

ELEVEN-A: The Threat

After so much deliberation on the stairs, Lukan has decided what to do about Klaus cheating on him. He will ask his mother for advice on what to do. However, Lukan also remembered that her advice was dodgy at best. While she always had his best interests in mind, her choices in attempt to atone to those interests have rarely ended well. It's mostly his own fault though since he hardly indulges in his own life to her so she consistently fails to understand his plights comprehensibly enough. He'll have to weigh her advice on top of other sources he could get his paws on. No matter what happens, this HAS to be the right choice. Once he does so, he knows he cannot turn back...

With a heart heavier than lead, Lukan dragged himself to his paws and slowly strode over to the door. As he did so, he heard crickets chirping and that it wasn't as bright as it was outside. Had he been on those stairs that long? Wow time flies when you're sulking. Lukan sighed as he took out the key card and unlocked the door. His paw froze on the handle. As soon as he opened the door and his mother did not see Klaus, she was going to ask immediately. Lukan had to be ready for her inquisitive intimidation. No matter. This was going to be inevitable anyways. No turning back. For the sake of all their futures... this must be sorted out.

Lukan opened the door, forcing the hesitation from his body and strode inside a little too forcefully. The door slammed behind him when he let it go. It slammed louder than Lukan had intended.

His mother jumped at the noise exclaiming. "What the--?! Oh, Lukan. It's you. Be careful next time; you nearly gave me a heart attack!" she gasped, clutching her chest. "Where's Klaus?" she asked predictably.

"Um... about that," Lukan started, nervousness creeping in as he irritably expected. Do NOT be this way now! "I found him alright, but..."

"You did? Where is he? Why isn't he with you now?" she asked worriedly.

"Well, that's just it. He was down the street as we first thought... he was at the gas station on the corner and..." Lukan trailed off. He knew that if he were to confess what he just saw to his mother now, there would be no turning back and this decision would be set in stone. He weighed his options one last time before he took a deep breath. "I... saw him with someone else. They... were kissing," he said, biting his lips.

Her immediate expression in response to the revelation that Lukan realized there was no turning back on now was that of what he expected. Complete shock, disbelief, surprise, the usual. "Are you serious!? Are you sure that's what you saw, Lukas?"

She rarely ever calls him Lukas... Only if she is really pissed off or... surprised like this. "They were only 50 feet away; I'm pretty sure I saw them quite accurately," Lukan said grimly. "What should I do!? I've never been cheated on before!" he suddenly exclaimed.

"Calm down Lukas, calm down," she said, trying to hold back her own distraught feelings. Lukan knew she hated seeing her son feeling like this. "Tell him what he's doing is wrong. That's what I'd do," she said, clearly stating one of Lukan's choices from before. Except now she knows. What will that change!?

"B-but is that such a good idea, mom?" Lukan fretted. "What if Klaus ignores me or does not care? You know how desperate he is to get laid lately so if the cat I saw with him will do so, then... what reason would Klaus have to stop?!"

"His morality would. Listen, Lukan. From what I've seen in Klaus is that he's a fine young man who does not really want to do the wrong thing. He's just seemed to have suffered a lot and is lacking judgement because of it. If he sees how hurt you are, he'll come round."

"Why do you have so much faith in him?" Lukan asked bitterly. "He's cheating on me..." Lukan suddenly felt like breaking down right there. But he somehow kept himself together.

"I know, honey, but if you truly loved him enough, you'd have faith in him, too," Lukan's mother hugged him. "But if you really feel like he won't, then we can figure something out. I don't want him hurting my son in such a way, ever."

"Okay, fine, mom. I'll talk to him when I can," he said.

Damn it. His mother had told him to follow one of his other choices. Looks like one path has diverged into another, but there was something different about this one. Oh that's right. His mother knew in this one... Lukan had to wonder again. What was that little difference going to change!?

Lukan could not sleep a wink that night. He lied in bed staring at the ceiling wondering what the hell was going to happen now. His mother knew what Klaus was doing. He wondered if she believed him at all. It seemed like she was skeptical that Klaus was cheating on him. He half hoped that she did not actually believe him. There was no telling how well she'd treat Klaus now. Especially now that she wanted him to talk to Klaus himself? It's like she was directing him down one of the other paths he considered. Maybe that one was the right choice after all? But now that she knew what was going on, there was no doubt in Lukan's mind that that was going to change something and it scared him out of his mind. He's lived with his mother for nineteen years and yet he still can't ever figure out the patterns behind her reactions to everything. And since his love life was a new development to happen in her life, that made it all the more unpredictable. He tried to remember details from her own love

life from what she's told him, but there was too little to go off of. A few boyfriends in high school... her ex-husband... No. Not much more than that. Of course Lukan knew what happened between her and his father, but that had not anything to do with this problem. Klaus wasn't an alcoholic smoker who mooched money off of them... There was no connection! All he could do was hope she wasn't going to do anything rash. Nothing rash like Klaus had done. For some reason, Lukan knew that Klaus meant no real harm to him; he just made a grave mistake and caved into his excruciating pain. But does his mother know that? Unfortunately, Lukan highly doubted that. Well, she knew he was in a lot of pain, but does she know that the reason Klaus cheated on him was because of said pain? She was never really good at making connections. One thing was for certain, he had to keep her from doing anything too harsh to the already suffering otter. But convincing her was going to be quite the task. Lukan always hoped for the best, but he was aware that the best was not always possible at all.

