

My Villainess Ex Won't Leave Me Alone #Chapter 101 - 4.1 - Law Of The Jungle - Read My Villainess Ex Won't Leave Me Alone Chapter 101 - 4.1 - Law Of The Jungle

Chapter 101: 4.1 - Law Of The Jungle

"Did nobody teach you that leaving bruises on others is a sign of abuse?" Lucian asked.

"Do these things have to be taught to be understood?" Celine asked back.

Lucian wiggled his finger at his neck, "What if it leaves a bruise? Are you ready to take on that burden?"

"Yes?" She replied with a question, not knowing what was the right answer, "I mean no? I don't want to get violent but it's necessary for my safety."

Lucian shook his head in disbelief at her response, "Your safety? What is that supposed to mean?"

"You are taller, stronger and more durable than me. You have the natural upper hand, so I need to make sure that I have an upper hand too. Or else you will be able to do whatever you want with me and I'll be left defenseless," she explained.

"I would never raise a hand to you," Lucian exclaimed, shocked at her words, "You should know that."

"Yes, that's because I have a countermeasure to make sure you won't," she pointed out, untying the ribbon and taking it off, "Abusive women are less likely to suffer from violent behavior from their men..."

"...There are quite a few examples where the man is the victim. I took some inspiration from them. It's a sad reality, but a reality nonetheless. It is the law of the jungle."

She blew at his neck to cool the skin, breathing in the scent of his body at the same time, "No redness or bruising. We're good."

This was a world where men were the superior ones in terms of strength and size. But women had their own advantages. They had their own cards to play.

Celine was just playing the game that was set for her.

Add some womanly charms and seduction techniques to the mix and they were a force to be reckoned with. The men could be brought down to their knees, unable to resist the temptations.

Lucian sighed and turned away from her, "Do you even love me? You sound like a woman who only cares about herself..."

Celine leaned against his chest silently in response, no longer engaging with their usual banter and verbal fights, looking like a lost child in need of a hug.

'*She's doing it intentionally,*' he warned himself and tightened his embrace around her shoulders. She could be manipulative and petty like that.

Lucian felt like he was in a tight spot, not because he wanted her to move away, but because she was not moving closer.

Her hands were hanging on the sides of her body, not wrapping around his torso, not teasing him. She was not pulling on his shirt or playing with the fabric of his pants.

It felt weird.

'*At least she isn't crying,*' he comforted himself, his heart starting to ache, and his stomach starting to twist. The need to cheer her up and to make things right was overwhelming.

"Did I hurt your feelings?" Lucian asked. It was hard not to play along with her, and he was doing his best to resist the urge to do so.

"I'm a witch, I have no feelings to be hurt," she said sarcastically before switching the subject, "Don't you have a gift for me as well?"

"...uh-huh," Lucian nodded, "Do you remember how I had to massage your bum after the long journey in the carriage?"

She nodded.

He pulled a small wooden wheel out of his pocket, and handed it to her, "There you go. I plan to start the production of rubber tires in the following month, and you will be the first one to experience its benefits."

Celine unglued her cheek from his chest and looked at the wheel, taking it into her hand. She squeezed the rubber on the outer side of the wooden wheel, "What's inside of it?"

"Air," Lucian explained, "It helps to cushion the bumpy road and uneven surfaces."

Wheels used to be made out of solid wood, with the outer part of the wooden wheel wrapped in a thin sheet of metal to prolong its life span. It was not a perfect solution, but nobody really bothered to try and improve it.

Celine held the wheel in one hand, a smile tugging at the edges of her lips, "You came with it for my comfort?"

"Yes, I care about that," he answered, resting his chin on her head, "I don't like seeing you in pain, and it will help to reduce it."

"Really?" she asked.

"Really."

She played with the wheel, rolling it on the ground away from her and then back to her. She seemed to like it a lot.

She didn't say anything for a few minutes, and he didn't push the issue further. He just enjoyed the feeling of holding her in his arms.

The issue would have been brushed under the rug like usual, but this time, he was determined to not let any abuse on his person to go unnoticed, or else she would think it was okay to do it again.

He tried to pry his "medal" from her hands and to put it in his pocket, but she wasn't letting go of it, "Do I have to pay for it now?"

She noticed the change in tone, which didn't sound doting like it usually did, and handed it to him, "Burn it if you want. It's yours to do with as you please. I won't be offended."

"Burn it?" Lucian looked down at her, confused, "Why would I burn it? It's the first medal I've ever earned. It's important."

She didn't comment on it, just pressed herself even closer to him.

"I don't hate it, I swear," Lucian coaxed her, but she just buried her face in his shirt even more, refusing to look him in the eyes, "I definitely didn't think of it as an insult. My sense of humor must have gotten rusty, and I misunderstood it."

'Why am I explaining myself? Shouldn't she be apologizing for almost choking me to death?' he thought, not understanding why he felt guilty.

He tried to remove her hands from his shirt to get some breathing room, but she held onto him even tighter.

Chapter 102: 4.2 - Mission Tame The Wolf

Lucian eventually stood up with Celine attached to him like a moss on a tree. She weighed nothing to him, so it was not a big problem.

He carefully closed the window and then started walking back towards his office, with her still clinging to his shirt, dragging her behind him. Whether it was a tantrum or something else, he didn't know.

He laid her on his bed, placing her in the middle of the pillow fort. She didn't let go, so he ended up lying on top of her, squeezing her under his weight.

The guilt refused to leave him alone, and he didn't know what to do with it.

'She is just playing with my feelings now,' he thought, not letting her get her way.

He rolled off of her, taking advantage of his strength and quickly wrapped the sheets around her like a caterpillar.

"You don't choke your lover," he scolded her, "It's a bad habit. Don't do it ever again."

He should have scolded her the first time she did it too, but his head was always in a weird place around her.

He would find himself indulging her to the point that he let himself get bitten, scratched, smeared with mud and whatever else her imagination came up with.

It was the opposite of what the priests made him feel. Instead of being disgusted, he was having fun. She was a hilarious wolf, trying to eat him up, and he was the clueless lamb, letting her.

"This is not how loving couples act towards each other," he continued his scolding, "They respect each other and take care of one another. It's about support, and understanding. You don't hurt each other, and if you do, you make up for it and apologize. You can't just do what you want and then expect me to let it slide."

She outstretched her arms for an apology hug, probably thinking they were playing around again, making Lucian facepalm himself.

"I'm serious, Celine. I'm going to take a bath and when I come back, you'll have to apologize and swear to never choke me again," he said, and left for the bathroom.

"I can swear to help you wash your hair instead," she said, unwrapping herself from her cocoon and following after him.

