

## The 5-time Rejected Gamma & the Lycan King by Stina's Pen Chapter 131

### Chapter 131

After training, back in the hotel, Xandar and Lucianne just came out of the shower when Chief Dalloway's emails came through. With a towel wrapped around her body, Lucianne buttoned-up her mate's dark blue shirt while he blew dry her hair. After Xandar zipped up her black skirt and planted a deep kiss on her neck through her dark blue, high-neck lace blouse, they still had two hours to spare before dinner. 1

Xandar opened up his laptop on the armrest of the couch and started reading the email. He was presented with two documents, one is the transcript of Sebastian's interrogation, the other was the report from interrogating the rogue Lycan before he escaped.

He forwarded the document on the rogue Lycan to the alliance members before opening up the transcript from the interrogation with Sebastian. Lucianne got out her own laptop, and she sat sideways on Xandar's lap, her back facing his laptop before she turned on her device on her own lap.

Without taking his eyes off the screen, Xandar's arm circled her waist like it was the most natural thing for him to do. And Lucianne's head instinctively leaned against his warm chest as she started reading the 70-page report on the rogue Lycan.

Xandar decided to start with the document on Cummings first because it was a much shorter document... and also because Sebastian was his mate's ex-mate. —

‘Question: For the record, what is your relationship with the suspect?’

Answer: I'm her brother.

Q: Have you been in contact with your sister?

A: Not since the day she was arrested. The last time I saw her was in the evening the day before last, when I visited her here in prison.

Q: So, after you left that evening, there were no phone calls, text messages, emails, notes or correspondence of any kind?

A: No.

Q: And have you been in contact with your father lately?

A: ...

Q: Mr Cummings, should I repeat my question?

A: No, no. It's just. No, I haven't been in touch with him either.

Q: When did you last see him?

A: I paid him a visit late in the morning today after he called to tell me that Sasha disappeared. You can check the visitation records. My name should be there.

Q: Do you believe that your father aided in your sister's escape?

A: What? How does that make any sense? If he could get her out, why wouldn't my father get himself out? He is resourceful as a minister but with the current charges against him and with his assets frozen, it doesn't take a genius to come to the conclusion that there is no way he could've helped anyone escape. My sister is no exception.

Q: So, you're saying that your father couldn't have been the one to break Sasha Cummings out of our

facility because the minister is in police custody and his assets are frozen?

A: That's what I said.

Q: Then, could it be you who has helped Sasha Cummings escape, Mr Cummings? Seeing that you are not in police custody and your assets are not frozen, you would have every opportunity to...

A: I didn't break her out.

Q: But you have the means to do it.

A: That doesn't mean I did it! After what she did to Lucia- the Queen, I was relieved that Sasha was imprisoned.

Q: You were happy that your own sister was imprisoned?

A: Happiness may be taking it too far, officer. I was relieved, I'll admit that much. I was relieved knowing that she could hurt...anyone anymore.

Q: When you visited her yesterday, what did you talk about?

A: Don't you have the transcripts to answer that question?

Q: I ask the questions here, Cummings. What did you both talk about?

A: It really wasn't anything important. I asked her why she did it, why she hurt the Queen.

Q: And were you surprised by her answer?

A: Hardly. It's all that she's been saying since the King...found his mate.

Q: So, you've known about her intentions to injure the future Queen but you did nothing to notify anyone?

A: I knew about her intentions to break-up the King and Queen by seducing the King, not by hurting the Queen.

Q: Are you saying that you're unaware of the fact that Sasha Cummings insulted the Queen on the very first day of the collaboration?

A: I am very well-aware of that incident but I didn't see her ability to exacerbate verbal attacks to physical ones. Officer, if you listened to the recording of my visit with Sasha, you'd know that I did not agree with anything she did.

Q:I have listened to it, Mr Cummings. And in that very same conversation, Sasha Cummings said that you both were accomplices when it came to separating the King from the Queen last year.

A: That was Sasha's accusation. What happened last year was not planned.

Q: So, is it true? That you made sure that the Queen-to-be never met the King last year?

A: She wasn't his mate last year. She was mine. I had every right to do what I did. And how is this relevant to my sister's disappearance?

