

My Villainess Ex Won't Leave Me Alone #Chapter 27 - 2.12 Not in a thousand years - Read My Villainess Ex Won't Leave Me Alone Chapter 27 - 2.12 Not in a thousand years

Chapter 27: 2.12 Not in a thousand years

The wagon had a narrow corridor with shelves on both sides. Thick canvas curtains were rolled down, meant for the plants that needed sunlight. They were not enough to block the four boys' chatter.

The guards seemed to be using Lucian's absence to question his employees, though he was currently having another predicament to worry about.

'What should I do?' Lucian thought to the voice, *'Should I tell her how I feel or not?'*

The voice was silent for a moment before it spoke up, *'That would be stupid. She just said she hates you, didn't she?'*

"What's wrong?" Celine asked, trying to see through his hands covering his face.

"You...you just said you hate me," Lucian stated, pointing at her with an accusing finger, "So why are you here, bothering me?"

"..." Celine's left eye twitched, "I don't...hate you," she said, her voice low, "I hate your mouth."

Here it went as usual. The poor attempts at pushing each other away. It worked when they were kids, but now? It only made them more aware of each other's feelings.

"So, you're saying that you like the rest of me?" Lucian asked, slapping himself on the inside at the same time. He wanted her to feel as flustered as he was feeling, but not through flirting! Mean! He was supposed to be mean!

"...No...I..." Celine's face turned a darker shade of pink. She grabbed a small package from inside her cloak and threw it at Lucian's face to switch the subject, "Here, to keep your mouth occupied from spouting nonsense."

Lucian caught it before it could fall to the ground. He opened it carefully to reveal beef jerky sticks.

"...Thank you..." he said, taking one of the sticks and biting into it, sealing his lips.

"..." Celine continued to scan his goods, refusing to make eye contact.

'I can't do it.'

Lucian didn't want to drag Celine down with him, no matter how much he wanted her for himself. It wasn't only about her status as the Duke's daughter.

Voice could take away his health anytime it wanted. With the strain he was putting on his body, there was only so much medicine he could take before it lost its effect completely.

He had already decided to pass on his legacy through Voice just like his parents passed on theirs through him.

"Why can't you leave me alone?" Lucian mumbled between his bites, "I'm not going to marry anymore, so there's no need for you to stalk me like this. You should focus on getting a good husband, not on trying to ruin my life."

He should push her away, even if that meant breaking her heart.

See? He could separate his fantasies from reality and act according to the circumstances.

"..." Celine didn't say anything at first. She just stood there, looking at him with a hurt expression on her face.

"..." Lucian felt terrible. It was like kicking a puppy or something equally cruel.

Celine's lips moved, but no sound came out of them for a moment. When she finally spoke again, her voice sounded strange.

"Why do you look like you are about to cry?" she asked, tilting her head to the side.

"Didn't you just hear what I said? Leave me alone," Lucian hissed, turning his back to her.

"And miss an apology hug? Not in a thousand years," she said, "It seems like you've been holding in a lot of pent-up frustration because of your good boy act, eh? And now you are taking it out on me."

"I...!"

The hug came from behind. Lucian's face was hot, and his eyes stung. He could feel her breath on his neck and ear, and her chest pressed against his back.

"You must be very stressed." She hugged him from behind, wrapping her arms around his waist and resting her cheek on his shoulder. It was gentle, yet firm. Like she wasn't planning on letting go any time soon.

Lucian's lips trembled, trying to keep his composure.

"Let go," he whispered, unable to raise his voice above the softness of her touch, "Stop it..."

"Why?" she murmured, tightening her grip, "I'm comforting you like you always comfort me when I'm upset."

He tried to pull away, but she held him close to her, refusing to release him.

"Don't," he whispered, closing his eyes tightly. "Please, stop."

"No," she refused, "You said it yourself that sometimes people hurt others because they are in pain themselves, and we need to help them get better. You helped me; now it's my turn."

"..." Lucian couldn't help but chuckle at her reasoning, remembering the time she would act mean toward him, "I guess I did say something like that."

