

## [David Lance POV]

Project Match.

Or this earth's bizarro I suppose.

Slade had managed to acquire Match, with a bit of help from Luthor. Obviously, I didn't trust Luthor to give us Match without setting a trap or two to get back at us.

That was never going to happen. It was in his nature to get the last laugh.

What he didn't know was that whatever he was planning, I was ready for. One of the few good things my time in Earth 22 had provided, was my understanding of the technology in said universe, which was leagues above the one on this earth.

I didn't know enough to replicate everything I had seen in my time there, but I knew enough to work my way around things, besides, I didn't need to.

The ring's Dex had, carried within them a vast database of information, information I could use and had used to improve my own gadgets.

Thanks to that, I was more than prepared to deal with Luthor's tactics. Like detecting the many tracking devices the pod Match was delivered to me had, as well as the many tracking devices within Match himself.

"I can't imagine Luthor gave this up without a fight," I said, looking at Slade who simply chuckled.

"He didn't have much of a choice," Slade replied, before giving me a look. "New suit?"

I chuckled under my mask. "Yeah, call it prototype 1. I've been working around a few things, and this is the first of many results, so to speak."

"I do have one question," Slade said, his attention fixed on the pod in front of us. "What use could you possibly have for this... deformed thing?"

Deformed was... the correct adjective for Match right now, thanks to his genetic makeup, which was as stable as a drug addict, he had become disfigured; getting paler. Not only that, but his left leg and the left side of his face had swollen in a perturbing manner, and his right arm had become oversized.

All and all, Match was an abomination right now.

"I could've understood this in the past if you had intended to use him for what he's worth. Muscle power," Slade continued, eyeing Match like one would a piece of trash. "But the thing is that's not really necessary anymore. So why?"

Right.

I see his point. He was saying that with 5-U-93-R, dumb muscle was no longer necessary. And he was right.

While I had yet to crack the formula to make the pills, it was only a matter of time before I did, so dumb muscle was no longer necessary. However, dumb muscle wasn't the reason I wanted Match.

He was... the closest thing to a perfect clone Superman had, and well, let's say I needed a Kryptonian to enter Superman's Fortress of Solitude.

Beyond that, however, I had my reasons to have Match. One of them being it wasn't bad to have a Kryptonian in your corner, and that I was almost certain that with him I would be able to crack the 5-U-93-R pill once and for all.

"I don't plan to use him as dumb muscle, Slade," I replied, leaning towards the pod. "I have other plans for him."

Slade looked at Match once again. "Good luck with that. So, what now, boss?"

"I want you and Ivy to collect as much information as you can about the Kroloteans," I replied, giving Match one last look before turning to face Slade. "I know enough about them as a species, so what I want to know is exactly what they are doing."

"Those little pests have been on my radar for a while now, though I never gave them much importance," Slade replied.

"They hardly represent a threat to our plans," I replied. "If anything, their research in human genetics would help us."

"And might I know why you are sending Ivy with us?" Slade asked, he didn't sound offended, but nonetheless wanted to know why I thought he needed more than himself and his daughter to accomplish this mission.

"Ivy's ability to control plants will help you collect intel more easily, after all, she can hear and see what her plants see," I replied, taking a small pause. "Not only that, her intensive knowledge in biochemistry, and genetics will prove useful when collecting data, saving you and as a whole us a lot of time."

"I see, in that case, it will be a pleasure to work with her," Slade replied without emotion.

"I do recommend you take some precautions. Ivy has a short temper, and while she obeys my orders more than not, one can never be too careful," I added with a mirthful chuckle.

"If I didn't know you any better, I would assume you were insulting me," Slade snorted. "I know very well what to expect from the likes of Ivy, and she's not dumb enough to test my patience. So don't worry, we will work just fine."

Leave it to Slade to take any warning as an insult to his skills. Oh well, whatever works for him.

"If you say so," I replied, my eyes back on Match. "I will let Ivy know about the mission."

"Very well," Slade replied before starting to make his way out of the office, only to stop before reaching the door, and turning around. "Oh, I almost forgot. Little Red left you this." At this, Slade pulled a USB flash drive out of his suit, before tossing it at me. "He said it contains information you might find useful. He didn't elaborate further."

I looked at the USB drive and smiled under my mask. If this was what I thought it was, then my moves in the political area of things were about to begin.

