me of the dryness that resided within my voice.

It felt like an eternity before Damien returned with a plate of food, it wasn’t a lot, but that was to be expected. He had two plates and brought a second cup of water with him, I’ll admit, the man would balance incredibly well.

“I hope you are a fan of sausage and eggs” he said as he handed me a plate, “and I see that you’ve gotten a hang of your hand already” gesturing at the glass of water which sat half full on the beside table.

“Appears so, way less issues than with my legs”, I say before taking a bit of the sausage now attached to the fork in my hand, “it—holy fuck Damien”, caught off guard with how well seasoned the sausage was.

“I know right?”, he says and takes a bit out of his own, closing his eyes savoring the taste, “it’s reindeer if you’d believe it”, turning his head to me scarfing down the food that was on the plate.

“Slow down there little phoenix, there’s more in the kitchen if you want more” chuckling softly to himself, “I underestimated how hungry you’d actually be”, his smile is contagious.

“Four weeks is a long time to be in a coma dipshit” I tap his shoulder with the fork playfully a grin breaking out across my face, “but you’re right, I should slow down before I choke on something”.

We eat in a comfortable silence, it’s fucking delicious, I knew the man could cook, but goddamn he gave me a run for my money. Soon enough my mind began to wander, the fork between my teeth. Damien must have noticed as he took the empty plate from me and set it to the side.

“I know you probably have a million questions in that pretty head of yours”, taking the fork from my mouth before I can protest, “I may not have all the answers, but I can at least answer the ones I can”, he settles himself next to me on the bed, taking my hands in his.

“First, where are we, I know it’s somewhere north, like, far north” I glance out the window at the snow lightly dusted across the treetops. It’s a breathtaking sight, one I could get used to.

“We’re in Juneau, Alaska, it’s a little out of the way—who am I kidding, way out of the way, family home like I said, no one other than me has used it before,” his words are soft and caring, this is his home, away from the hustle and bustle, quiet and calm. His eyes drift to the photos on the wall, I follow his gaze. None of them show his family, all of them are with the Recon squad and people I don’t recognize. Hell, he has photos with the (Insert recon branch leader), and for once she isn’t buried in tech or strangling some poor Navy officer for interfering with her squads.

“Hey Damien?”, my voice comes softer than I intended, curiosity lacing the edges.

“Yes, my angel?”, his eyes still on me.

“Why isn’t Renault in any of these photos?” I asked, my eyes scanning for any trace of the man.

Damien’s gaze flickered down, and I caught the subtle tension in his shoulders. He leaned forward slightly, resting his hands on my knees—right where flesh met synthetic, grounding me like he always did.

“There’s talk of internal sabotage,” he said finally, his voice low and somber. “The entire ship is under investigation. Renault’s leading the charge, and...” His eyes darkened. “He might have his sights set on us.”

“Renault? Havoc?” I sat back, incredulous. “Why would he come after us? We haven’t done anything to him.”

Damien’s lips pressed into a thin line before he spoke. “You did catch him sleeping with the second officer, you remember her, Elise Darrow. Ellie, he’s desperate for a way to discredit you—and, by proxy, me.”

He reached up, brushing a stray strand of hair from my face, his fingers gentle as they tucked it behind my ear. My hand instinctively followed his, and before I knew it, my fingers had laced into his, holding him there.

“That bastard,” I muttered, an exasperated look crossing my face. “The number of times I saved his ass... He wouldn’t even be alive if it weren’t for us!”

Damien’s lips quirked upward in a faint, bitter smile. “Guess we didn’t see the whole him,” he said quietly. “I certainly didn’t. And I’ll tell you this—I’ll never forgive him for cheating on you.” His thumb brushed softly along my cheek, his voice steady but tinged with steel. “Just so we’re clear.”

I leaned into his touch, closing my eyes for a brief moment. “I don’t understand how someone can turn on the people who had their back—on the ones who trusted them. It’s pathetic.”