"See? It is true," she exclaimed, hugging him harder, "I've been learning from you, and I'm a great pupil."

He turned to face her, and she loosened her grip to allow him to do so.

Then, they hugged properly, arms wrapped around each other's backs and shoulders, their heads resting on each other's necks.

They stayed like this for a while, until Lucian finally managed to push her away.

"I'm feeling better," he said, wiping his nose, "Thank you."

She smiled, outstretching her palm, "Two gold coins."

Lucian's eye twitched. "You are charging me now?"

"Hey, it's not easy to cheer up a friend," she said, "And I'm a great hugger. My hugs are worth a fortune."

He took out the coins from his pocket, trying to suppress another chuckle, "Here, two gold coins."

She stuffed them down her shirt. "It was worth it," she said, "You're smiling now."

"Only because you're being ridiculous," he said, shaking his head.

Lucian didn't have the heart to tell her that her hug was worth more than just two gold coins to him. It was worth the world.

He pulled her into another hug, but this time he was the one embracing her, "It's your turn to be upset now. Come on, cry on my shoulder."

Chapter 28: 2.13 Greedy Girl

Lucian knew it was Celine from the beginning (not recognizing her was an act, just him being dramatic before Voice).

He just didn't want to confront the fact that he had given her a cold shoulder and avoided her like he would a poisonous plant. After all, he was failing her as a friend and a man, and he hated to admit it.

"I'm sorry," he said, "I was really busy and couldn't write you any letters."

She was quiet, and her eyes were downcast as she placed the box with the egg inside the bag on her hips. He couldn't tell what she was thinking. He knew, however, that his answer was far from satisfying for her.

His earlier nervousness returned, the guilt adding to the mix, making his stomach churn.

"I swore to beat you up the next time we meet," she said, her hands cupping his cheeks. Her gaze was fierce as she stared into his eyes, "And that's what I'm going to do."

She pressed her lips against his, her kiss demanding, just like her eyes. Her hands held him firmly, preventing him from moving away.

Lucian's mind blanked out, and his body went limp, allowing her to do whatever she wanted, "Hngh—"

Her tongue entered his mouth, and he felt a jolt of pleasure course through his body.

He couldn't breathe, he couldn't think, and he didn't want to. He wanted to drown in this feeling forever.

She pulled away, leaving him gasping for air and with a burning sensation on his lips. The taste of her lingered on his tongue, sweet, yet with a slight bitterness.

"Now you can die and go to hell," she said, licking her lips and releasing his cheeks. Her touch left a tingly sensation on his skin. She pulled out a pocket watch to check the time, "I know there's no future for us, but living with regrets is not something I'm willing to do."

She didn't ask why he was avoiding her for the second time. She simply accepted it, making him wonder if she was expecting it. She was aware of the risk he was taking by approaching her, but instead of giving up, she made a bold move that was going to hunt his dreams.

Her might was stronger than any wall he could put between them, and his heart was weak in the face of her onslaught.

She grew more and more powerful as the years passed. He could feel her harsh upbringing in the way she acted, in the way she talked, and in the way she kissed him. She wasn't a passive person. She was used to being in charge, not being led by others.

They were both similar in a sense. Like plants, taking in the nutrients of their environment, but their roots remained the same.

The only problem was that they didn't belong in the same garden.

"...Again..." Lucian mumbled, his mind still hazy from her kiss. He wanted more. And the more she was willing to give, the more he craved. "Kiss...me again..."

"..." She opened her mouth to say something, but he was already on her.

For a second kiss in their lives, it was a wet and messy one. When he tried to stick his tongue in her mouth, she stuck hers in his mouth, curling them together.

"...Hah...hn..."

His heart was beating so hard that it was hurting his chest, and his breathing was quick and shallow as they sucked on each other's lips. The heat in his lower body was growing, and it felt like he was going to explode.

He didn't want to let her go, but the pocket watch she was holding near his head reminded him that they were on a timer.

"...I...have..." she gasped in between kisses, "...ten...more...seconds...to get out..."

