

The Deceit of Luciant

By L. Mark Tolle

Narrator:	Female or Male
Lucy: Dragon (Lucia Lucinda)	Female
Zurie: Princess	Female
Hillis: Princess (Zurie's little sister)	Female
Harriett: Queen (Zurie's stepmother)	Female
Amelie: Wizard	Female
Henry: King (Zurie's father)	Male
Villiam: Court advisor and spy	Male or Female
Regilee: Servant to Zurie and Hillis	Female
King Alfrand: Queen Harriett's father	Male (Reference only—no lines in Part 1)
Emperor Rudolo the Magnificent	Male
Luciant: Dragon (Luciant Liballie)	Male

Length: 45 minutes

Cast: 11 (7 female, 4 male)

Synopsis: A young princess with attitude, her younger sister with unknown powers, a king with personal issues, a queen dealing with her stepdaughters' attitudes, an empire with a power struggle and an external challenge, two wizards with reckless ambitions, and a mysterious young dragon keep Lucia Lucinda—a wise, older dragon—busy.

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Scene I

Narrator: Once upon a time, in a land much closer than we know, in a time between a dream and the last yawn, high in a castle tower by the Widow's Gate, is a large room with a table, two chairs and one small window just large enough to look through. A young girl sits cross-legged in the straw on the floor. Wrapped around her is a dragon so blue, it appears black. The dragon's scales, struck by sunlight from the window, reflect light like a mirror and light up the room. The dragon turns its head to the little girl and speaks.

Lucy (dragon): What did you do this time to be exiled to the tower?

Zurie (young girl—painfully): Are you against me too?

Lucy (pained tone): I will always support you, even when you are wrong!

Zurie (sharply): What do you mean by that?

Lucy (sing song): One can't grow from one's mistakes until one recognizes their errors. I so love it when you gain wisdom.

Zurie: You are one smarty-pants dragon with stinky meat-eater breath on your prickly tongue!

Lucy (with mirth): And you're a devious little mouse of a human with a mischievous mind!

Zurie: And you love it.

Lucy: And I love you.

Zurie: And I you.

Lucy (sharply): Say the word.

Zurie (quietly): Love. I love you.

(Pause.)

Lucy: What did you do this time to end up in the tower?

Zurie: I only added spice to her soup.

Lucy: Whose soup? Oh, no—the queen does not cook.

Zurie: No, but she does eat.

Lucy: Which spices did you add?

Zurie: Oh, a little this, a little that.

Lucy: A little this and that *what?*

Zurie: Ground seeds, simply ground seeds.

Lucy (growling): My ground seeds? Did you use my ground seeds? The seeds I use to start the fire in my broiler to clear the vermin from the battlefield?!

Zurie (mockingly): That is what those are for?

Lucy (sing song): My spicy ground seeds, my hot spicy ground seeds, from peppers that burn fingers to touch! Cayennes, chilies, and habaneros are cold compared to my spicy ground seeds! Chilies in your chili are cool, iced compared to my spicy ground seeds! This was very unkind to the queen.

Zurie: She took away my father.

Lucy: He is only a man. You are too young to understand.

Zurie: She wants me to go away. She has a child on the way.

Lucy: If this is true as you say, I have your back—you can stay.

Zurie: She is not my mother. I miss my mother.

Lucy: I miss your mother.

Zurie: Will it burn when they pass, these seeds?

Lucy: Like the fire they are intended to start!

Zurie: Will even a little toot be hot?

Lucy: She won't need fire to feel the burn.

Zurie: Are you smiling?

Lucy: Dragons don't smile.

Zurie: You would if you could.

Lucy: I would. Regardless, this was a cruel thing to do. The queen, your stepmother and the soon-to-be mother of your little sister or brother. *(Pause.)* You're going to be a big sister!!

Zurie: Oh, no.

Lucy: Oh, yes, you are going to love a sibling.

Zurie: I don't want one!

Lucy: You don't know what you want!

Zurie: I don't want a sister and I really do not want a brother!

Lucy: Why do you say that?

Zurie: A sister is just another princess. I have a little sister. A brother would someday be king.

Lucy: There are times you surprise me, times you disappoint me, times you do both.

Zurie: What?!

Lucy: I hear footsteps.

Zurie: I hope it's lunch. I'm starving.

Lucy: I must leave now, little one.

Zurie (emphatically): No, Lucy, please stay, become invisible, or turn into a fly and wait on the wall.

Lucy: I must go, I will be back.

Zurie: I'll become a vegetarian—you can have the meat from my lunch.

Lucy: I dare not become a fly in this cobweb-infested spider trap of a castle tower. If you've nothing to do but hold a pity party, you could clean up this room.

FX: *Footsteps coming from afar (two people).*

Zurie: There are times you are no fun at all. Why don't you just burn the spiders and their webs?

Lucy: I would barbecue you in the process, my dear Zurie. Did you think this through?

Narrator: Zurie runs to the window as Lucy transforms into a falcon and flies away.

Zurie: Come back soon, Lucy—goodbye.

FX: *Footsteps stop. The latch on the door snaps and the door creaks open.*

Zurie: Queen Harriett, I, I did not expect you.

Harriett: Why not, Princess Zurie? Did you think I would not want to walk up all of these stairs just to visit you? It is good for my condition. And for the child I carry, your sibling. After all, you will soon be a big sister again. Oh, you are surprised? Did you think the torture caused by my daughter, with fire from my tongue to my bottom, still incapacitated me?