"Did you even listen to a word I said?" he asked. She was already behind him, helping him set the fire to boil the water inside a kettle.

"If I kept listening to your words, your neck would be carrying my handprints to the grave right now," she said, overbearing and unapologetic as usual.

"You...you are really something else," he ruffled his hair in frustration.

"Of course, I'm the best," she laughed, contagiously, "Fret not, I will help you bathe like a maid to satiate your desire for power over me, and you will have to be satisfied with that much. Now, take off your clothes and let me see the damage I have caused you."

"..." Lucian's nostrils flared as he turned his back to her, not wanting to look at her face lest she saw his stupid grin, "You are not my maid. Don't talk like that."

Her tone, her words, her voice, all of it made him want to laugh, and he wasn't sure why. She was good at twisting his heart into knots, and he couldn't stop it from happening.

He loved it how she could turn even the most depressing thing around and make him feel better about it. Like getting bruises just to get tended to afterward, and see her cute face while she pretended to be a maid. A very domineering maid, who only listened to her own rules, and no one else's.

'Mission tame the wolf is failing...'

Lucian thought as he unbuttoned his shirt. They already saw each other naked, so he had no qualms about undressing in front of her, and instead focused on what to do to convince her to change her ways.

'She's not even bothered by her wrong doings, and is a little too good at manipulating me...consequences aren't working as they are supposed to...maybe I should try rewards instead...and lots of treats...'

He paused in his thoughts.

'Isn't that exactly what she wants me to do?'

He looked over his shoulder in horror, seeing her turn on the faucet to fill in the tub.

'I'm being manipulated! Oh, Gods above, she's turning the punishment into a reward. I'm being outplayed...I'm losing control...'

"Can I choose the essential oil?" she asked, looking through the collection on the shelf, sniffing each to see if there were any that she liked.

"Do I get a say in it?" he asked, half sarcastically, not sure if he was allowed to make decisions for himself when she was around.

She smiled, "Aren't you going to choose depending on what I would like to smell anyway?"

"..." Lucian grabbed her by the shoulders and pushed her out of the bathroom before she could drive him crazy. "I'm locking the doors."

"I will scream," she threatened him.

"Then do it, see what happens," he threatened her back, and locked the doors.

He let out a breath, and then another. His heart was beating too loudly, his body was too warm, and his chest was a mess of butterflies. Whether from stress, or excitement, or anger, or fear, or whatever it was.

He ended up choosing her favorite citrusy scent and added it to the water, then removed his clothes and sunk into the tub, closing his eyes.

He didn't have a chance to take a bath before meeting her because a certain someone didn't give him a chance to.

"My Lo~rd," she called out to him humorously, tapping her fingers against the door instead of knocking, "Your back is going to itch if I'm not there to wash it for you. I will make you feel really nice and clean, so good that you will want to keep me by your side fore~ver and e~ver."

Chapter 103: 4.3 - The Damage Is Already Done

"..." Lucian covered his ears and pretended to not hear her calling out to him.

'That's what happens when you don't set your boundaries from the beginning. If she won't act on my requests, then only actions are left.'

The fear of being given a cold shoulder was still in his heart, making him wary of his actions.

She had a high level of tolerance and understanding (not the gentle kind) for him, but he didn't want to find out the limit.

"Lucian...it has been an hour. Come out now," she called out from the other side of the door, her voice sounding slightly sad. "You are worrying me, are you okay?"

Lucian covered his ears harder, "I'm fine. Can't I have some privacy in the bathroom? You haven't left me alone for a second since I returned. I just want a moment of peace, without you bossing me around. Please."

She went quiet.

'She is going to leave me. She is going to leave me,' he panicked, hearing her footsteps move away, *'So what if she does? Stop thinking about yourself, Lucian, and think about her. Be a man.'*

'It's for her sake. If she starts thinking that she can't do wrong, what will she become? The world is not a forgiving place and it will not bend to her will, even if she wants it to.'

The thoughts in his head were spinning and spinning.

He wanted to run after her, apologize and make up, but he forced himself to sit inside the bathroom and not budge. To be stubborn and firm in his beliefs. That it was the right thing to do.

'So what if I make her a bit upset and she ignores me for a while? It won't be the end of the world. It's alright. My parents would always make up after an argument, and we will too.'

He stayed in the bathtub until his fingers started to look like raisins. Then he got out, dried his body, put on a new shirt and pants.

He carefully opened the door, finding Celine sitting on his pillow and holding her legs close to her chest.

She lifted her head when she heard the door open, her expression blank, no emotions visible on her face. She didn't look angry, or sad, or even annoyed. Just neutral.

Lucian was trying to kick the regret out of his mind, but it kept crawling back in.

He walked to the bed with a heavy heart, hearing a click as the bathroom door closed behind him, "..."

He stood there like an idiot for a moment, then went to his bed and laid down with his arms crossed under his head.

He hated it when his parents fought, and the atmosphere in the house was tense. He hated it even more that he had caused the same tension with Celine now. Intentionally even.

'It's just another hardship I have to overcome, isn't it? I have survived far worse than this. And so can she.'

He could have avoided it all if he had just indulged her, and let himself be happy with her. Instead of choosing the hard path.

He thought Celine would remain locked in the bathroom and give him a cold shoulder, but she came out after a while as if she just needed to use the toilet and wash her hands.

He closed his eyes, pretending to be asleep. He used his external eyes to watch her instead.

She laid down a bit further away from him. She gave him the space that he so much 'wanted', didn't talk to him, or bother him in any other way... just like he demanded of her.

'This feels different than mom's cold shoulder toward dad.'

Celine's dress was light with not many petticoats underneath. She was not wearing her usual corset either, just a simple chemise, which made her look soft. She somehow looked more gentle in his external eyes than his physical ones.

Unguarded might have been the better word for it. She hugged his pillow and gave it a goofy smile, looking like she was having the time of her life. She was not even bothered by him ignoring her like that, which was even worse.

Celine was definitely not like his mother at all, who was an expert at giving cold shoulder treatment. Lucian could only wish to have such thick skin like Celine had.

Somehow he felt that she just followed the: This is not how loving couples act towards each other. They respect each other and take care of one another, example he gave her.

It was like the image of a loving couple he had in his head and the one in hers were two completely different ones.

After she got enough rest on the bed, she went to search his cabinet for snacks, picking out a jar of dried apple chips.

She ate them one at a time as she sat on the chair behind his desk. She made no sound as she chewed, not wanting to disturb him, enjoying her quiet time.

Lucian found her pleasant expression infuriating. She looked happier eating snacks than being with him.

He had his eyes closed so she shouldn't be putting on a performance for him. She was genuinely enjoying her snacks, and not paying him any mind.

