

(Every character depicted in the story below is a consenting legal adult over the age of 18)

A/N: Lucien and Grail fightin' in space, K-I-L-L-I-N-G~

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They clash, Grail's fist striking him across the jaw before Lucien grabs her wrist and then slams his knee into her abdomen. He wishes he could say he dodged her outright, but he's used up most of his speedster style swiftness on getting to Themyscira and then getting Grail OUT of Themyscira.

Now, he's reduced to a 'mere' Kryptonian's speed and Grail can easily keep up with that from the look of things. Even as she's doubling over his knee, her other hand is swooping around in a claw aiming for one of his eyes.

Lucien blocks it with his forearm and transitions that into an elbow that takes the Daughter of Darkseid right in the chin and sends her spiraling back through the air from him, causing the fighting to cease again, just for a moment.

... He should probably go for the kill, but he finds himself hesitating for multiple reasons. First and least of those reasons is the Justice League. If he kills Grail right here and now when she only has some nameless Amazons dead at her hands, then he knows they won't be very happy with him.

Hell, even if she'd managed to kill Hippolyta before he stopped her, or this was the original timeline and Wonder Woman, Wonder Girl, and Troia were all dead as well, they would STILL expect him to try and take her down nonlethally.

In a world where even people like the Joker were taken into custody rather than put down like the mad dogs they were, there wasn't any heroes who would be happy of Lucien killed Grail.

... There was a reason that was the least of his reasons for not just ending her life, however. Lucien didn't really care if the Justice League got mad at him for

ending a threat like Grail, to be honest. He was untouchable at this point and the people who's opinions he actually cared about would likely get over it.

His second reason for not going straight for the kill had much more weight behind it. Namely, he didn't know what the fuck she was really doing here or what her goals were. Ending Grail's life before he could find out the motives of a massacre that had never happened would perhaps be a little premature.

Sure, she'd claimed that she was here to test them... but test them for what? Was Darkseid on his way? If he was coming, how long did they have? Was it just him or was he bringing his armies? Grail might have answers to all of these questions and more, to say the least.

Of course... his third reason for not going straight for the kill was perhaps the most important reason of all. Namely, he couldn't. Not yet anyways. Not his preferred method.

There was something... different about Grail's biology. He'd noticed it when he first grabbed her by the back of her head and slammed her into the floor of Themyscira's Throne room. He couldn't just paralyze her from the neck down or send her into unconsciousness with just a touch or anything like that. Obviously, he'd instinctively tried... but nothing had happened.

For the first time since he'd died and come back to the past with his new power, Lucien Luthor was stymied. He couldn't understand Grail's biology, nor could he effect it... yet. See, not all was lost. Every time he touched her, every time they clashed and he got skin-to-skin contact, it was like breaking through another firewall. Like decoding an encryption.

Perhaps that was what he'd always been doing, to be fair. This was just the first time Lucien actually struggled with such a thing. The first time he couldn't just... win with a single touch.

"I like you, Lucien Luthor. Your strength... it excites me!"

Lucien narrows his eyes as Grail calls out from across the space between them. The Earth still looms large in the distance and the Moon still stretches out under them. He doesn't want to damage either, so he decides he needs to start pushing her towards the Sun at this rate.

Not to kill her, but maybe to exhaust her. After all, the Yellow Sun only made HIM more powerful. Hopefully, the immense heat will overwhelm her. Plus, it gives him a chance to stay ahead of the others. Yes, he'd sent Blackfire to the Justice League... but that was when he was uncertain of just how strong Grail truly was. Now that he knows better...

With a snarl, Lucien launches himself forward. Grail's eyes widen in surprise but also delight and she lets out a roar of laughter as she meets his charge. Again, they clash, but this time Lucien goes for the grapple and holds it, before putting on the gas as he flies them away from the Moon, away from Earth, and towards the center of the Solar System.

Grail hits him and it hurts. She kicks him and he spits blood as she breaks ribs. But none of it is exactly permanent, his physiology healing faster than she can try to break him down. It takes her a bit to realize this and when she finally does, her eyes narrow and she breaks free of his grasp with a snarl.

"You... are truly something else."

Lucien pauses, letting her talk. After all, they've closed about half the distance to the Sun at this point. And that means he's bathing in more of it than ever before. It's not just the part of him that's Kryptonian... there are more alien species out there who enjoy benefits from sunlight than just Kryptonians.

"What do you want, Grail? Why are you here?"

Growling, Grail bares her teeth.

"I've already said! Try to keep up! I am here to test if you are worthy!"

But Lucien shakes his head.

“Worthy of what, exactly?”

Grail just smirks.

“Well, that would be telling wouldn’t it? And I would hate to speak of matters of import to someone who would only disappoint me in the long run. Come Lucien Luthor! Show me more of your strength!”

And so they clash again and again. Each time, Lucien can feel himself getting closer to an epiphany regarding Grail’s biology. Each time, he pushes them a bit closer to the Sun, until it’s practically all that one can see as they fight their way past mercury and closer still to the massive flaming ball of energy.

He grows stronger, but Grail is impressively resistant to damage. His initial blows only bruise, but eventually he manages to make her bleed. Until finally... she figures it out.

“Oh. You... clever male, aren’t you? So that’s your game. Cute, but you’ve given it away now!”

Lucien raises an eyebrow as Grail once again creates distance between them. He doesn’t press the attack for the moment because he can feel that their last skin contact is what he needed to finish the puzzle that is her biology. Any second now and he will unlock the secrets of her genetics.

