

(Static fades in. Cuts.)

I don't know where I would be without these broadcasts. I can't stress tht enough, Lucent. Wherever or whoever you are. I don't know where I would be without you.

(Music fades in)

The other day, I came out in the morning to find Dad was at the kitchen island. Pr the peninsula. But... But I--I don't feel like being clever anymore. But he was down there with a new laptop for me. A top of the line one. All the bells and whistles included. It even came with a couple designer cases. To say that I was confused that this man who was notorious for never wanting to spend money, especially on me--a servant of his, a lowly office manager--that's, that's an understatement.

But there I was, being given this very elaborate and desirable gift.

I couldn't believe it. It didn't matter that it had a bow on it. It couldn't have been for me. "What's this?" I asked.

"You said you needed a new computer," he answered. "So I got you a good one."

A very good one, I thought. It had only been released a few weeks ago. And then sold out instantly. Partially to scalpers, so he would have had to pay well above market price to get one for me before the second release.

It was a somewhat thoughtful gift, you could say, all things considered. It was practical and valuable, just maybe something he paid too much for. But it wasn't my place to point that part out.

And there was a time in my life when I would have gushed over this gift, about this small sign that he saw my humanity and cared. And okay, I can be defensive and

angry and outright hateful when the need arises, but deep down, I was still a wide-eyed child that doesn't fully understand why her father didn't love her. That cookie cutter or template-adjacent thing or need for my parents' care and approval in my heart is still in my heart, somewhere. I haven't yet figured out where, so I could take it out. (sigh) We--We all have it, and mine has never really went away despite my efforts. I had substitutions, yes. Very good ones. But it wasn't the same thing. I--I shouldn't have wanted him, but I did. And against my better judgment, part of me still does.

But now, whenever it flairs up, I think about the woman in your painting. The woman that was me or a version of me that I had always wanted to be: stronger and fiercer, more powerful and independent. Everything I was pretending to be before and before, in front of, Dad. I still want to be her.

So I--I didn't really react like he was expecting to the gift. I didn't gush or hug him or show him any affection. Not in a meaningful way. And that was puzzling to him. This was a sign of much sought after paternal love, right? Even when I don't admit it, I always wanted his love, so I should have showed it. But no--no that's not what happened. While I thanked him properly, I did not go above and beyond like he was expecting me to. And that was a mistake, I guess because he reacted to it. The features of his face fell.

"What's wrong?" he asked. "Wrong color?"

I just shrugged. There was no really clever answer I could have given him. He was what was wrong with this situation, but I couldn't say that. So instead I went to go make breakfast.

And that's when he swung the other way. From love, albeit fake, to an attack.

I make notes to you before I record. It's not a script or even an outline. But I want to be sure I know what I need to say. Just because I don't have much time to say everything I need to say and because... Well, it's somewhat cathartic to make those notes.

After the last broadcast, I didn't throw out the notes I made. And maybe I should have. It's one more thing he could have found and used against me, but the entire... set up I have in the maid's quarters would be damning enough. So it didn't matter. Until it did.

Because then Dad started asking me why I wasn't going to the interviews for the new nanny anymore. And you and I both know it's because he said I couldn't go. He said I was the problem. He locked me out, and I speculated as to why. I thought it was an attempt of a power grab of some kind. Just to make my situation worse and to make me more powerless. And yet, there he was: telling me that I was the one making this difficult by not wanting to go. By putting my foot down.

And that's not true. That's really not true. But I was ready to question that. I was ready to question my conviction. I was ready to doubt my own memories because he was just so sure, and he was drilling the point so hard. And when I tried to push back, he'd just point out what little sense I was making. Because if I knew what the kids needed. Why wouldn't I be in the interviews? He doesn't know anything about the kids. He can't figure it out, he says. He... He tells me all the things he's done wrong. Why, why would he be the one to decide?

(Music fades out and new music fades in)

And--And that's the same argument I had. But he didn't care back then, but he suddenly cares now. When it works in his favor. My breath caught instinctively because I could tell what was happening, but luckily my back was to him, so he didn't notice. He has no way of knowing why I'm so sure, and I can't let him push this point too hard.

So I dismissively said, "Whatever you fricking say." Because I didn't care anymore. I could not bring myself to care.

And he took my derision as a sign that he had won. He hadn't, but he could keep thinking that for all I cared. And then he left for work shortly after.

I think he's done that to me before. A lot. I think he tries to twist me because I can't really do anything to stop him. And there was no one around to help me. I was alone. Isolated under the guise of childcare.

Can I leave the kids to that same fate? I don't know.

(Music fades out and new music fades in)

Sometimes... well, sometimes things like this only happen to one kid. And the psychology behind it is irrelevant. But sometimes a parent focuses on a single kid for their rage. And he's just ignored the other kids or so long. Maybe he wouldn't keep this up after me. But who knows? How could this impulse just be dropped? It couldn't be. It's too much a part of who he is right now. So what am I to do?