'She can't possibly be happy like this. She should feel hurt and dejected and... and... she should have an epiphany moment and come to the realization that she was in the wrong. That she was being disrespectful, and come apologize to me.'

He could wait. He was a patient man after all. He continued pretending he was sleeping, waiting for her to approach him.

But after she was done eating, she pulled out his notepad, took his pencil like it was her own, and started drawing something on the paper.

She was not planning to come to apologize. She was perfectly content just drawing stuff.

'This is ridiculous.' Lucian could almost see a tail swishing from side to side behind her back. He was about to jump up and confront her, but decided to stretch lazily instead.

Her gaze landed on his stomach that he slightly exposed when he stretched, and she gulped, swallowing the last piece of the snack she had in her mouth.

Her lips parted ever so slightly, her hand holding the pencil began to fan her face.

She eventually covered her eyes with her hands, but kept her fingers apart, still peeking through the gaps.

She then squeezed her legs together, shifting uncomfortably in his chair.

The pencil became her new chewing toy, which she nibbled on to calm herself down. She decided to focus on her drawing again, but not before glancing at him a few more times.

The sketching sounds resumed, her attention fully focused on the obscene artwork she was creating.

'Is she using me as a reference?' Lucian could only guess by the way she was blushing.

She definitely got a bit too inspired by his exposed stomach, and her imagination ran wild.

A silhouette of a naked woman and a man appeared on the paper, entangled in a rather inappropriate way. She was kneeling in between his legs, her head resting on his lower stomach.

'Don't react. Don't react...' he chanted to himself, closing his external eyes, trying to engage in a conversation with Voice to kill the mood and to keep the blood from rushing to his lower half which was yet to be drawn.

Voice, of course, abandoned him, not wanting to deal with his nonsense. He was on his own.

Celine took the drawing and compared it with him. She stretched her neck, nodded cutely in approval, then continued drawing.

She even used herself as a reference, twisting and bending her body to get the angles and shading right.

Lucian covered his face with his right arm; he was supposed to go through hardship that was to come from their silent war.

Not to be seduced to the point of his body betraying his own mind.

'I need to focus on her flaws, and not on her...her...'

Lucian's thoughts trailed off to her hand sliding across the paper, the way she held the pencil, the way her fingers curled around it, and the way her nails dug into it once in a while.

'Focus on her bad character...her arrogance, her selfishness, her... her... Ugh... I can't leave it for next time...I've delayed it too much already...'

His neck was aching, not because it got squeezed, but because it was parched.

It was craving her lips to touch it.

Her teeth biting into it.

Her tongue sliding against it.

'You can't love her more than you already do, idiot...' he tried to knock some sense into his head, but the damage was already done.

══════ Author's note ══════

Sorry for the long Chapter, didn't want to leave it incomplete.

As you could see, this arc will push their obsession to new heights. 😊

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'You can't love her more than you already do, idiot...' he tried to knock some sense into his head, but the damage was already done.

He was good at fooling himself, at telling himself that things weren't the way he thought they were. But that didn't mean he was not aware of the truth.

'Why is she not pouncing on me?'

'No, I'm not being needy.'

'I'm just... just...trying to understand what's happening.'

She outstretched her hand in his direction, making a grabby motion with her fingers. She entertained herself by acting all silly, not realizing Lucian was dying inside. Dying to touch her, to kiss her, to cuddle her to death!

She was clearly horny and had her own fantasy going on, yet she refused to make a move.

'Is she waiting for me to make a move?'

'Is this why she is being so slow? She wants me to pounce on her?'

'But I'm not a pouncer, I'm a catcher,' he insisted.

Lucian was the one who would wait for the right moment, for the perfect opportunity to present itself. And when it happened, he would strike and capture the prize.

"Mm," Lucian mumbled sleepily. Maybe a small bait would do. Just a small bait to see if she would grab it, "Celine..."

Her ears twitched at the sound of her name, stopping what she was doing.

Lucian's body's reaction would make one guess what dirty dreams he had. He shifted in the bed to hide his 'problem' from her, covering his face with his arm and pretending he was still sleeping.

Killing his mood with depressing thoughts did put his body under control, but he didn't like the price he had to pay for it. So he let it be, to see where it would take him.

She grinned from ear to ear, giggling like a kid who was given candy. The head of the pencil was covered in teeth marks, which she started to bite into again.

He had asked her why she loved to bite him so much, and she would say how she loved him so much that she wanted to gobble him up.

The load in her chest couldn't be relieved by any other way. She had to vent it out in small bits that bordered on violence.

Lucian didn't understand what she was talking about. He never had a need to pull her hair until she hissed in pain, suck her skin until it bruised, or scratch her back until it bled. He just wanted to love and cherish her, and that was it.

She didn't enjoy seeing him in pain, nor did she want to cause him pain, so he didn't know where this sadistic side of her came from.

Could it really be because she was overwhelmed by her love for him?

Celine tiptoed closer, lowering the notepad to peek at his face, making sure that his eyes were still closed. Her pink cheeks were puffed up and she looked as if she was about to explode from holding back her urges.

A small part of Lucian felt like he should be scared for his safety, and the other part of him was cheering her on.

'I'm sorry dad, mom...' Lucian apologized in his mind, *'Please don't look down on me from the heavens above.'*

Celine wasn't a girl he would have ever introduced to his parents. They wouldn't understand why he was drawn to her and would definitely doubt his motives.

They always did, since he remembered himself. No matter how much he proved them that he was a good boy, they would still worry that he would do something terrible one day.

'Celine is a great actress. I wonder if she would be able to trick them into believing she is an angel...'

She would probably bully them to death, or at least make their hair go white before their time, or even worse, give them both a heart attack.

He was exaggerating with his thoughts, he knew that. Celine could be generous with her pampering and sweet words when she wanted.

They would probably behave like such a loving couple before his parents that they would puke their jealousy at them. That would be more like it. He ate vinegar every time he saw his parents together, and he would return the favor.

'Now that I got my morals straightened out...' Lucian thought, *'I feel like I'm ready to face her again.'*

Celine's values were corrupted and it was his duty to correct them like his parents did with him. Though he was doing such a half assed job at it, he might as well be encouraging them.

══ Author's note ══

Lucian didn't get fully influenced by Voice's ideology thanks to his parents balancing it out.

Do you feel how he is unconsciously embarrassing the 'an eye for an eye' philosophy in the prologue?

Boy even wants to get back at his dead parents for making him feel jealous (jokingly, of course), lol.

He also thinks his parent's teaching is the 'right' way, and the reason why he became a 'good' man. At this point, he is just asking for trouble with Celine. □



Chapter 105: 4.5 - A New Comfort Thing

Lucian slowly opened one of his eyes like he was just waking up, and when he saw her face, he opened both, blinking a few times.

