

456 Uncle Luci

Hades 1

They led us up the charming walkway, past the jack-o'-lanterns and flower beds that looked so perfectly normal it made my teeth ache. But as we approached the front door, I noticed things that didn't quite fit the suburban dream.

The porch boards didn't creak under our weight—they were solid, reinforced. The windows had the faint shimmer of bulletproof glass. And the front door, painted a cheerful red with an autumn wreath, was at least three inches thick.

"Huh," Eve murmured, and I shot her a look that said I'd noticed too.

One of our escorts—the one with winter eyes—stepped forward with what looked like a normal house key. Except when he inserted it into the lock, the entire door frame lit up with a soft blue glow. A retinal scanner dropped down from what I'd assumed was decorative trim.

He leaned forward, let the scanner do its work, then placed his palm on a section of door that looked like painted wood but clearly wasn't. The handprint reader beeped softly, and then—

because apparently we weren't done with the spy movie nonsense—he pulled out the strangest key I'd ever seen. It looked like someone had melted a normal key and twisted it into impossible angles, with teeth that spiraled in ways that hurt to look at.

The final lock disengaged with a sound like a bank vault opening, and the cheerful red door swung inward to reveal an entryway that belonged in a completely different house. Steel-reinforced walls. Security cameras in every corner. A hallway that stretched back into shadows, lined with doors that looked like they could withstand a nuclear blast.

"Welcome to the real house, Alpha," the winter-eyed one announced. "I will escort you to the little miss's room."

The rest of the men stayed behind, no doubt watching our every move as we made our way deeper into the most mundane home I had ever stepped in.

Eve clasped my clammy hand, squeezing it tight as we walked deeper into the home that I had not known existed. Every step felt like a walk up to a guillotine, my guilt being the blade. He had feared for his daughter so much that he hid her



from the world.

I had always thought that his lack of disdain for Eve from the beginning to the point where he had tried to get her to leave me, and had made some 'elusive' deal with her after our catastrophic fall had been because he had been messing with me.

I believed that he was trying to get a rise out of me. Poking the bear like he always did because he had been jealous that I was Alpha and he was not.

He had even in his own obnoxious way tried to push me to tell Eve the whole truth. They had not been signs of his own bad intentions, it was because he possessed true empathy. 4

He didn't need to put himself in Eve's position; someone who was hated in Obsidian for who she was. Someone he cared for was already living in that hell, his daughter had been part werewolf all along.

The guard came to a stop and we both halted at the door.

I studied the pink door we now stood in front of. It didn't take me two seconds to know the painting of the door was not a professional job.

The pink was lighter in some places, patchy in some others with pink color caked into the hinges.

My chest tightened when I noticed an inscription at the bottom of the door.

By papa and by Sophie. 2

I could not imagine my half brother with pink paint splattered on his face and clothes rolling layers of color onto a wooden door while his daughter did the same. 2

It was making even more sense why he had been so receptive and empathetic to Sage, a tear even escaping when we had seen her walk away, the weight of the world on her little shoulders. He had seen his daughter in Sage. I had been the villain to the mere existence of his daughter just like Darius had been to Sage's.

I held my breath as the guard knocked on the pink painted door.

"Little miss, you have visitors," he said, his voice carrying.

The answer came immediately. "Where is papa, Freddy?" her voice was mature in the only way that children could manage, but this had an



undertone of sorrow.

"Papa is yet to return," the guard named Freddy replied.

She said nothing at that, and did not open the door. Freddy sighed deeply. "Little miss," he called again. "Papa will be back soon."

"I said that last week," she replied through the door before he could get another word in. 1

I stepped closer to the door, my chest heavy with the weight of what I now understood.

"Sophie," I called gently, "it's your uncle, Alpha Hades."

The silence that followed was deafening. Then came the scream.

"NO! WHERE IS PAPA? WHERE IS MY PAPA?" Her voice cracked with terror, high and desperate.

"I'M NOT A WEREWOLF, I PROMISE! I'M NOT! PLEASE DON'T TAKE ME AWAY!"

The words hit me like physical blows. This child—Cain's daughter, my own niece—was terrified of me. Of what I represented. The stories she must have heard, the fear Cain must have carried every day that I would discover her existence.



I staggered back from the door, Eve's hand tightening on mine as she watched the devastation cross my face.

"I promise I'm good! I don't shift! I'm not bad!" Sophie's voice was muffled now, as if she'd pressed herself against the far wall. "Please don't hurt Papa! Please!"

Eve stepped forward, her voice gentle but carrying clearly through the door. "Sophie, sweetheart, it's uncle Luci. Your papa's younger brother."

I turned to stare at her in shock. Luci—the name I hadn't heard in decades, the name Cain had called me when we were children, before everything changed, before I became the Alpha everyone feared. 1

The sobbing on the other side of the door gradually quieted.

"Uncle... Luci?" Sophie's voice was barely a whisper.

"Yes, little one," Eve continued, her voice warm and soothing. "He's here with me, Aunt Eve. We just want to see you, to make sure you're safe while Papa is away."

Long minutes passed. I could hear shuffling, the soft sound of little feet moving across the floor. Then came the careful click of multiple locks being undone—how many security measures had Cain installed on his daughter's bedroom door?

The door cracked open just an inch, and a single brown eye peered out suspiciously. Then it opened wider, revealing honey-colored hair with natural blonde highlights that caught the hallway light. Her warm caramel skin was nothing like the signature Stravos pale complexion, and those big brown eyes studied us with a wariness that no child should ever have to possess.

She was beautiful, and she was terrified, and she was my family.

My chest ached so badly.

"Liar," she whispered, her small hand gripping the doorframe.

Eve and I shared a glance before looking back at her, where she stared up at us.

She swallowed audibly. "Uncle Luci is dead."

I recoiled. Did Cain tell her that?

"Alpha Lucas, grandpa took him away when he was eight. Uncle Luci never came out of the

black room." She stated.

My limbs froze, my mouth still, eyes bulging because she was not wrong. Lucien did not come out of the black room. Hades did.

Comment ¹³

View All >



Leave the first comment for this chapter.



Vote



Fandom



Send Gift

Book Badge



Swipe left to continue >