They separated with a loud smack. Lucian was a complete mess, his cheeks red, and his mouth and chin were wet with saliva.

She pocketed her watch and pulled out her compact mirror to wipe the saliva off her face with a handkerchief and fix her wig, "Ugh, my makeup is ruined."

"You are wearing make-up?" Lucian asked and noticed a few shadows around her cheekbones and nose being smudged away.

She fixed the imperfections with her fingertips after taking off her glove. Putting away her mirror once she was satisfied with the result, she took another look at Lucian.

If only time would freeze in place for them.

But it didn't.

She had responsibilities to fulfill, and he had unfinished business to deal with.

"I'll come to visit you soon," he said, making her pause, "So you don't have to sneak out to meet me."

'Why did I just say?'

At that moment, his pride couldn't stand the fact that she had to be the one chasing after him.

Before he could take back his words, her eyes lit up in a way that made his heart skip a beat. In her roots and soul, she was still a girl. A girl who was in love.

"I look forward to that," she said with a smile on her face and left the wagon.

Lucian wiped his mouth and followed her outside. His legs felt like jelly, but he still had to show face to the Duke's son (daughter).

"Are you done, young master?" the captain asked as they both emerged from the wagon.

Edmund mounted his horse, "Yes, I am. You can let him go. I've got what I needed from him."

Lucian bowed slightly, hiding his flushed face at her ambitious words, "I hope that young master enjoyed his shopping experience."

Edmund coughed lightly, his voice returning to a lower pitch, "Very much so. Thank you. My sister will be very pleased with the gift."

"I'm glad to hear that. Have a safe trip, young master."

Cel—no, Edmund nodded and left the garrison, followed by the soldiers on horseback.

Lucian returned to the wagon and collapsed to the floor, leaning against a crate and holding his chest as he tried to calm down his beating heart. It was racing like a runaway horse, and it wouldn't stop.

There was a saying that the more one gets, the greedier they become.

Celine was a greedy girl, and Lucian, the humble boy that he was, was going to be eaten alive by her in the future if he didn't learn how to tame this side of hers.

Lucian hit the crate with his head, his face scrunching up in pain as he groaned, *'How to tame a wild little wife? Is there some sort of guide on this? Voice?'*

Chapter 29: 2.14 A Miniature World Behind Glass

'Find yourself an obedient one,' the voice suggested.

'Mine is obedient when she wants to, Voice,' Lucian defended his little wife, *'I'm just too lenient on her.'*

Lenient its non-existent ass. He was whipped.

'...' the voice gave up on the boy. At least his drive to live had returned to a certain extent, considering the state he had been in not even a day ago.

'Did that just happen?' Lucian asked himself over and over again. He had to pinch himself to confirm it was not a dream.

Instead of a slap, he got a kiss. A kiss that was better than the ones he imagined. A real one.

Sometimes, Celine would be too shy to even utter Lucian's name, but sometimes, she would pounce on him like a hungry wolf. It depended on how mean he had been to her.

He allowed it once when he tried to kick her out of his property, and now there was no stopping her.

Go away suddenly meant: come over and make yourself at home.

Leave me alone probably became: I'm lonely.

Celine somehow translated everything Lucian said into something else, and his reactions only fueled her confidence in her translations.

'Are we lovers now? I mean, we kissed and all,'

Lucian said to himself, trying to figure out their relationship. *'You certainly don't kiss your friends like that. Only lovers do that, right?'*

'...'

'Wait a moment... did I just take away her innocence?!' The realization hit Lucian like a ton of bricks. *'I need to take responsibility.'*

'You haven't done the deed yet, you moron,' the voice said.

'But it will happen sooner or later. We are lovers after all. I can't have her run around and find someone else to do the deed with.'

'...'

The voice was at a loss for words at the sudden turn of the situation.