Q: Well, I'm trying to gauge the proximity of your relationship with your sister, to understand how likely or unlikely it is for you both to help each other when one is in trouble. Seeing that she kept the King away from the

Queen, and you kept the Queen away from the King, there seems to be a consensus of goals, don't you think ?

A: I see you're marked, officer. How would you react if some other male's eyes kept finding their way to your mate ? Would you have introduced her to this creature, or would you have kept her away like I did ?

Q: You went against the Crown, Cummings. I didn't. And...

A: For the last time, she was my mate! The King was nothing to her. I did not go against the Crown because there was nothing between them. Nothing. She was bonded to me. Questioning what I did is questioning our Goddess.

Q: So, after the severance, would you say that there was never an occasion where you and your sister both went against the Crown ?

“Xandar, darling. Is everything alright ?” Lucianne's voice of concern pulled Xandar's attention away from his screen. It was only then he realized that his arm around his mate's waist was tightening.

He loosened his grip around her immediately but the worry in Lucianne's black orbs did not fade as she waited for him to speak. A warm smile graced his features before his fingers ran down her hair as he said, “I've fallen in love with you from the first moment I laid my eyes on you, my little freesia.” After pecking a kiss between her eyebrows, he uttered, “I love you.”

Lucianne was still confused. How did reading about a rogue Lycan raise any thoughts of his feelings for her ? “I love you, too, Xandar. Which part of the document are you reading by the way ? I don't see anything that...”

Xandar silenced her with a deep kiss before he uttered, “It’s not the report on the rogue, my love. I’m reading the transcript from Cummings’s interrogation. He mentioned that I couldn’t take my eyes off you in the collaboration last year, which pissed him off quite a bit. It seems this beast has been under your spell even before we met, before we were bonded.”

Lucianne blinked, trying to keep up with her mate’s train of thought before she uttered in confusion, “As romantic as that is, dearest, why was it in the transcript? How does that connect to Sasha’s disappearance?”

He brushed his nose against the bridge of her nose as he explained, “The police suspect that the brother may have helped the sister escape.”

“Did he?”

“It doesn’t seem likely for now. But I haven’t reached the end yet. I’ll let you know when I’m done, sweetheart.” Another kiss on her temple, and his eyes returned to his screen but that was when a small hand reached for his cheek.

Lucianne turned his face towards hers. With a shy smile and her doe-eyes, she said in a soft voice, “For what’s worth, I’ve always thought you’re the most handsome creature I’ve ever seen, even before we met.”

“Is that so?” Xandar asked flirtatiously as he tucked a loose strand behind her ear. He even felt his animal’s ears perk up at Lucianne’s confession.

Lucianne started blushing when his thumb stroked the warmth on her cheek as she admitted, “It is. From afar, you’ve always looked...brooding and maybe a little scary but I don’t know why, I just never felt intimidated by you. I’m not sure if the others felt the same way

but to me, there's always this...confidence and...assurance that you bring into a room which makes your people feel...looked after in some way. It's kind of hard to explain. Even when you don't smile and look...menacing on most occasions back then, there was never a time I felt...unsafe in your presence."

Xandar felt a gentle warmth embracing his heart, making him peck a kiss on her lips before he declared," Not feeling unsafe is not enough, Lucy. I want you to feel safe when you're with me, completely safe."

"I do. That was last year, before we met. I do feel safe with you now, Xandar. More than safe, actually."

"That's good." Xandar uttered before his animal had the sudden urge to tease their flustering mate so he said, "And, my dear, maybe you've never been intimidated by this menacing beast because of your unusual tendency to venture into dangerous waters."

"So, you're saying that I shouldn't have such tendencies, my King?" Lucianne challenged with a coquettish smirk in return

"It's far too late for that, my Queen." He pecked a kiss on her palm before he pouted, "You wouldn't want to break this poor beast's heart by staying away now, do you, my love?"

Lucianne continued tracing his eyebrows as she muttered, "I don't think I could even if I wanted to. Staying away from you would hurt too much, Xandar."

Xandar's Lycan cooed when Lucianne's words showered it with a blissful waterfall of love, affection and devotion. Their lips collided until they became breathless, and they reluctantly tore their eyes away from each other to return their attention to the documents on their screens.

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Xandar picked up from where he left off:

Q: So, after the severance, would you say that there was never an occasion where you and your sister both went against the Crown?