But because Klaus was most definitely not doing this out of malicious intent, he wondered if the otter still loved him. Not deeply enough to not cheat on him it seemed. What frightened Lukan was that he could hear Klaus telling him how much he hated the raccoon as clear as day. He could picture it so vividly that for a moment he thought he really did do so. But he knew he didn't. And as long as that was the case, there was still a chance for things to work out. And he hoped that they would...

Lukan was still awake when the door to the hotel room opened at around six in the morning. He had gotten maybe an hour of really light sleep that night. Nothing gave him enough peace to let him sleep. When the door opened, he immediately assumed it was his mother, probably getting something she forgot about in the car, or vice versa, putting something into it. The familiar scent of his- could he call him his boyfriend anymore- came in with a heavy sigh. There were traces of cat scent on his fur. Lukan did not want to know how they got there to spare his already incredibly achy heart. Klaus sat in the bed next to Lukan's. At first, Lukan wondered where his mother was because she did not yell at Klaus for running off or... cheating on Lukan as soon as Klaus revealed himself. The only place she could be was the showers so Lukan assumed that. Lukan looked over to Klaus slowly, trying not to let him know he was awake. Klaus sat at the edge of the bed, head buried in his hands. Lukan couldn't tell if he was tired or in serious regret. If it was the latter, then Lukan still had some hope that Klaus would realize his mistake. But there was no way to know for sure without confronting him. Confronting him... Lukan's mother wanted him to follow that path because she thought it best. Maybe... But Lukan had a serious worry over how she knew what the problem was. Still... Lukan also felt it to be the best course of action now.

"Welcome back, Klaus," he said, voice more exhausted than he had ever heard it.

Klaus jumped, obviously startled. "Lukan! M-morning!" he stuttered. "H-how'd you sleep last night?" How cute. He was avoiding the subject.

"Awfully," Lukan grunted.

Klaus's face fell. "Worried about me? I'm sorry Lukan... I just needed time to myself for a while is all," he explained.

Lukan stifled a scoff. To himself... yeah right. "I dreamt last night that my boyfriend, stricken with too much sexual anxiety, starting courting with another guy to get his rocks off more and more often than I ever could..." Yeah. Let's try an indirect way of letting Klaus know that Lukan knew.

Klaus jumped again and looked nervous. "Y-you did?" he breathed.

Lukan nodded, giving Klaus a hard stare. "I did. It made me realize how much worse I've been as a boyfriend up to this point. But of course, I was going to tell you that before you dashed off last night..." he said sternly.

"L-Lukan..." Klaus started.

Lukan held up a hand to silence him. "Save it, Klaus... I just don't want to hear it anymore..." he said, suddenly feeling too upset to continue. No. He couldn't do it. Not here and now, even if it is his only good chance to do so. He knew that if he didn't, his mom would, and she'd really let him have it. And yet... he couldn't. Would it be so different if she did not know? Ironically, Lukan thought it'd be easier to tell Klaus if she did not. Was a subconscious thought that because she knew, he knew she'd do something so he did not have to, despite probably not liking the outcome? It was possible, Lukan supposed.

"I'm sorry Lukan..." Klaus repeated miserably. For some reason, Lukan felt that was for him cheating. Did his hints come across? He did not want to assume that.

"We all make damning mistakes in our lives Klaus... but we got to learn from them, right?" Lukan said. When Klaus nodded, he continued. "When I made that decision to move to Bright with my mom eight years ago, I thought I had made the worst decision in my life. And I still think it was. But I learned from that mistake to never take any decision lightly ever again. Never trust anyone right away ever again, and never trust myself ever again..."

Klaus shook his head. "I've made more mistakes than I can count," he said, looking down at his paws.

Lukan shook his head. "Same here, Klaus. Same here. I try every day to not make anymore, but that's sadly impossible." Klaus only nodded. Still, Lukan couldn't quite tell if Klaus was regretting cheating on him or was regretting running off the way he did without letting Lukan explain himself. Either way, it still showed that Klaus had some sort of morality. This gave Lukan just a little more hope. Maybe Klaus can repent for this sin after all. But Lukan dared not get his hopes too high. He knows all too well what would happen if he did. There was nothing left to do except wait and hope. And

especially, hope his mother wouldn't do something terrible in retaliation to the otter hurting her son the way he did.