'But we can't just rush it, can we? I need to make it special. Make her feel good,' Lucian continued, not paying attention to the voice, *'A ring. Yes, I need to buy her a ring first. A ring will make it official. And then, the deed...'*

The boy had already moved to his dreamland, his body moving mechanically as he prepared for the departure. The egg should hatch in a few days, so he wrote down instructions and sent them to Celine on how to take care of it, with an apology that he was in a hurry.

He then traveled toward the plot of land he bought near the southern forest.

Buying a few building supplies and equipment from the town nearby, Jax, Leaf, and Fishbone began to chop the wood necessary to build a small workshop, which would also serve as their new home.

They had some experience with building buildings and supports in the mines; Lucian only had to point out how big and wide the place had to be.

He left a few coins for the trio to resupply and feed themselves before departing with his wagon and Goblin.

In case he needed to send them some instructions, the kid would relay the messages between them.

They all knew the northern language due to living here before being dragged back, so communication shouldn't be an issue.

"Boss, are you okay?" Goblin asked, looking at Lucian's weirdly smiling face, "Is something good gonna happen?"

"..." Lucian looked at the boy with a smile, "You will soon inherit my greenhouse. You can call it Goblin's greenhouse from now on. How does that sound?"

"..." Goblin's expression was full of doubt. He didn't think he would ever inherit anything. The concept was so foreign to him that it was hard to wrap his head around it, "Why?"

"You are the most loyal out of the four," Lucian answered, "I trust you the most."

Goblin's expression turned from doubtful to proud, and then to determined. "I won't let you down, Boss! Goblin's greenhouse will be the best greenhouse!"

"Then let's make it happen," Lucian said, laughing.

The boy was easy to please and was the least likely to anger others with his presence. He was also the most sociable of the bunch and could even make friends with a tree if given the chance.

For five years, Lucian had traveled, negotiated, and persuaded local artisans and craftsmen to design and build the idea in his head.

In the future, he planned to use prefabricated glass sheets and iron frames to build greenhouses of any shape and size by putting the pieces together in different ways. It would fasten production and simplify assembly.

The team solved a number of new technical problems along the way, like draining water off the roof down through hollow tubes inside the cast iron profiles.

"Woah!" Goblin's eyes widened at the sight of the glass structure, "This is the greenhouse?"

"Yes, it's a less grand version of what we will build for the nobles," Lucian said, leading him inside through the glass doors, "This one focuses mainly on producing more plants rather than being a showcase of the owner's wealth and power."

In case of Lucian's greenhouse, it measured around 20 m wide, 60 m long, and around 10 m high. For stability, it had to have two gabled roofs (10 m each).

He didn't have money to burn, so he had to keep the budget low and the return on investment high. He also traveled a lot, so the greenhouse had to survive for a while without needing constant maintenance.

The roof and walls facing the south, east, and west were made out of iron frames with double-layered glass sheets, while the wall facing the north was built out of stones, resembling a mountain hill covered in moss and ferns.

From the roof hung a few mirror panels that heated the stone paths.

Fake rainfall was achieved through a pipe network that blended with the metal skeleton of the greenhouse.

Fake rainfall, fake sunlight, fake spring... the greenhouse was a miniature world of its own, and it had to be run like one.

Chapter 30: 2.15 Goblin's Greenhouse

The greenhouse still needed human intervention, so Lucian taught Goblin how to clean the reservoir, which was hidden inside the makeshift hill.

It used a water clock system to water the plants every day at dawn (once water filled a small container, it would trigger a release that would send water through glazed ceramic pipes).

Lucian opened a hidden door to the hill. After lighting up the torches along the walls, he climbed up a large tank filled with water.

Goblin followed behind.

"We are still looking into a filter system, but until then, we need to clean the tank at least once every two months," Lucian pointed to the water. "Check the smell and color. If it's clean and clear, then it's fine. Cold water could shock the plants and kill them off, so also check its temperature, whether it needs some heating..."

Goblin nodded in understanding.

"Good. Now, let's move on to the next step. We need to add some nutrients to the water. I developed them myself, and they help to promote healthy plant growth," Lucian explained, "I have them stored in this barrel over here."

He let Goblin pour the nutrients into the tank and use a long, narrow stick to stir the mixture.