Grail, meanwhile, begins to speak in a low, sibilant chant. Lucien’s eyes widen as she raises a hand and proceeds to perform a magical ritual of sorts right there in the middle of space.

With a snarl, Lucien lunges forward to stop her from whatever she’s doing. By that point he’s too late though and all he does is put himself in range of the dagger-like shard that she proceeds to slam right into his side a moment later. A shard that glows a sickly, familiar green.

Grunting from the impact, staring into Grail's eyes as she grins at him and twists the shard for maximum damage, Lucien pulls away. Then, he looks down at the fragment of Kryptonite that she's just summoned from seemingly nowhere and impaled him with.

"I must admit, I didn't take you for a Kryptonian at first. But you gave yourself up by forcing the fight closer and closer to the sun, Lucien Luthor. Such a pathetic weakness you Kryptonians have... tch, it could never be you, in the end."

Lucien doesn't say a word. Instead, he merely reaches down and grabs the shard, gripping it roughly... and yanking it out. The moment he removes it; his body begins to heal. Holding it up in his hand, he eyes it for a moment, feeling none of the debilitating effects it should have.

Then, in the ultimate act of contempt, he tosses it back to Grail underhand as she gapes at him, her eyes now wide.

"Sharp. But nothing more special than that."

Grail catches the Kryptonite Shard, staring between it and him in disbelief. They're only about twenty feet apart after all, he should still be feeling its effects from where he is. More than that though, his wound shouldn't have started healing when the toxic mineral was still clenched in his fist.

Lucien tilts his head to the side and smirks at Grail's stupefaction.

"Sorry, did I confuse you?"

Far from getting angry or looking overly upset, Grail... only looks more delighted. She tosses the piece of Kryptonite away, sending it flipping end over end towards the surface of the Sun. Then, she grins wickedly as she eyes him up and down far more appreciatively than before.

"What *are* you, Lucien Luthor? You aren't human. You aren't Kryptonian. No... you're something else."

Letting out a slow breath, Lucien feels the 'unlock' in the back of his mind and gives Grail a lopsided grin.

"I am whatever I need to be, Daughter of Darkseid."

She seems to approve of that response, but Lucien doesn't care because he's already tensing up to launch himself forward. Seeing this, Grail tenses up as well for another round. However, in the half a second before they can clash once more, they're interrupted.

"LUCIEN!"

Lucien and Grail both pause as their privacy is finally ended. Appearing at his side in a flash is Blackfire, immediately ready to support him if need be. On his other side comes Galatea, glaring with glowing red eyes at Grail, her heat vision primed and ready.

Two more groups come as well. The Justice League, both in space-capable vessels and under their own power, appear one by one, Superman leading the charge with Supergirl right behind him. And as well, in an 'Invisible Jet' that Lucien can nevertheless see very clearly, Wonder Woman arrives with her two proteges and Claire in tow.

Superman is quick to insert himself into things, his own eyes glowing red as he imposes himself upon them.

"This ends here. Invader, stand down and surrender immediately."

Grail's eyes narrow as she takes in the forces assembled against her. She also flicks her gaze towards Lucien and he can tell that she picked up on the fact that he's seemingly the only one who knows exactly who she is. He called her Daughter of Darkseid after all, as well as 'Grail'. But in this timeline, she never got the chance to introduce herself. So how did he know who she was if none of Earth's other heavy hitters did?

He can see that question rattling around in her skull even as the Daughter of Darkseid grins wickedly.

“Oh but things were just getting good. And I was just about to administer the final test. You may all bear witness.”

That’s all the warning she gives before her eyes glow bright and the Omega Beams Lucien remembers from the previous timeline come shooting out... directly at him.

Superman tries to impose himself of course. So does Tea and Blackfire. Those are the only three who even have a chance to do so before the Omega Beams reach him. None of it matters though, because much like what he remembers from the previous timeline, the Omega Beams don’t miss.

They dodge under Superman, dance around Blackfire, and zigzag over the top of Galatea in order to slam into Lucien’s chest before any of the three aliens can even realize they’ve been juked. Lucien, of course, doesn’t even bother trying to dodge. Instead, he readies himself.

Funnily enough, from the look of things, just the Kryptonian part of him alone could have allowed him to withstand Grail’s Omega Beams. The pain would have been immense and the damage certainly noteworthy, but he could have taken it all the same.

However... he’s not just Kryptonian. And while he hasn’t been able to use his newfound access to her biology against Grail herself yet, he’s had just enough time to make use of it for his own benefit.

As such, when his would-be saviors all whip towards him in horror, inadvertently clearing a path in the process so that Grail can see what’s happened as well... all four see nothing but a light red sizzle on his naked chest where the Omega Beams hit.

Grail’s eyes widen even more than ever before, while Superman’s narrow in disbelief before he whips back towards her.

“Omega Beams. What- Who are you?!”

To be fair, the Man of Steel must have already had his suspicions. The family resemblance is uncanny, after all. Still, Grail confirms it with a laugh, her red eyes blazing and her lips pulled back into a toothy grin.

“I am Grail, Daughter of Darkseid and the Amazon Myrina!”

And then, before anyone else can say anything, she suddenly points past them all directly at Lucien.

“And I surrender... to *HIM*.”

Lucien wishes he could say he was surprised as all eyes turn towards him. But he’s really not. More exasperated than anything...

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A/N: Remember to go back and VOTE!