Zurie: Was it bad?

Harriett: Would you like a bowl of your special soup? I had the cook save you some.

FX: *Footsteps (a servant girl).*

Harriett (to serving girl): Regilee, put the tray down on the table, dear.

Regilee: Yes, Your Majesty.

Harriett: Zurie, you have an important role to play in this kingdom. Your father loves you. I too want to love you, if you help me. I am not your enemy. Watch me, judge my actions. You will learn this to be true. Regilee, please taste all of the dishes you brought for the princess and sit with her while she eats. They are all good and will not harm you.

Regilee: Yes, Your Majesty.

Harriett: Princess Zurie, you will see as you eat, Regilee will not fall ill. Neither will you. When you are finished with your meal, you and Regilee can leave the tower. Zurie, your father will want to see you.

Zurie: Yes, Your Majesty

Harriett: Someday I pray you will want to say, "Yes, mother."

Narrator: Queen Harriett exits, leaving the door open. Zurie and Regilee sit down on opposite sides of the table while Regilee tastes a sample of each dish.

FX: *Footsteps start (1 person) and grow fainter.*

Zurie: Which one do you like best?

Regilee (giggling): The pudding, of course.

Zurie: Then it's yours.

Regilee: Are you certain?

Zurie: If it is really good, you can sneak me some this afternoon.

Regilee: Sneak you some—? All you have to—

FX: *Footsteps stop!*

Zurie: It tastes better if you sneak it.

Regilee: You are so silly at times.

Zurie: And you're so practical!

Regilee: I am but a servant. Practical is the role I must play.

Zurie: You are my friend—so please, sneak me the pudding later as my friend, not bring it to me as a servant.

Regilee: Yes, Princess.

Zurie: I am going to throw my peas at you!

Regilee: Shall I hold my mouth open?

Zurie: They would ruin the pudding. Besides you might miss and then the mice would no longer be hungry. They need to eat the spiders.

Regilee: You are a strange princess and an even stranger girl.

Zurie: Thank you.

Scene II

FX: *Muffled crowd noise: glasses on tables, people chatting, laughing.*

Narrator: In the busy Silver Boar Inn by the wharfs and warehouses outside of the city gates, an attentive, overdressed, cloaked figure sits alone at a corner table, drinking a glass of ale and smoking a pipe while reading a scroll. As the village clock bell strikes three, he stands, walks out the back door then—

FX: *Shuffling footsteps.*

—quietly up the stairs to the rooms above the Inn. He goes to the third door and knocks.

FX: *Knocking on door.*

A female voice bids him enter.

Amelie: Advisor Villian, you are very prompt.

Villian: Counselor Amelie, I am honored by your invitation to speak with you.

Amelie: It has been too long, Villian. We have much to speak about. What news do you have of King Alfrand?

Villian: Amelie! Why should I have news of Alfrand?

Amelie: Why shouldn't you have news of Alfrand? You are one of his most trusted confidants. Here, I have a correspondence between you and Alfrand. Is this not your seal on the letter? This seal on the envelope is King Alfrand's!

Villian: Certainly, this is a forgery, I am loyal to King Henry.

Amelie: I am not judging who you are loyal to. This sealed correspondence was written in code, but it is not a forgery, my dear Villian. It was not impossible to break the code. I strongly suggest you create another and not seal it with magic next time.

Villian: I know not what you are talking about.

Amelie: Sit, Villian. Pour a glass of spiced wine for both of us. This conversation might take longer than you wish.

Villian: I care not to sit and converse—this is preposterous!

Amelie: What is preposterous is your lying and denial. Where are we meeting, Villian? If I were to accuse you of treason, do you think we would be here at this little out-of-the-way inn? We have known each other for many seasons—I do not think you daft. Do not change my opinion now. Please sit down and pour the wine.

Narrator: Villian pours two glasses of wine from the vase on the table while looking very intensely at Amelie. As he sits, he speaks.

Villian: I feel the cloak of silence on the room. Do you mind if I double it?

Amelie: It is not necessary, but if it makes you feel better....

Villian: Thank you for not being offended.

Amelie: I would do the same. Now tell me how does Alfrand plan to win the vote to be the next High King?

Villian: Why do you care? Henry is not seeking the position to rule the seven kingdoms.

Amelie: I care much. Henry might be elected by the other kings because he does NOT seek the position. He is the most trusted amongst a group that can not be trusted. He seeks not power.

Villian: This is a good point. Henry is a likely candidate because he is not a candidate. But why do you want to know Alfrand's plans if our king—your king—is not going to seek the role and will most likely refuse to be the High King if it is offered?

Amelie: This is why I want to know how Alfrand plans to win. It is wise of Henry to not seek and to refuse the role of High King. It would be in his service if I assist you to assist Alfrand to accomplish this.

Villian: I do not trust you.

Amelie: I am not the spy here!

Villian: Touché. I assume from your comments you broke the code, and reading the note is how you know of my assignment and his ambitions.

Amelie: His ambitions are obvious—too obvious. If he is to win over the other six kings in this union, he must play more to their needs. How invested is he in satisfying the needs of Henry? Is he also studying the courts of the other five kings to develop a strategy of negotiation? No offense, Villian, you are lucky to be a trusted advisor in the