



171 Tell Me, Lucy

Hades 1

"You are such a dick, Cain," I snarled at him through the screen, my voice lowered so that Ellen would not stir. It wasn't as if she could wake up so easily after the hectic day and the Deltas' healing.

"Such crass words from the regal king of the Obsidian Pack," he tutted. "What would Mother say?"

"Cut the crap," I snapped, my voice low and venomous. "Crossing the line and interfering in my territory was bad enough, Cain. But touching what's mine?" My grip on the desk tightened, the wood creaking under the pressure. "That was your first mistake. Making it personal was your last."

Cain leaned back in his chair, the smirk on his face visible even through the screen. "What's mine, you say? How territorial of you, Hades. I didn't realize the great king had gone soft, claiming little pets now. Forget what Mother would think—let's talk about Danielle and the child that the Princess' father's beast ripped out

of her." 5

A lump formed in my throat, and I swallowed the urge to touch the earring dangling from my ear. Ellen's scent still encroached on my senses despite her no longer being in my arms. But I refused to falter. Like every other Lycan, Cain craved the weakness of his opponent.

"Don't test me, Cain," I growled, my patience hanging by a thread. The shadows in the room deepened, responding to the rising anger in my tone. "You and I both know the rules. We both know where we stand. Yet you should do well to remember we stand on the same side in the grand scheme of things. I will make you regret it, Cain, if you stand in my way."

Cain chuckled darkly, his expression unbothered by my warning. "Regret? Hardly. If anything, I'm curious. Curious about the little thing that has you so worked up. Must be something special to get under your skin like this. The fact that it took her only two months to tell you someone was warning her to escape? You've done well." 2

My nails dug into the desk as the surge of power pulsed through me, begging for release. But I couldn't let it take control. Not yet. "Stay the hell away from her. This is your final warning."



His grin widened. "I get another warning?" His brows shot up. "You are really going soft, Lucy." 3

I gritted my teeth at the long-forgotten nickname. "Cain," I growled in warning.

"She is changing you," he remarked, an unknown emotion leaching into his voice. "I can almost recognize you again—that eight-year-old boy who used to try and pull me out of the shadows. The only one who deemed me worthy of a smile. Mother's golden pup. The one who hadn't yet learned to bury his heart beneath layers of steel and Vassir's Vein." Cain's smirk faltered for a fraction of a second, and I caught it—a glimpse of the brother I once knew before our lives became a web of blood, betrayal, and vengeance. 2

"That boy is dead," I said coldly. "And if you think I've grown soft, then you're either delusional or suicidal. I'll ask you one last time, Cain. Stay. Away. From her."

Cain tilted his head, studying me with an expression I couldn't quite decipher. "Ah, but that's the thing, Lucy. I don't think I can. You see, she's... intriguing. And I don't think you've told her everything, have you? About you. About your wonderful plans. About your plans for her."

My chest tightened, his leisure in his voice igniting a fury so potent I could taste it in the back of my throat. "You know nothing of my plans." He could not begin to comprehend them.

"Oh, but I do," Cain countered, leaning forward. "You think you can protect her from everything, but you can't even protect her from yourself. How long before she sees what you truly are, Hades? How long before she realizes the monster in the shadows isn't the one outside her window—it's the one sharing her bed?" 1

"You heard me, Cain. Stay away from my wife."

He raised his brow again, seemingly genuinely surprised. "Your wife? Who is Danielle, then?"

His question hit its mark.

"Oh, I forgot. She was slaughtered, and you moved on to the daughter of the man who did that to her." He ran his hand through his hair. "Tell me, does her voice still haunt you? Do you look into Ellen's eyes and see Danielle? Do you think of your child? The one whose body was never found. Tell me, Lucy." 6

Cain's words struck like venom, each syllable digging deep into old wounds that had never fully healed. My vision blurred for a moment, the



memories surging—Danielle's laughter, the warmth of her touch, and then the blood. So much blood. Her screams still echoed in the recesses of my mind, joined by the haunting cries of the child I never got to hold. My dreams had never been so haunted until during those years.

My grip on the desk splintered it further, fragments of wood scattering across the room. "You don't know a damn thing about what I see," I spat, my voice laced with barely restrained fury. "You don't know the choices I've had to make. The lives I've had to save while drowning in my own failures. So don't stand there and act like you have the right to question me."

Cain leaned forward, his smirk softening into something more sinister, almost pitying. "Oh, but I do, brother. You wear your failures like armor, hoping no one will see the cracks underneath. But I see them. I see you. And you're right—Danielle's voice does haunt you. Her blood is on your hands, just as much as it's on Darius. And Ellen? She's your penance, isn't she? Your pathetic attempt at redemption."

"You don't get to speak her name," I snarled, my claws extending instinctively, shredding through



the remnants of the desk. The shadows in the room twisted and writhed, feeding off my rage. "Not Danielle. Not Ellen. Not anyone. This is your last chance, Cain. Walk away."

Cain chuckled, a low, mirthless sound. "Walk away? Oh, Lucy, you still don't get it, do you? This isn't just about you. It never was. You think claiming her as your wife changes anything? That it erases the sins you've buried under layers of lies and blood? You think she'll stay once she knows the truth?" 3

I straightened, the weight of his words slamming into me like a physical blow. He was playing a dangerous game, pulling at threads that I couldn't afford to unravel. But I wouldn't give him the satisfaction of seeing me break.