There was a shift in her demeanour. Her posture changed from a relaxed one to a more defensive one. She covered her blush with his notebook, hiding everything but her eyes.

Lucian looked at her with his tired gaze, which she took as a sign of him not wanting to deal with her. She covered her face completely and pretended to be a statue.

"..."

"...?"

"That's my notebook. What are you doing with it?" he asked, voice still rough from 'sleep'. He wanted to sound cold and distant, to prove his point that he still did not move on from her earlier behavior (strangulation).

She peeked at him from the side, her gaze going up and down his body, "Sketching the lewd dream you had, of course."

'This girl! I swear...'

She was so quick to react and so eager to get away with everything.

He couldn't afford to go easy on her, not even a bit, or she would take advantage of it. "I'm not in the mood to play. Give it here."

She blinked curiously and immediately handed it to him, not questioning him.

"I'm begging for forgiveness in there," she said as Lucian opened the notepad, acting like his tour guide, "On my knees, even. Look at that devotion, and dedication, and admiration. I know you wouldn't believe me if I said all that out loud, but if I were to act on it...wouldn't it be a different story?"

Putting aside the lewd part of the drawing, she had drawn herself in a very submissive manner. It would be hard to not have his heart squeezed by the sight of her like that.

"I just wanted you to promise me not to choke me again, not to beg for forgiveness like that. I was talking about a simple apology that a child could make," he said, trying to explain to her.

"But..." She pinched her pointer and thumb finger together in an attempt to negotiate, "Only a little squeeze? Not enough to hurt, but enough for you to know who's in charge?"

"...in charge of what?"

"Your body," she answered without a trace of shame in her face, "It needs to learn to obey my will instead of its own. I can't have it misbehave on me. Your mouth is loose enough as it is."

"..." Lucian closed the notepad with a thud.

He prayed to the gods that she wasn't some sort of a devil, sent to test his purity, patience and sanity, because he was sure as hell failing at it.

So this was how his parents felt when they were dealing with him...so powerless.

They had the authority; they were the one who set the rules, yet they couldn't enforce them because of his tricks. He would always find a loophole, just like Celine was doing now.

"This is definitely not my dream," he pointed out as he opened the notebook again, his words falling on deaf ears, "My dreams are pure as the day I was born. There's nothing lewd in them."

"Sure, they are," Celine nodded, agreeing with him, "Then how do you explain all the moaning and groaning I could hear coming from you while you slept?"

She exaggeratedly described how he was purring and rubbing himself against the sheet like a cat in heat, how his voice was full of lust and how he couldn't get enough of the dream.

"..." Lucian threw the notebook aside, pulled her onto the bed and began to tickle her.

"Ahahaha!" She laughed quietly, her hands flapping like a bird, "Sta-stahap!"

"Trying to turn me into a pervert, hm?" Lucian said, tickling her harder.

"Nohohoho!" She covered her mouth to prevent herself from laughing too loudly, but couldn't stop her body from wiggling around.

Lucian continued to tickle her for a couple of more seconds until he was satisfied and stopped, letting her catch her breath.

See? She didn't kick around or punch him when he did these kinds of things to her.

She just accepted them and didn't cause him any bodily harm in return.

Only when he did things like scooping her in his arms or pulling her into an embrace would she attack him.

Her legs would wrap around his waist, and her arms would squeeze him. She would twist her fingers around his skin, holding onto him so hard that her nails would leave an indent on his skin.

"..." Lucian blew away her hair from his mouth that got stuck when she pounced on him and began to pat her back to calm her down, "Are you okay?"

"...mhm..." she murmured, "I'm just... so happy."

She scratched his back through the shirt like she didn't know what to do with herself. She ruffled his hair, repeatedly, but none of that seemed to be enough to satisfy her.

"I'm going crazy," she laughed softly, biting his shirt instead of his skin, and then hugged him tighter. It felt like she was trying to break his rib cage with her bare hands, "I can't get enough of you."

"..." Lucian's heart skipped a beat, but he quickly caught himself before he could say something stupid, "Yeah, I'm pretty lovable."

"Mm." She didn't disagree and bit on his shirt some more, not saying anything, just breathing in his scent.

"Are you getting a replacement for me already?" Lucian asked, not liking how she was taking it out on his poor shirt either.

She gave him a stink eye as if it wasn't him complaining about her leaving marks on his body. 'Make up your mind,' her expression said with his shirt still in her mouth.

She looked like she was struggling inside, but it could be all an act to make him fall into her trap.

"I feel so guilty when you are acting like you are in pain," Lucian said.

"...you should," Celine muttered as if knowing he didn't trust her and was being quite sarcastic about it, "...I'm trying to make you regret ever denying me. I'm suffering the consequences and so should you."

"..." Lucian's heart was racing. Who said communication was important in a relationship? It just made everything worse, and his chest more painful.

He has never met someone who could twist and turn a sentence in her favor and make it sound so reasonable to his ears.

His right hand went up her back and to her neck. Maybe if he made her feel the same way, she would understand what she was putting him through.

No matter how similar they were, there was one thing that was completely different. He ended up caressing her neck instead of squeezing it.

His hand that was on her neck snaked around to cover her mouth, saving his shirt from further abuse.

His other hand was unbuttoning his shirt to save it from her clutches, and when he was done, he threw it to the corner of the bed.

She looked up at him in protest, reaching out for her new comfort thing.

"Aren't you hot?" he asked, kicking his shirt off the bed like he had a grudge with it.

"I'm burning," she said in anticipation as he started to remove her dress, sliding it off her shoulders.

She helped him by pushing it off of her hips, leaving herself with only her undergarments on.

Lucian's hands traveled under her arms and threw her over his shoulder before jumping off the bed, "Then let's take a bath to cool off."

"..."

He began to walk towards the bathroom, unbuttoning his pants and removing them on the way.

Celine hit his back with her fist, "Are you even a man? Where did your balls go? We are supposed to make babies, not play in water like kids!"

"What other way can I prove that my body won't misbehave on you?" Lucian asked.

Chapter 106: 4.6 - [NSFW 17+] Both Wants The Same Thing

══ Author's note ══

Lots of erotic teasing and seduction, where they mess around with each other's self control. You can skip this Chapter (only the self control is important for the plot).



"If even you can't seduce me, how could a random woman? Do you think so low of me to think that I would cheat on you just because I could?" he asked, stepping inside the tub.

"Uggh," Celine whined, her legs trying to climb up Lucian's torso to avoid the water, "Why would you do this to me? Why do you hate me?"