"When there is no sun, we use the back-up fireplace to heat the stones," Lucian explained as he led Goblin to the second heating system beside the solar one.

There was another water tank with a fireplace placed under it, which was used to distribute heat through pipes underneath the ground. This one was insulated and had a thick lid to prevent steam from escaping.

"I barely use it here, but cities further north would require them more often," Lucian said, "I call it a boiler system. It works by having hot water run through the pipes to transfer heat. It runs on both coal and wood."

He then showed Goblin how to control the humidity levels in the greenhouse, "If the humidity is too high, the plants will start to rot. If it's too low, the plants will dry out and die."

He used a long staff with a hook to open one of the window panels, which was three meters above them. "One vent is placed above and the other below," he opened another panel close to the ground, "This is to allow air circulation."

The greenhouse was divided into two zones. The plants that were more sensitive to temperature and light were placed closer to the artificial heat sources, while the hardier ones were placed further away.

There were many misses and errors, which were corrected and improved upon over time. Things broke down, were fixed, and broken again, so the storage room had many replacement parts just in case.

"You can leave the pest control to the house's gardeners. They should know how to handle them," Lucian added, "But the operation of the greenhouse is something that only we can do. That includes repairs."

They moved back to the entrance to the hill, where Lucian stopped Goblin from moving forth.

Goblin's eyes widened in amazement as the water clock activated and water began to flow through the pipes, sprinkling the plants in the greenhouse. It was a beautiful sight.

"Wow," he whispered.

"I call them sprinklers," Lucian said, watching the droplets of water gently fall on the leaves. He then looked at Goblin and saw the wonder in his eyes. "What do you think?"

"It looks amazing," Goblin answered truthfully, "Can I really be in charge of this?"

"Yes," Lucian replied without hesitation, "This is your new home now. I've hired a few gardeners to assist you in your duties."

The young boy blinked, tears starting to form in his eyes as he nodded vigorously. "I will make sure that everything runs smoothly here."

Lucian smiled and ruffled his hair.

"You can start with scrubbing the reservoir once it empties, then filling it back up," he said, pointing at the well outside. He found these tasks to be wasting his valuable time, so he always hired temporary workers for this.

It was pointless to hire full-time gardeners when the greenhouse had barely been finished a year ago. The greenhouse currently housed the more resilient and easier to care for plants.

Lucian spent most of his time collecting seeds and making sure the system worked.

He needed his gardeners to be on the move. Not only would they have to take care of multiple greenhouses at once, his distribution services also needed a workforce to function.

"It's time to make big money," Lucian rolled up his sleeves, ready to unload the wagon. "The new batch of employees should arrive soon enough."

The new batch of employees arrived in two days, and Lucian wasted no time in getting them to work. Some were given the task of planting new plants, and others were put on the task of maintaining the already planted ones.

Lucian was everywhere, supervising every aspect of the greenhouse, "Hey! Be careful with that! It's a living thing!"

"Sorry, sir," one of the gardeners replied, looking down at the plant he had just buried under a careless heap of soil. "I'm used to working with trees and bushes. This is the first time I'm working with delicate stuff like this."

It was a rare variety of flower, which would grow to bear large leaves resembling the wings of a dragonfly.

Lucian leaned down to examine the sapling in the ground. It was a bit battered and bruised, but nothing that wouldn't heal in time. "Switch with someone else, you will take care of the fruit trees and shrubs."

"Understood," the gardener said, quickly leaving to change his position.

The rest of the workers seemed to have learned from that situation and started handling the flowers and plants with more care. Their pay was based on their experience and skill, and that one, who had just lied about his experience, had his pay cut.

Running around, Goblin supervised the work in silence, his expression serious. The gardeners were no locals, so beyond cleaning the greenhouse, he was also responsible for arranging their meals and lodgings, as well as making sure they did their job, and reporting everything to Lucian once he came back.

"I will leave them in your care," Lucian said, patting the boy on his head, "I need to go and get the goods to sell to my clients in the south."