(Pause)

I almost miss the interruptions. We have a nanny right now on a trial basis. He hired her behind my back supposedly because he had to, which is a crock of nothing.

He didn't have to do anything but make himself feel good or power trip or whatever is worse. I don't even know which one would be worse.

But at least, the kids have taken to her rather well. She's fairly young and lively, but that's not exactly a bad thing. I mean, the kids are mostly self-sufficient, so you don't need an experienced sage who can anticipate every possible catastrophe or outcome. You just need someone who can get them through the moments when they might be lacking. But all the same, apparently, she's going to be a live-in nanny, which scared me a bit at first because, hello, I've secretly taken over one of the spare rooms. But there's another spare room closer to the kids, so Dad put her in that one. Across the house from this room and closer to his. Which might raise another concern, I guess. It's just something I had never really thought of before.

I know I should have maybe... I know I should hope that she's okay. Like as a person okay and not as a nanny. I should hope or try to make sure that she feels comfortable and safe and she might even like this new workplace-slash-home combo and it should be a pleasant for her. But I really don't have it in me to care anymore. I don't have it in me to do much anymore.

(Music fades out and new music fades in)

And I'm not proud of that. I'm not proud that a fundamental aspect of my humanity is just gone and/or unsustainable. But here we are. Exactly at that point.

The kids like her well enough. And whether or not they should is an issue I don't want to think about right now. They like her. She'll probably take care of them. And so, I

can leave. Right? I can just leave them. The consequences aren't something I can help anyway. There's nothing I can do. There's nothing I can do.

I say that a lot to myself when I'm in the office. It's just part of the world I'm in. There's only so much you can do to help a patient and their families, even if you cast ethics aside, which it's probably something you shouldn't do because that creates more problems. Like, maybe you think you are making everything better, but you can't keep track of all the variables. You can't know what you're doing on a grand scale. There are just too many connections that we don't fully understand. And yes we are doing the best we can, but that doesn't mean we're doing everything right or doing enough.

(softer) Maybe that's just an excuse. I love those kids. I really do, but... But if I waste away here, they will still be stuck here. Nothing changes for them no matter what I do, so I have to save myself, right? That's the only choice available to me and the only option I have.

Look, I don't really care what you think about that. I'm going to do it regardless.

(Music fades out and new music fades in)

I don't have a choice. I have to. I have to do this.

And for what this is, well... I saw that there were too small divots in the canvas, so I put two electrical wires at those points. I got the wires and the battery from the random odds and ends I could find in the office, and it wasn't that hard to sneak them out; they can fit in my pocket without making their presence very obvious. So I snuck them home and into this room.

From there, well, it was easy. A basic science experiment that I had to do with the kids any number of times.

The circuit had to run a few seconds for the address to appear. And once it did, And once it did, there was no going back, right? I mean, that was my mistake. I shouldn't have tried this before I was ready to leave because I can't reverse this chemical interaction. I don't have the means or the knowledge to do so. A solid color would have just been a questionable art choice. But now, I have an address and if anyone sees this address then I'm done for, right?

I have to run. Right? I--I have to. What's done is done. And it can't be undone. I don't even know what I need to bring with me. Maybe--Maybe... Maybe I could scope out the place, right? Before I go Frick. Why didn't I think to do that sooner. Why am I suddenly so unhinged. Nothing or everything. This isn't like me. Wh--(Sigh)

(Music fades out and new music fades in)

There's something else. Someone else. Not just the nanny. Even though I want to ask her about this. Just to see what answer I get. But I'll have to sidestep the issue. And so, I really need more time for that. Time that I didn't give myself. And it shouldn't just now be occurring to me here that I messed here. But--But in the paperwork I took from Dr. Alexson's office, a couple of the documents had Mom's name on them. Both medical and legal paperwork. In a way that doesn't add up timing-wise. And she was never Dad's patient either. Or she wouldn't need to be. Not that I remember. Also, why the legal paperwork. The asset distribution. That stuff. That sort of stuff that isn't all that

relevant when someone dies. Or... I--I guess it would be. It's hard to explain why those documents looked so wrong for me. But they do.

There's something about him not owing her anything. Not having to pay her alimony or something. And it used that particular word: alimony. That's only relevant in a divorce, right? There's no reason to pay the dead.

Maybe I shouldn't be concerned with them. Or should. But legal documents only bore me. On the other hand, it's just... What if Mom had a degenerative neurological disorder that set in early on? Not to be selfish, even--even though that's what I am, but what would that mean for me? Right now or in the future? I need to know before I go.

But I can't think too much about that right now. The implications. I mean, speaking from professional experience, medical history is important when it comes to patient treatment. I just have to hold onto that. And to you, Lucent, I, I know you're real. I have you. So that needs to be my focus right now. But I'm only going to have one chance at this. And once I leave, I'll never know. And I need to know. For my own sake. (Static starts. Music cuts. Static fades out).

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