A: I would never work with anyone to hurt the Queen, not even if it's with my sister.

Q: That wasn't the question, Cummings. Did you or did you not try to come between the King and Queen in the past two weeks?

A: No.

Q: Not even with what could seem to be an innocent act?

A: Officer, if you already have an occasion in mind, just lay it on the table so I can explain myself.

Q: It is rumored that you attempted to gift a book to the Queen early last week.

A: That was just a friendly gesture. I remember she loved to read. She didn't accept it, by the way.

Q: And did that make you upset?

A: Upset enough to regret I didn't do well by her? Yes. Upset enough to join forces with my sister to break the mate-bond she now shares with the King? No.

Q: Very well... there was also something else you and your sister both said when you visited her. You asked Sasha Cummings if she knew something you didn't know about your father. What did you mean by that?

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A: Well, when Sasha asked me whether I would continue supporting my father even if he is later found guilty, there was this...glint in her eye, like she was challenging me. I just asked her that question on a hunch. She looked like she knew more than she was letting on.

Q: Do you think she knew more than she let on?

A: I don't know. It's hard to say. Sometimes, she would have threats up her sleeve but most of the time, she just wants to look like she has the upper hand to make you lose faith in yourself.

Q: Would you regard your relationship with your sister as being strained?

A: Yes.

Q: Would you say that your relationship is strained enough to perhaps....get rid of her?

A: What are you suggesting? That I break her out of prison, transport her somewhere and then kill her myself? Seriously? She was already removed from society when she was in police custody. I didn't abduct her, neither did I help her escape.

Q: Where were you between 11:30 pm to 1 a.m. the night before last?

A: At home. In my bed. Sleeping.

Q: Is there anyone to confirm your whereabouts ?

A: No.

Q: Not even your neighbors ?

A: I moved out of the family home a day before my father was arrested. I'm now living in the penthouse apartment on the twenty-sixth floor of my office building. I'll gladly have my people send over the security footage of the office floors to verify what I just said.

1. Yes, that would be helpful. As for leaving the family home, why ?

A Let's just say it was getting suffocating there.

Q.Please elaborate, Cummings.

A Well since last year, I haven't been able to tolerate my sister the way I always could.

Q:And why is that ? Is it because she has a tendency to gravitate towards the darker parts of society ?

A: What ? No! Sasha's just crazy. She's not evil. Just...crazy.

Q: Crazy enough to make the suitable connections to escape prison ?

A: No, her craziness isn't the type that attracts that form of resources. It's just the type that drives everyone around her crazy. If I were to be honest, escaping prison seems to exceed her own skill set and expertise. I mean, she can't even sneak out of our family home in the middle of the night without waking my dad or me, or even us both sometimes. Escaping

prison, with guards on all entrances and exits... it's just not possible for her.

1. When you think of a possible person who may help her escape, who comes to mind?

A: (pause) No one I can think of.

Q: Not even an uncle?

A: What uncle?

1. On our record, a certain Mr Richard Morland visited your sister a few hours before your visit. Morland is your late mother's family name, isn't it?

A: Yes, but my mother had no brothers. Only a sister who remains a spinster, living in Iceland. We haven't been in touch in decades. I doubt she ever married this person who came yesterday.

Q: Is your aunt not the type to wed?

A: No, it's not that. Aunt Carol is a homosexual, and she eloped with her bonded mate after my grandparents objected to their union.

1. I see. Could it be one of Sasha Cummings's friends, perhaps?

A It couldn't have been. They were more or less like her. You know, they'd just spend their time squandering their parents' money on material items and drinking.

Q It would seem like you've met her friends. Are you familiar with a close associate of your sister's, a Ms Livia Aphael?

A: Y-Yes.

Q: Care to explain your familiarity with this woman?

A: Sh-She was my sister's closest friend. They're still very close, if I'm not mistaken.

Q: And what about you? How close are you to her?

A: I'm not

Q: Are you sure?

A: Yes. She was just my sister's friend. That's it.

Q: So, apart from the fact that she was your sister's friend, she was nothing more to you?

A:...

Q: Answer the question, Cummings.

A: I just don't see how this is relevant.

Q: Until I have my answer, I can't see the relevance either. And avoiding the question would just prompt me to put a red flag on this particular issue.