"You are the one who started talking about my balls. Now they are in control," he said, submerging both of them in the water.

"..." Celine shuddered from the cold and immediately clung to him to warm herself. It seemed like she would rather suffer with him than let go and run away from the tub.

Lucian knew how to use her words against her as well. It was a small, petty payback, but it felt good to have an upper hand over her once in a while.

"What a gentleman you are," she scowled, shivering in his arms, "You really know how to treat a lady. So kind. So gentle. So thoughtful. So selfless. So matu~re."

Lucian poured some water over her head with his hand, wetting her hair. He let her rant to her heart's content, not bothered by her words.

When she didn't get the reaction she wanted, she moved her arms in between their bodies, warming her hands up with his skin. Her fingers found his nipples and flicked them in annoyance. It was not a playful flick, but a spiteful one, "Kiss me already."

"For acting spiteful toward me?" he asked, flicking her nipples in return.

They were hard and standing up. She breathed in a sharp breath, making him wonder if she liked it.

He rubbed them in between his thumb and pointer, making her squirm on his lap and pressing her forehead against his neck. She didn't tell him to stop, nor did she push his hands away.

"Say, please, kiss me, Lucian, my dearest," he said, cupping one of her breasts in his hand, massaging it, more on a firm side, not really being gentle with it.

She guided his other hand to her free breast, not letting it hang, and continued to breathe heavily on his skin, warming him up, "You want to kiss too, don't act like you don't."

"Wanting to do it and actually doing it are two different things. This is just proof that I have control over myself," he said.

"What about my needs?" She moved her right hand below his belly button and pressed her fingers against his skin, sliding her hand downwards, stopping just shy of his manhood before going back up again.

Lucian breathed in deeply. He wanted her to move her hand further down, but he wanted to push her over the edge even more. He didn't want to beg her either.

She tilted her head up, her lips pressing against his jawline, testing his resolve to not give in to her advances, "Do you plan to leave your woman high and dry?"

"No, of course not. I'm just proving a point."

"You are so infuriating!" She cupped his cheeks and pulled him closer, kissing him herself.

He responded in kind and kissed her back eagerly. She tasted like apples, and he couldn't help but bite her lip, wanting more of that sweetness.

She gasped as his teeth grazed her lip, and her hands released his cheeks, traveling to the back of his head, pressing his lips harder against her own.

The cold water didn't help much in cooling their bodies down, not with the way their lips were moving against one another's, their tongues intertwining.

They didn't get out of breath, finding a way to breathe through their noses. They would only pause when their lips parted from a kiss and pressed back together again. It was hard to tell where one kiss ended and another began.

They both wanted the same thing, but doing such things before marriage was out of the question.

Celine valued her virtue more than she was letting on. Her mind's virginity has already been given to him. Her body's virginity was the last bargaining chip she had, and she refused to give it away until he married her.

It didn't mean she would stop her seduction attempts, or he, his.

"What if I lose control over my body and it accidentally slips inside of you?" he asked against her lips.

His dirty words did their job at arousing her even more. Her breathing became heavier, and her hips moved faster.

She was imagining it all in her head, he could tell by the way she rubbed herself against him. His own breath quickened in response, feeling himself grow harder underneath her.

"Do you think I would be able to pull out in time before it gets too dangerous?" he continued, licking her lips.

It was hard to tell what was more filthy, her drawings or his words.

"You look like you would want that to happen," he whispered in her ear, "Do you want to feel me inside of you?"

The heat must have gotten to her, making her feel light-headed, "Mm... I do..." she admitted, "I want to feel you inside of me... so much..."

They felt the lust throwing away their inhibitions, making them more honest with their desires. More daring. More willing to cross the line. To go all the way.

"Mmm..." Celine's voice was like honey, sweet and sticky. Her tongue slipped out of his mouth and licked his lips, "It's poking me. It must be asking for a kiss."

"..." Lucian felt her lift herself off his lap and move her skirt away. He was rooted to the spot, unable to move. He was too focused on her every move, every little detail.

She wrapped her fingers around him firmly and moved her hips, rubbing her entrance against the tip. She giggled and bit her lip, enjoying the sensation of it against her sensitive skin, "It wants to go in..."

"You...don't say..." he managed to say, his voice hoarse.

His tip kissed her little pearl and he felt it throb, demanding more. It wanted to go deeper, to plunge itself into her warmth.

She laughed again, this time more nervously, "Alright, alright. Just a little bit more, okay? Just a small peck. No more."

"...Celine..." he called out to her, his voice strained. He was holding his breath, not sure what he would do if he let it out.

Chapter 107: 4.7 - Blockhead of a Donkey

Celine's smile was innocent as she tucked little general back inside Lucian's underwear, "It seems like your body won't betray you around other women. May your freedom be returned to you."

Lucian pouted, his lips puckered up, looking quite miserable. Even her soft lips kissing the tip of his nose didn't help.

"What? I trust you enough to roam from place to place without me, don't I?" She asked, probably thinking that was the cause of his mood change.

Lucian let out an exasperated sigh, "I realized you don't want me enough to lose control over yourself for me."

"Are... you... serious?!" She shook his shoulder in disbelief, making his head bob up and down, "You blockhead of a donkey. One moment you want me to be all docile and obedient, the other you want me to be all aggressive and dominant. I can't keep up with all these contradictions. What do you even want?"

She sounded quite helpless in that moment, not understanding what he was expecting of her. It wasn't easy to please him and his whims.

"I'm confused myself," Lucian admitted, resting his head on her shoulder, "Loving right or loving wrong...I know what's better, but that doesn't mean I want it more..."

"Oh," Celine nodded in understanding, "That's why you got jealous of your own shirt?"

"What...? Who? Me? No," he denied, holding her head in place, "It was more than that," he played along, pretending it was all part of his plan to act jealous of a lifeless piece of cloth.

She tried to pry his hands from her so she could see his face, but he held the back of her head against his shoulder so she couldn't see him.

She stopped struggling and hugged him back, patting his head, "Able to ignore all the temptations the world offers, and get all jealous over your own clothes. What are you trying to tell me by showing me this side of you?"

Lucian's face turned redder and redder, feeling a bit embarrassed. He only acted childish in his head. It wasn't supposed to come to the surface. *'Her tantrum must have rubbed off on me and corrupted my actions. Yes, it's all her fault.'*

"Achoo!" Celine sneezed, frowning, "Weird. Is someone badmouthing me again?"

Startled, Lucian quickly got out of the tub to grab a towel to wrap her in, "Let's get out before you catch a cold."

He slipped his hands under the towel to remove her undergarments, not wanting to get all worked up from seeing her completely naked.