"Good luck fixing that mess," Slade added before walking out the door.

"Mess, huh?" I muttered, looking at Match's deformed body. What an accurate way to describe him. "Don't you worry, I will fix you up. At the very least I can say with certainty that I can't fuck you up more than you already are, it is how they say. Once you are at your lowest you can only go up."

It would take some time, and resources, but I was certain it was within my reach to fix this failed project, turning him into what they had originally intended him to be.

Be that as it may, even I could admit this would be no easy project. He was broken both physically and mentally.

I had my work cut out for me.

"Hayley, please make the necessary arrangements for our guest over here," I said through the comms on my suit.

"On it pudding!"

I sighed.

"And you don't have to call me by my fake name when we are alone. It feels weird."

Hayley was simply a nickname I had given Harley to avoid being discovered in case communications were ever in jeopardy.

"We talked about the reason behind your name. Please, stick to it," I replied.

"Fine."

Harley was both a pleasant ally and an unpleasant one. When she was driven to do something, she would follow instructions perfectly, she would even act normal if the situation required her to act like she wasn't crazy.

Sadly, she wasn't perfect all the time.

"So, where do you want me to take the gue-- eugh! Holy fucking cock that's ugly!" Harley said as she entered the room, her face contorting into one of shock and disgust at Match.

"Are you sure you don't want me to take that into the incineration room?"

"No, I'm sure," I replied, finding her reaction somewhat amusing.

"Well, you're the boss," Harley replied walking towards Match's Pod, only to stop a few inches from it. "Are... are you sure whatever that thing has isn't contagious?"

"I am," I replied.

"Ok ok, just wanted to make sure," Harley nodded, before activating the pod's movement system to follow her. "Be careful, that thing inside is only that calm when in stasis."

Harley looked at me and then at Match, giving a brief nod. "Don't you worry pudding, I will treat it like it is my own deformed child."

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## **[Lex Luthor POV]**

Hundreds of millions of dollars lost, and all in a single day.

I was well aware of Deathstroke's skills, and how frightening his reputation was. But even then, he shouldn't have been able to kill all my genetically engineered weapons with such ease.

Some of them had physical endurance comparable to that of project Kr. Yet he had sliced through them one by one with his daughter like they were nothing.

It didn't add up.

In the recordings, Deathstroke and his daughter moved and attacked, showing prowess that far surpassed what they should have had.

That kind of power was leagues above the super soldier program he had been a part of, by a lot. I would know, I had researched that little thing a long time ago.

My computer blinked awake, showing an incoming call I had been waiting for.

"Luthor."

"Savage, you took your time to call me back," I replied with a sigh. "Did you receive the information I sent over to you?"

"Yes," Vandal replied after a long pause.

"And what do you intend to do about it?" I asked.

"For the moment, nothing," Vandal replied. "We know nothing about this new threat we have on our horizon. Moving against it without anything is a foolish endeavor."

As much as I hated to admit it, he was right. Whoever Deathstroke was working for, knew more about us than we did about him.

"I suppose I already knew the answer to that," I sighed, rubbing my temples. "On the same note, did you see the videos I sent you?"

"Yes." Was Vandal's reply.

"Whoever we are dealing with, enhanced Deathstroke and Ravager to a point very few could possibly hope to match," I stated. "It might be in our best interest to figure out how."

"Perhaps it would," Vandal replied. "But for now, it's best we focus on learning what this unknown wants. if we play our cards right, we might secure a new ally for the Light, otherwise, like everything standing in our way, it will be eliminated."

I could see the benefits of making an ally out of this... mysterious threat. But it was too soon to tell if it would be worth it.

"Very well," I replied, taking a deep breath. "I doubt we will see much of this threat in the foreseeable future. Deathstroke left it very clear that Match was his primary objective."

"See what you can find about Project Match, and what could've made someone move to acquire it," Vandal replied after a moment. "It might be a long shot, but we might find what this unknown wants through that."

A very long shot indeed. How could we hope to solve a problem, if we didn't even know the question?

That was our situation right now. We knew nothing of this threat, nothing at all, other than whoever we were dealing with wanted Project Match.

"I'll see what I can find, I don't promise anything though," I replied, hanging up the call.

I suppose if anything this unknown has given me a newfound interest in that failed project.

I was for the first time in years, truly captivated.

"Now, let's see what Mr. Unknown finds so valuable about you, Match."