A: We had sex. Once. That's it.

Q: So, during the course of your intimate relationship with...

A: There was no intimacy. It was just sex. My heart had always belonged to another.

Q: During that short stint with Livia Aphael, did she mention anything about being able to do things that a normal creature couldn't do?

A: Like what?

Q: Break someone out of prison, perhaps?

A: No. Nothing came close to that. The only thing she'd go on and on about in the bars was how sexually attractive the Duke is to her...

Q: The Duke, Christian Blackfur?

A: No. The other Duke, Greg Claw.

Q: I see. Anything else?

A: Well, she also loved bragging about being a relative of the Kyltons but I honestly don't see why she does it. They've been gone for years since the King refused the heiress's hand.

Q: Did she ramble about anything else?

A: With me? No. With my sister...do you really want to know, officer? They'd just gossip about the daughters of the other ministers. Like how one is too tall, one has no taste, one would scare any man away. I wouldn't be of much help here. I can't even remember what they said about which one of them.

Q: I see. So, from your understanding. Livia Aphael and Greg Claw share a close relationship?

A: No, that would be misleading. From the way it looked, Livia may be intimately interested with the Duke but the Duke didn't seem to reciprocate.

Q: A one-sided interest, you mean ?

A: Yes, that's about right.

Q: So, seeing that she liked him. It's possible that she helped him disappear ?

A: Disappear ? Greg Claw disappeared ? Why aren't you questioning Livia about all of this ?

Q: Because she has disappeared as well, Mr Cummings.

A: When ?

Q: That's what we were hoping you could tell us.

A: How would I tell you ? I mean, I would if I knew but how would I know ? I haven't spoken to Livia for over a year ! Whenever she visited Sasha, I'd leave the house ! I am far from being privy of her whereabouts, officer

Q: When was the last time you saw Livia Aphael ?

A: Uh. I don't know. Last month, I think. She came over for a gossip session with Sasha. I don't know how long she stayed. I was out of the house within two minutes of hearing her voice.

Q: I see. Is there anything else you feel the need to mention, Cummings ?

A: (a pause) Yesterday when I visited Sasha, she was...unusually calm. Normally, when something happens to her, something that takes away her freedom, she'd go crazy and throw a fit. But yesterday, she was calm when we talked about the severity of her situation. It was odd.

Q: And what do you gather from that ?

A: I don't know. It's still a puzzle to me. My best guess is that she was calm because she already knew she wasn't going to be in here for long. Maybe she thought I would eventually bail her out, not that it would happen seeing that she attacked the King and...Queen. I don't know, officer. My sister can hardly maintain a level head throughout anything, let alone something that curtails her liberty.

Q: I see. Anything else ?

A: (a pause) Nothing I can think of at the moment.

Q: Alright, then. Thank you for your time, Mr Cummings. We'll contact you should we need any further information.

When Xandar clicked open the document on the rogue Lycan, he felt Lucianne trying to remove his arm on her waist so he held her tighter and asked, "Where are you going?"

She placed her phone on his lap, and said bathroom' before breaking loose and heading for the toilet. Xandar lifted up her phone, and saw that it was a reminder to be ready for dinner. After smiling to himself, he skimmed through the first three pages of the report before they left for the dining hall together.

Everyone was surprised to see the Duchess making an appearance after all these years. Seeing how welcoming Lucianne was with Annie, the wolves welcomed her into their circle with utmost respect and courtesy. Many of them warmed up to her almost instantly. The Lycans, however, were a completely different story.

Some were courteous but those who remembered her from almost two decades ago forced smiles and formal gestures as the gears in their heads

turned, thinking of a subtle way to make the Duchess feel small the same way Lucianne had made so many of their friends feel inferior in the past couple of weeks.

Lucianne was speaking to General Langford and a few Lycan warriors with Xandar by her side. Christian left the dining hall to have a change of clothes after one of Marie Martin's sons accidentally spilled red wine over his white shirt. After Annie spoke to a few wolves with Luna Hale's help, she decided that she wanted a drink and headed for the refreshments table. Annie was taking a sip of white wine when she suddenly felt a presence drawing near.

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"Your Grace, it's a pleasure to meet you." The young female Lycan said and offered an obligatory bow to Annie.