Thankfully, when Lukan's mother emerged from the shower, she only addressed Klaus's flight from the hotel to be potentially lost in Salamanda for an indefinite amount of time. She was even surprised that he found his way back to the hotel at all. Surprised and relieved. Lukan himself was surprised. Though his surprise was more directed at his mother's lack of acknowledgement of Klaus's infidelity. He wondered if she was ever going to address it. If she was, he wondered if she was waiting for the right time like he was when it came to doing it himself. Now would be the obvious wrong time to do so since they had more pressing matters that needed to be attended to immediately. Finding a job and place to live has been what was daunting Lukan since they left Lilac Grove and yet, his mother never gave him any plans to alleviate his worries. And they still did not. Was planning things out poorly another raccoon thing? Somehow Lukan thought that was a distinct possibility.

They spent the day driving through town with awkwardness flooding the air in the car so thickly it threatened to suffocate Lukan. Klaus did not know that he and his mother knew he was cheating. And Lukan's mother did not know the circumstances that led to Klaus's lapse in self control. Lukan could not help but think he created a huge mess. One that was going to explode in his face sooner or later. He dreaded that moment.

The city of Salamanda's main attractions all seemed to be right in the same areas as each other: on and around the two main roads that split the heart of the town, one north and southbound, the other east and westbound. Many apartments were scattered around them. The three new citizens looked in each of them that they could find. They all said the same things. No job. No lease. They looked into places that were hiring, which were forebodingly low in numbers. And they also said the same thing. No place of residency, no job. Lukan could feel his mother's frustration growing. His would gladly grow alongside hers if not for a serious emotional distraction. They returned to the hotel that night with high tensions and low spirits.

"How in the hell are we going to break this cycle, dammit!?" Klaus demanded, clearly exasperated at the fiasco unfolding.

Lukan's mother looked at him with a hard stare. "We'll find a way Klaus," she almost spit that out like fire. Oh no... her irritation is starting to let her tongue slip. Lukan knew from her demeanor that this was going to end horribly. It was then, that Lukan knew, he fucked up. He shook his head. No. No more assumptions. Things must play out more before he decides on that. He knew that now more than ever. He followed them in in silence.

"S-so what ARE we going to do, then?" he asked nervously.

His mother sighed. "Next time, we'll just ask for advice on how to break this ridiculous back and forth garbage," she huffed. "We might be here a few days," she added.

"Damn! We have no time or money for this!" Lukan exclaimed.

She shook her head. "No, no we don't. Which is why we need answers ASAP," she stated. "Speaking of answers..." she trailed off. Lukan's ears perked. "Klaus, just what were you doing last night anyways?"

Shit.

"Oh? Uh..." Klaus had no idea how to answer that apparently. That only made him look even worse in face of this confrontation. "I just need a walk to calm my nerves," he said meekly.

"All night long?" she said skeptically.

"It takes a long time for me to calm down!" Klaus exclaimed indignantly.

Lukan realized this was spiraling out of control. With everyone feeling as terrible as they did, this was far from a good time to have this chat now! "That and he might have had trouble finding us again!" he chimed in, hoping to throw water of the growing flames.

His mother looked surprised to see her son defending the guy who cheated on him. Nevertheless she argued. Like she always had. "I find that hard to believe Klaus. I've noticed that your mood changes faster than anyone else's I've ever seen! What's going on. And I want the truth. Even though I know it, I want to hear it from you, Klaus," she spat.

Klaus recoiled, looking taken aback. "Wh-what do you mean!? I have nothing to hide from you guys at all!" he cried, beginning to look clearly desperate. There was no stopping Lukan's mother now... Lukan braced himself for the storm that would inevitably follow.

"Black. Cat," she hissed.

Klaus's ears flattened. "N-no... How do you know a-about that...?" his voice was almost entirely impossible to understand. Lukan felt really bad for him, even though he knew that he probably shouldn't to the extent he does.

"Lukan said he saw you kissing a black cat last night. Now is that true, Klaus?" she demanded. "Are you cheating on my son?"

"I-I-I!" Klaus stammered.

"Klaus!" she yelled.

"Y-yes, I-I am! B-but I really don't want to!" Klaus whined, tears streaming down his face in fear. Lukan suddenly wondered if he was getting flashbacks to his own mother confronting him like that.

"Did not want to!?" she shouted incredulously. "Then why!? Why have you broken my son's heart!?"

"I-I-I! I couldn't take it anymore!" Klaus sobbed.

"What!? My son...?" she said darkly.

"N-no! I-I love Lukan! I just couldn't handle--!"

"If you loved my son, you wouldn't consider for a single SECOND cheating on him!" she roared.

"B-but what was I supposed to do about my--!?" Klaus tried to get his words out as desperately as he could. True to Lukan's mother's actions in Lukan's childhood, she refused to listen to any reason.

"I don't care why, Klaus. But if you dare do it again. If we see you with that cat, or even SMELL him on you again. I swear to God, I will kick you out of this family for good!"