"I don't think it's a cold," Celine scrunched her nose.

"..." He dried her hair and then carried her to the bed, grabbing a clean shirt on the way. He helped her put it on before laying her down on the covers.

He then busied himself with making a cup of tea for her while she was warming herself up under the sheets.

He then picked up the clothes scattered on the floor and hung their wet undergarments in the bathroom.

Leaving his chest bare, he wore his pants and sat down beside her, blowing at her tea to cool it down before handing it to her.

She accepted it, sipping at it quietly, giving him a suspicious look. His shirt hung on her body loosely, so loose that the collar slid off her shoulders, leaving them exposed.

"..." He wrapped the covers around her tighter, to prevent it from slipping any further. "Doing it in the bathtub filled with cold water is not the best setting for our first time, is it?"

"It's not bad, still sounds better than a horse's back."

"...who does it in such places? Poor horse," Lucian commented, not wanting his first time to be on top of an animal and crossed out that option as well.

"Right? People actually do it. It's like they are inviting animals to join in on their fun," she complained about the latest trend where courtesans riding horses would show up at the noble gatherings, especially hunting parties.

Lucian expressed shock at her words, "To think that horses are being used in such ways... What? Why are you looking at me like that?"

"There will be a hunting competition in two weeks. An opening event for the grand knight tournament. Let's go on a date together," she said, a glint in her eye, "We will spook the horses together. It will be so much fun to watch them run wild and free."

'So that's why so many courtesans complained about their horses being spooked lately.' Lucian had Jax invest in his favorite brothel to improve the living conditions there, and make sure the girls had access to higher paying customers.

It required education and proper grooming, and of course, new dresses and fancy horses.

"Isn't grand knight tournament going to be hosted next year?" Lucian asked.

The sight of Celine wrapped up like a dumpling still stirred hunger in him, so he went to pick up the jar of dried apple chips that she was eating earlier in hope it would help.

"They want to hold an opening ceremony to stir up people's spirits...Speaking about courtesans, one of Glory's men bought a brothel in the city as an investment." She squinted her eyes at him as he munched on the chips innocently, "I don't think you have anything to do with it, do you?"

"My Vices are free to do what they want with their earnings, I don't interfere with their lives," Lucian answered, "Passive income would allow them to retire early and spend the rest of their days living in luxury. Why should I stop them?"

Celine squinted even harder at him, making him smile at her cutely, "You are allowing your men to profit from selling other people's bodies. How noble of you."

"They are not selling bodies, but a fantasy," Lucian defended Jax's choice of investment, "It is just like actors and singers, using their charm and beauty to make a living."

"Right." She opened her mouth for him to feed her a chip, "And what would your parents say if they found out that their only son is involved with such a business?"

"That I'm helping the poor and homeless women who have nothing else to sell to survive but their own bodies?" Lucian answered, not seeing the problem.

He fed her his unfinished chip, "If you want to blame someone, blame the church for rejecting them as nuns or priestesses. Blame the people who made them widows, sold them to pay off debts, or abandoned them on the streets. Blame the world that didn't give them a choice. At least now, they have a chance to change their lives."

She let out a soft sigh, chewing and swallowing the chip before speaking again, "I'm not blaming you. I might end up in one of these places one day, so make sure to invest in some yourself. I will make sure to return your investments tenfold."

"What...?" Lucian looked at her in confusion, "What are you talking about?"

"You don't want to marry me because of our class difference, so would becoming the lowest class solve it for you?" she asked quietly, "Or would it be too low?"

Her lips parted for another chip, but he pulled back, holding the chip out of her reach, "Didn't you want me to become your husband and take over the Rochefort house as the new head so your brother could lead a carefree life?"

"Edmund is no longer interested in leading a carefree life, so the plan is not viable anymore," she replied.

"Hm?" Lucian was surprised at this, "What caused the change of heart?"

"I'm not sure, but he suddenly wanted access to my connections and to get involved in politics," she said, not understanding the change, "Maybe he finally realized that he needs to grow up and be a man and stop burdening his sister all the time."

Chapter 108: 4.8 - High-class Courtesan

Celine helped Lucian fluff the pillows, making the bed look untouched as if they hadn't used it earlier.

She had to return to her place before anyone could notice she was gone. Having traces of women in his place wouldn't ruin his reputation if anyone were to find out. Her dark hair, however, could, so they took the utmost care in cleaning everything properly.

Once alone, Lucien tried to return to his working mode.

'I'm now stronger than most people in the kingdom. If I don't squeeze every tiny little benefit out of my new rank, I'm going to lose my mind.'

Spending that much money on something that would not bring any profit back left him feeling a bit empty, despite his physical gains.

Regular town and city guards were mostly at copper knight level, and some of them were even at the iron level. Lucian has surpassed those two levels, and altogether, it cost him 2600 large gold coins to cross to the bronze level.

His pockets were now so empty, that a gust of wind could make them whistle (most of his savings were gone, not his wealth).

He stared at his desk, where a pile of letters stared back at him. Most were marriage proposals and a few invitations to attend different social events and gatherings.

A bronze knight wouldn't make them go out of their way to marry off their noble daughters to him. His feat was not as great as the price he paid to get it.

At the end of the day, it still came down to money. He would gain more power by getting richer than stronger at this point.

'Two more ranks until I reach Edmund's level...' he thought.

Lucian's motivation to get stronger stemmed mostly from his desire to be able to hold his own against Edmund.

That young heir was giving Celine lots of headaches lately, with how he was going against her every step of the way.

Celine spoiled and cleaned after Edmund too much in Lucian's eyes, and when he pointed that out, she pointed back to him and said Edmund used to be obedient before he came along and ruined her little brother (Edmund is older).

"Sir, you have a visitor," a store's employee interrupted his thoughts, knocking on the door, "Lady Lily is here."

Lucian acted deaf to the last part and continued looking through the proposals.

Whoever was able to persuade his employees to let her in despite his orders, was probably even better than he was at persuading people to do his bidding, and that was not something he was looking forward to dealing with.

He had been stumbling onto this high class courtesan more and more often.

Sometimes Lady Lily would act surprised and other times she would pretend she was just taking a walk and happened to pass by him by chance. It was like fate kept pushing them together.

Celine at least didn't act like it was the God's will but hers, which made the God listen to her demands and interfere with Lucian's attempts at avoiding her.

He didn't remember Celine ever using subtle seduction tactics on him. She was short on time, and in case he was a dense blockhead who didn't understand her advances, she wanted to make sure her message came across clearly.

Lady Lily went the mysterious aura route that said: 'There's more to me than meets the eye'. But that's not the only thing that made her so desirable.

She was considered to be the number one beauty in the capital.