Annie returned the gesture and smiled warmly at the brown-haired beauty as she said, "It's a pleasure to meet you too. May I know your name?"

"I'm Dorothy Dawson, your Grace. I'm here as someone's plus-one. And if I may, your Grace, I have a burning question that I hope you don't mind me asking." Her green eyes sparked mischief as her pastel lips curled up into a grin, showing her braces holding the two rows of teeth together.

Annie continued smiling as she asked amicably, "What would you like to know, Dorothy?"

"How do you do it, your Grace? How do you be okay with...not being able to give the Duke a child?"

Annie's eyebrows raised in surprise before she asked in concern, "Dorothy, are you facing pregnancy problems? Because..." 1

"Oh, I'm not, your Grace. I doubt I would. I just wanted to know how you mustered the self-esteem to stand next to the second most powerful creature in the Kingdom with so little to offer." She blinked her green eyes like she was just asking an innocent question, when in fact, it was clearly an attempt to make Annie feel small and unworthy. 1

When Annie realized what Dorothy was doing, the Duchess put aside her sympathy she initially felt for this young woman before she said, "A woman is more than a baby-making machine, Dorothy. I'm here to support my husband as a wife and as Duchess."

"But we've never seen you before in these things. Why the sudden need for support? Is the Duke facing a certain problem that requires your presence with him?" There was that glint in her eye again. She knew more than she was saying. Seeing that Annie was speechless, Dorothy continued, "Your Grace, you seem a little tongue-tied. I hope I didn't make you uncomfortable. I was simply trying to understand the level of self-entitlement one requires to..."

"To join a government event and speak to anyone she pleases?"

Lucianne's stern voice came loud and strong from the side. The fast clicks of her heels itself exudes confidence.

Xandar mind-linked her that Annie needed help when his sharp hearing caught bits of the conversation between the Duchess and Dorothy.

Lucianne abruptly paused her own conversation with Phelton and excused herself before making quick steps towards the Duchess.

"Your Highnesses." Dorothy bowed in the King and Queen's way. They both nodded curtly in acknowledgment.

When Dorothy's head was raised, she let out a light chuckle before she said, "Well, this is quite a surprise. I didn't expect to have the opportunity to speak to you so soon, my Queen." She knew that pleasing Lucianne was more important than pleasing the King, so her efforts were solely to butter-up the wolf, as much as she was dreading it on the inside.

Lucianne smiled menacingly as she said, "Well, perhaps you didn't expect to speak to a Queen-to-be but creature-to-creature, we've already spoken in last year's collaboration, Dorothy Dawson."

Her eyes widened in genuine surprise at Lucianne knowing her full name even without an introduction. Dorothy faked an apologetic look as she said, "Oh, this is embarrassing. I don't seem to recall our

encounter, your Highness." On the inside, she prayed that she didn't do anything to insult her. 1

Her prayers were denied when Lucianne said, "Hm. That's hardly surprising. I doubt you remember the number of wolves you insulted in the ladies room last year. When I was defending my Luna after you insulted her dressing, you told me to shut my mouth before you used your boyfriend's influence to burn my pack to the ground." Dorothy froze in fear as Xandar's eyes turned onyx. And as if the King's seething anger wasn't enough, Dorothy began to feel something else.

There was something radiating from Lucianne, an energy which was compelling Dorothy to avert her gaze and hold her head down. Even Xandar and Annie felt it. Dorothy's mouth quivered, and her mind suddenly felt like a vacant room. Hollow, cold and lonely. Her own animal was covering its eyes and curled into a ball in fear of what was going to happen next.

Just then, Christian returned and asked Annie cheerfully, “Hey, sorry I took so long. What did I miss?” Registering the daunting energy from the Queen, his cousin’s onyx orbs, and his mate’s discomfort, Christian’s smile faltered as he studied the woman before them.

A young man appeared by Dorothy’s side, and bowed without greeting the royals. He then tugged Dorothy’s arm as he whispered, “Dory, what are you doing? Come on.”

Lucianne’s sights shifted to him as she asked, “Mr Martin, is this your girlfriend?”

“Uh...y-yes, my Queen.” The young blonde responded carefully. The chatters in the hall were dying down.

“What an interesting creature you’ve chosen, one who has the audacity to question the presence of a Duchess.” Lucianne noted, making Christian’s own eyes turn onyx.

Herbert Martin immediately fell on one knee before he apologized, “I am deeply sorry for my girlfriend’s... insubordination, my Queen. Please, forgive us. It won’t happen again.” Like his girlfriend, he knew better than to anger the Queen.

It was clear from the collaboration mishaps that if the King was angered, the Queen would calm him. But the King himself would never think of restraining his mate from unleashing her wrath on any of them. The whole dining hall was silent at this point when everyone saw a Lycan kneeling before Lucianne.

Toby, from afar, muttered to himself, “Oh, goddess. What now, Lucy?” Juan and Hale were getting worried, too.

Lucianne looked at Herbert Martin, who, in the previous year, touched her lower back with no remorse before she slapped him. He smirked coyly in return like she did no damage to his very thick skin. Lucianne would've pounced on him right then and there if Juan hadn't held her back. Tate and Toby growled to shoo Herbert away before Juan released his grip on his frantic sister. As furious as they all were at what happened, they knew that challenging a Lycan would never end well for the wolf so the matter was swept under the mat. But that was last year.

This year, Lucianne was not going to let Herbert or his girlfriend get away with disrespecting her or Annie. Lucianne simpered, "Insubordination, Mr Martin? That's putting it too lightly, don't you think? This is a matter of willful disrespect, the respect that should be given to any individual, not just to a superior figure in the Kingdom."

Lucianne's sights returned to Dorothy before she said, "You seem a little tongue-tied, Ms Dawson. I hope I didn't make you uncomfortable. I was simply trying to understand the level of self-entitlement one requires to poke into the personal life of another."

After a moment, Dorothy quivered as she said, "I-I apologize, my Queen."

"Whatever for? Was I the one you said those insidious words to?" Lucianne continued to press mercilessly.

Dorothy's head raised to meet Annie's eyes before Christian's glare compelled her to look down as she uttered as loudly as she could manage, "I'm sorry, your Grace. I am so sorry for my behavior."

Herbert stood slowly, and placed an arm over his girlfriend's shoulder before he asked cautiously, "I can assure you that it won't happen again, your Graces. Would you forgive her?"

Annie threw Lucianne a grateful smile, which seemed to have calmed Christian a little. The Duchess gave Herbert and Dorothy a nod, and one could see the relief in their eyes as they started taking steps back.

Just then, Lucianne spoke again, “Now, where are you two going?”

Their relief vaporized as Lucianne noted, “Forgiveness is not a dismissal. None of us have dismissed you two yet.”

The two stood rooted to their spot, and Xandar had to close his eyes to take a whiff from his mate’s hair to calm himself as Lucianne spoke, “Dorothy, what business do you have here?”

\*I-I’m his plus-one, y-your Highness.” “That wasn’t the question, Dorothy. I asked: what business do you have here? In other words, what contribution are you intending to make by being here? Are you here to contribute as a minister, a future minister, a warrior, a leader, an expert, perhaps?”

“N-No, my Queen.”

“And you, Mr Martin. Are you here as a future minister, the son who will follow in his mother’s footsteps?” Lucianne questioned. Anyone could hear the sarcasm in her voice, and things weren’t any better when everyone knew that his mother was arrested for corruption charges.

“W-Well, I hope to do better, my Queen.”

“Better how?”

He was dumbfounded. No one had ever asked him that before. He fumbled over his words unintelligibly for a moment before Xandar decided he had had enough of the nonsense. The King pecked a sweet

kiss on his mate's temple before he glared at the two youngsters and said, "If you two have no business here, then you shouldn't be here in the first place. Do you need to be escorted out?"

"N-No, my King. We'll take our leave now. Thank you."

As they made their way out, Lucianne pecked a kiss on Xandar's jawline. The lilac shades were returning as they focused on her soft, black orbs but the moment was short-lived when Xandar's eyes caught something at the dining hall entrance.

Lucianne turned to see what her mate was seeing, and was surprised to see two policemen behind four ministers. The two men in uniform stood in front of Herbert and Dorothy, preventing them from leaving. And the four ministers were pacing towards the royals in quick steps.

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The four ministers felt the tension the moment they stepped foot into the hall. With their heads held low, they knelt on one knee before the royals as they uttered, "Your Highnesses. Your Graces."