Lady Lily had men falling in love with her at first sight. The only thing that kept them in check was her price tag.

Lucian shuffled through the letters, disagreeing with the public's beauty standards.

Celine used make up to blend in, while Lady Lily did it to look the best she could. She had to, for her profession depended on it. Celine could afford to look ugly, and she would still have everything at the end of the day.

Why give people an eye feast when she already had the upper hand over them?

Lucian would have worn a mask if he could hide his appearance. Keeping a certain expression on his face all the time was tiring.

But alas, his looks were one of the things that made him seem trustworthy, so he had to endure the strain on his facial muscles.

"Sir...?" the employee asked with another knock.

"Is he alright?" A soft, feminine voice asked from the other side of the door, "Perhaps he needs help?"

"He must be busy, my lady," the employee insisted, "Please, wait in the guest room. Sir Arclight doesn't like being disturbed while working."

"I will leave as soon as I make sure he is okay. Are you not worried that he might have passed out from exhaustion in there?" Lady Lily asked.

"He does this all the time. Your worries are misplaced, Lady Lily. We have a schedule that has to be followed. We don't want him to think we can't follow simple instructions."

Lady Lily didn't argue back, "You are right. My apologies. I didn't realize how stressful it must be to meet so many people, day after day..."

Lucian used his third eye to observe her tactics and learn something useful to pass on to Jax's courtesans to increase their earnings.

Lady Lily had the right amount of sympathy in her voice, and it sounded quite convincing.

Her light purple hair was tied into a neat bun at the back of her neck, and her eyes were a shade darker than her hair. Her skin was delicate, like it was meant to be admired, not touched.

She was wearing a laced dress that showed just the right amount of curves to tease the imagination. Her hands were covered by long, silk gloves, and her hat was adorned with a small veil.

Lucian felt his little general finally calming down at the sight. It stopped poking at his pants. Who knew that all it needed was a top beauty to scare it back to sleep? Not a cold bath that only seemed to rile it up more.

Just the thought of what Celine did to him under the cold water caused Lucian to get distracted again.

'This won't do. I need a change of scenery,' Lucian gathered all the letters and work-related documents, and put them inside his briefcase, then opened the door to slip out of the office, taking a chance while Lady Lily was being distracted.

'She has probably figured out that a business proposal would help her get closer to me instead of a fleeting smile here and there.'

Lucian was not going to make it easier for her just because she was a woman, no matter how beautiful. That wouldn't be fair towards other businessmen, would it?

He entered his carriage and closed the curtain, "To the Red String Brothel."

Chapter 109: 4.9 - The Red String Brothel

The red light district didn't look much different from any other street in the city.

Upon closer inspection, Lucian noticed some signs that were not seen elsewhere.

A few women were leaning against the walls, smoking and talking to each other. Some noticed his carriage and waved to it. Some of them were already on the job, leading men by their hands and disappearing into the buildings.

The Red String brothel was a four storey building, with a thick red rope tied to its entrance.

With a cane in one hand and a briefcase in another, Lucian stood in front of the brothel's gates. It had a sign above it that said:

The Red String will lead you to your destined lover. Come, find the one whose heart matches yours, and make a memory that will last a lifetime.

The guard at the entrance was not used to early visitors, and was surprised to see a man at this time. He let Lucian pass, though, without asking any questions.

A receptionist greeted Lucian as he walked past the entrance.

"I'm looking for Jax. Can you please inform him that Lucian Arclight has arrived to visit him?" he asked politely.

She seemed to recognize him and immediately invited Lucian inside the lobby, offering to serve him tea.

On the way, Lucian took in the sight of the interior, which had been renovated just recently.

The furniture was made of fine, dark wood, and the curtains were crimson red, made of velvet. There were white statues and vases with green plants. The air smelled like incense, which was used to mask the smell of alcohol.

"...He is here! He is finally here!"

Whispers came from all around Lucian, and it didn't take long before he was surrounded by thirteen young women, wearing their best smiles and their finest clothes.

They were wondering if he would take them to bed, and were trying their hardest to impress him.

Some were giggling, and asking him to play with them.

Some were more reserved and were content with only watching him like he was a piece of fine art.

Some acted disinterested and cold, trying to pique his curiosity.

Some were curious, but too shy to approach him themselves.

Some of the courtesans even tried to touch his hand and arm.

Lucian quickly raised his hand up in a polite refusal.

"My dear brother, what a surprise to see you here!" Jax ran down the stairs, still putting on his robe.

'*Brother?*' Lucian raised a brow in question, but didn't correct him.

Jax pushed the courtesans aside, acting like the most important man in the brothel. He was the owner after all, so it was not far from the truth.

"Come, come," Jax said, leading Lucian towards the stairs and to the fourth floor where his private room was, "Sorry about the commotion, the ladies can get a little wild when they see something shiny. Don't take it the wrong way, brother."

"I understand, it's perfectly fine," Lucian nodded, following after him.

Once inside the room, Jax closed the door behind them and quickly tidied the room, throwing clothes, books, and other items that were laying around into a corner of the room.

"Please, make yourself comfortable, Boss," Jax said, pulling out his office chair and placing a napkin on top of it. "A clean spot just for you."

"Brother, was it?" Lucian asked as he sat down, making Jax laugh nervously.

"I'm sorry, it's just an act I had to put up," Jax apologized, "I'm not trying to be arrogant or anything, it's just that if I were to call you Boss in front of the girls, my authority would plummet."

"No, I like the title. Call me brother in public more often," Lucian said, liking the sound of it.

He thought about how he became a center of attention lately and decided to adapt as well, "The more people realize that Glory's success is not a result of a single man, the better. In private though, I would prefer if you still called me Boss. You can relay this order to the rest of the Vices as well."

Jax nodded slowly, contacting the rest of the Vices through the link tattoo, "Yes, boss wants to change the hierarchy of the organization on the outside, again, and make the Vices look more equal in power to the Boss. Why?" He looked at Lucian in question.

"It's safer to hide behind the Vices and let them take the blows," Lucian said, humored by Jax's face.

"..." Jax's eyes went blank as if he was a puppet without strings, "Yep, that's the kind of man boss is. I don't know what I expected."

"You get to enjoy the prestige of being one of the Vices, and you get to share the risk with the other Vices. I think it's fair," Lucian explained the bright side of the matter.

Jax knew that he didn't have much choice in the matter, so he didn't complain and just went with it, "Boss is catching too much attention to himself, and wants to hide behind our asses. Why do you sound so happy?" he asked Goblin, "This isn't a joke. We might end up getting assassinated in his place!"

Lucian chuckled, flicking the dust off Jax's armrest, "All the more reason for you to work harder on your self-defense. Motivation is key."