Lucianne smiled graciously as she spoke in a much gentler voice, "Yarrington, Weaver, Pamela and Vanessa, it's so nice that you four could join us tonight, despite your current workload."

Her warmth was contagious, and the atmosphere of the room took a 360-degree turn, their mood easing with the Queen's mellowed voice. Xandar matched his mate's smile as he said, "Stand, ministers." 3

They stood, all looking less fearful than before. Yarrington then handed a grey folder to Christian as he started explaining, “We’ve negated the last two complaints made against you, your Grace. I’ve asked Vanessa and Pamela to trace the roots of the complaints, and they found that all ten false allegations were made from the same IP address.” He then looked behind him as he said, “Vanessa, it’s your cue.”

When Yarrington stepped aside, Vanessa looked mostly at the encouraging Lucianne and Annie as she spoke, “Basically, we traced the complaints to the location that it was sent from. Oddly and coincidentally, all ten were made from the same IP address and the same device, a laptop registered under the name of Herbert Horasho Martin’, and the IP address is the Dawson residence.”

“Huh.” Lucianne muttered in response as all eyes fell on the two Lycans who were as white as sheets at this point. 2

Christian and Xandar growled at the young couple so fiercely that they even made Dorothy burst into tears. For the first time, Lucianne didn’t stop Xandar. She was equally enraged. The click-clack of Lucianne’s heels and Dorothy’s sobs were the only sounds in the dining hall when Lucianne walked towards them.

Xandar, Christian and Annie were not far behind her. Every Lycan and wolf held their heads low when they walked past. When Lucianne was right in front of them, Dorothy sobbed even louder. The couple would leave but they doubted that the two policemen behind them would let them go.

Lucianne didn’t bother faking a smile and asked curtly, “Why did you both do it?”

Herbert opened his mouth but nothing came out. Dorothy continued to sob as she spoke incoherently, “I didn’t w-want to. Her-ber-t made me.”

Herbert seemed taken aback as he hissed, “It was your idea, Dory! I was just ranting after mom got arrested!”

Xandar then spat, “So, you decided to take your anger out on the Duke?!” His thunderous voice echoed in the quiet hall, making Dorothy sob even louder.

Herbert fidget uneasily as he said almost in a whisper, “Your Highness, it m-meant to be a j-joke...”

“A joke?!” The strength of Annie’s voice scared many, especially the young couple. And she wasn’t finished. “Do you have any idea of the distress you’ve caused me and my mate, along with the King and Queen?! How dare you make false allegations against an innocent?!”

Seeing that the only way out was to beg for mercy, they knelt in front of Annie and Christian as Dorothy begged, “We’re s-sorry, your Graces. Plea-se, it was a mistake. A mistake we’ll r-regret for the rest of our lives. P-Please, spare us.”

“Spare you?” Christian asked rhetorically in a low, homicidal tone. “You both didn’t have the decency to

respect the system in place to deal with sexual harassment. You made allegations against someone defending the system. You acted with nothing but slanderous intentions, and you have the gall to ask us t o spare you?”

Dorothy tried begging again, “It... It was a mistake. A very big mistake.”

“And it’s one you’ll regret making for the rest of your lives, correct?” Lucianne asked, to which Dorothy hastily replied, “Yes! Yes, of course.” Herbert nodded aggressively in response as well, thinking that the Queen may be offering them a way out.

Lucianne smiled and said, “Very well, then. You can spend your lives regretting it in prison.” She gave the policemen an affirmative nod to cuff them.

“What?” Dorothy uttered in disbelief as she was being cuffed, expecting the little wolf to have mercy or at least some respect for Lycans, the superior species!

Lucianne’s voice was laced with dark humour when she said, “Why are you so shocked, Ms Dawson? Don’t you know the law on fabricating evidence? Allow me to enlighten you: it’s an imprisonment term of fifty years and forty strokes of the whip with Oleander cuffs on to suppress healing. But seeing that you both fabricated evidence against a member of the royal family, the punishment is imprisonment for life, along with five strokes of the whip every single day until you both die. Does that put things into perspective?”

Dorothy was horrified when she muttered, “No. No no no no no. That can’t happen. Please, your Highness. I am starting an internship next month. My parents were so proud when my application was approved.”