Jax's lips twitched upwards, showing his teeth. He was forcing himself to smile, but his face looked rather constipated as he took the order more seriously, his tone changing to a more formal one, "Yes, we will put our life on the line to protect the organization. Glory till the end."

Jax waited until Fishbone passed the message to his wife, who passed it to Mumbai and Cansan, making sure everyone understood the assignment.

They continued to discuss work for another hour and a half before ending the meeting.

"How are the students doing? Any good candidates for future recruits?" Lucian asked, setting his cane aside.

"Average at best, no one that can be entrusted with a big project," Jax shook his head, "The moment they come into contact with money, you can bet they'll start stealing."

"Send me one with the best hand writing to be my personal scribe," Lucian said, "I'm in need of someone to help me write letters."

"Sure thing, boss," Jax didn't protest, used to Lucian's hiring process.

People thought taking a few coins here and there wouldn't be noticeable, not realizing that Lucian had eyes everywhere.

Bookkeeping fraud was a common way people tried to steal money. Some would overcharge the client and pocket the extra cash. Others would fabricate expenses that didn't exist. Some would claim they were robbed, and that the money got stolen.

There were always at least one accountant and one counter accountant to prevent money from going missing. To stop them from colluding together, they were switched around every so often.

Lucian tried to save money by cutting on the number of employees, and used to think he could run his business on honesty.

He changed his opinion fast. If he didn't, it would only be a matter of time before he was robbed blind.

Chapter 110: 4.10 - A New Theme

Jax unlocked a chest near the desk to grab a ledger and handed it to Lucian. "Here are the monthly reports for the past month, as well as the weekly ones."

Lucian opened the ledger, flipping one page after another. He knew most of the prices by heart, and he could tell at first glance if the numbers were off. Quantities could also be estimated and thus checked.

Everything was in order, except for the brothel, which wasn't in a profitable state.

"There was not a single girl at the entrance to greet the guests," Lucian said.

"The wind was too strong, and the dust was getting everywhere. The girls were exhausted and couldn't stand for too long," Jax said.

Lucian gave him a side glance and continued to look through the report.

"The tea was watered down to lower the cost," Lucian said, and Jax started to explain himself again.

"They can't tell the difference, Boss. They are so drunk by the time the tea comes that—"

"I wasn't drunk when I tasted it, nor were the sober patrons," Lucian said, "You lowered the quality and your reputation at the same time. Are you sure you aren't the one stealing?"

"..." Jax lowered his gaze.

"My funds are limited," Lucian said, "If you can't double the brothel's profits by the end of the year, I will sell it off. Pass on the message to your girls to start looking for other jobs or do better if they want to keep this one."

"Boss, that's too harsh," Jax tried to plead, "How am I supposed to do that?"

"If you can't be innovative, copy others. If you can't copy them, learn from them, and if you can't learn, then get others who are more experienced to take over."

"I know that already, but it's easier said than done..." Jax took back the ledger, closed the chest, and put the key in his pocket, "Do you think I should appoint someone else to manage the brothel for me?"

"Someone who can handle both men and women better than you can, yes," Lucian answered, "Preferably a mother figure, a queen, if you will. Someone who can welcome a guest like her own son and give a girl a scolding if needed."

Jax wasn't always present and when he was, he would be very protective of his girls. That was one of the reasons why the brothel was doing poorly. He fought with the customers the Jax way, which caused more trouble than it was worth.

Jax needed someone to hold him back and deal with the customers in his stead. Even at the cost of having to split his share of the profit.

Lucian had no experience with other brothels, but if he were to compete with Lady Lily's ways, he would go the opposite direction.

Jax's courtesans couldn't compete with the quality of Lady Lily's services nor her popularity. They could capitalize on innocence, purity and the forbidden aspect instead.

The girls had lots of training and studies to go through, and couldn't keep up with Lucian's initial idea of luring richer patrons through their newly learned etiquette and horse riding.

Courtesans like Lady Lily would easily overthrow them at their own game. What Lady Lily couldn't risk was changing her whole style and brand without losing her regulars and having to fight for a new customer base from scratch.

"I will appoint Camilla," Jax said, taking some inspiration from the theme Lucian proposed.

"Good. I'll be borrowing your office for a while."

"...what happened to your office?" Jax asked.

"It's mine. What about it?" Lucian asked.

"You could just use that instead," Jax said.

"I could," Lucian agreed, opening his briefcase, "But I don't want to."

"..." Jax's eye twitched as he cleaned his desk to make space for his boss, and then left the office.

Lucian took his work out from the briefcase. There were no distractions that reminded him of Celine rolling in his bed, sitting in his chair, playing with him, and other activities that he was trying to avoid thinking about.

Soon, two young men came to help Lucian with his work.

They were around eighteen years old, and were afraid to return home and inform their parents that they failed their exams, so they wanted to earn some money on the side first.

Ulrick and Klaus were both from a family of farmers. They already failed the knight examination in their childhood. If they graduated as scholars, they could get hired by nobles as their assistants or accountants. They could even teach their children or work for a big business. But they failed those tests as well, ending up here.

They didn't know that Lucian knew about how they faked the books to make the numbers look good.

Lucian would have fired them for stealing money if he didn't find their calligraphy skills useful. They could copy the handwriting of other people after practicing a bit. It was a rare skill that couldn't be ignored.

The store's employees were usually enough to take care of Lucian's basic necessities such as his meals, laundry, shopping, accounting and other mundane things, not the people he was dealing with.

Klaus and Ulrick helped Lucian sort the letters and prepare the gifts and make a note of all the important dates such as birthdays and anniversaries. They also researched the senders of the letters, their likes, and dislikes and wrote a small summary of the information for him.

They would have to work closely with Jax's information network from now on. Be able to demand Jax to gather the information for them, and not take no for an answer.

Jax on the other hand would have to make sure they didn't sell that information to outsiders. If they did, he would have to deal with them in the Jax way, with his fist.

'Should I tell Jax to put them in charge of bookkeeping once in a while?' Lucian thought, 'The more evidence there is, the easier it will be to convict them if they ever decide to use the information they gather against me. Mmm, it's too early to think about that. Let's see how they handle the job I gave them first.'

The hair on Klaus' and Ulrick' necks rose, feeling a chill. They lifted their heads in Lucian's direction and saw him smiling at them.

"Is everything alright, Sir?" Ulrick asked, the spectacles on his nose slipping slightly down.

"No, nothing. Keep up the good work," Lucian said, getting ready to leave.

Klaus and Ulrick exchanged a glance with each other, and then quickly returned to work. Their employer was satisfied with them, and that was all that mattered.