Lucianne responded without missing a beat, “You can tell your parents and your future employer that there has been a change in plans. That, or you can leave it to tomorrow’s news to notify them of what you’ve been up to with your boyfriend lately.”

“No no no…” Dorothy continued to mutter.

Xandar then said, “Get them out of our sight.”

“Yes, my King.” The policemen took them away from the hall with Dorothy still muttering an endless stream of ‘nos’ like a jammed robot.

After they left, the two cousins gave each other a brotherly hug. The ordeal was finally over. The four ministers came forward, and the royals thanked all of them. Seeing that they could manage the complaints so efficiently, Xandar and Christian opted to step aside to let them finish what they started while the cousins themselves focused on the rogue attacks.

Before leaving the dining hall, Xandar called for a government meeting first thing in the morning the very next day. Although it was a Saturday, no one dared question his decision because with so many ministers gone, the work was piling up. Either new appointments had to be made, or the work had to be taken up by those in the clear.

When Xandar and Lucianne were walking back to the hotel, something came to his mind. The energy he felt radiating from Lucianne back in the hall when she spoke to Dorothy felt stronger than any ordinary creature’s emotions. He suddenly recalled feeling her inspirational fighting spirit right before the rogues appeared in Forest Gloom as well. There was also the fact that Lucianne seemed to always be able to control the atmosphere in any room they were in.

After concluding that his mate may have some sort of innate ability, Xandar started their conversation as they entered the elevator, “Babe?”

“Yes, darling?” Lucianne asked affectionately as she stroked his cheek.

He leaned into her touch as he asked softly, “What did you do to make Martin’s girlfriend hold her head down like she did?”

Lucianne got confused so she asked, “What do you mean? She held her head down before all of us, even before Annie and Christian.”

“No, sweetheart.” He held her hand on his cheek, and pecked a kiss on her palm before he explained,” Right before Christian came in, when you were talking about her threat to burn Blue Crescent to the ground, you radiated an energy.”

“Did I?”

“You didn’t feel it?”

Ding!

As they stepped out through the elevator doors, Lucianne said nonchalantly, “I just felt angry, darling. Maybe it was my radiating anger you felt.”

That didn’t convince Xandar at all. He continued to think about it, and as he followed Lucianne into her room, he said, “Lucy, I think you radiated something different, an Authority”

Lucianne paused in taking off her shoes as she asked in surprise, “I’m sorry, Xandar. Could you repeat that? I don’t think I heard you right.” He looked at her with pride as he approached her, and with his rough hands on both her shoulders, his eyes sparked excitement as he whispered firmly, “You radiated an Authority, Lucy. The Queen’s Authority”

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Lucianne took a moment to digest whatever Xandar had just told her before she blinked to bring herself out of her daze and asked, “Is there even such a thing?”

Xandar's thumb tried to smoothen the lines on her tense forehead as he explained, "Not in a long time, sweetheart."

After another moment of thinking, Lucianne said, "That makes no sense. I am not even a Queen, at least not in technical terms."

Xandar smiled wider as he whispered excitedly, "That's the thing! You've been our Queen long before anyone knew! Lucy, this is amazing!"

"Are you sure, Xandar? Don't you have to mark me before I even stand a chance to get that power?"

"Well, you just proved that I don't need to." Xandar said matter-of-factly,

Lucianne was still skeptical. "No, that can't be right. How do you even measure the level of energy required before it can be regarded as..."

Xandar planted a deep kiss on her lips before he released them to explain, "There's never a need to measure such a power, my love. You felt the King's Authority before. There's no explanation for it, you just feel it."

Lucianne pondered for a moment before she asked, "How do you feel yours when you radiate it?"

"Uh...it's basically just emotions associated with the need to emit the Authority"

"What does that mean?" She cocked her head to one side and asked in bewilderment,

Xandar's hand went to touch the back of his neck as he explained, "Well, uh...when I want to activate the King's Authority, I think of the person

I'm trying to compel. And I couple that intention with a reason for the compulsion, harnessing the emotions that come with that reason."

His lilac eyes met her black ones, and his voice turned soft as he continued, "In the rogue's case the other day, the reason was to keep you safe at all costs. I harness all the emotions I felt from needing to keep you safe. The stronger the reason, the stronger the emotions, the more powerful the Authority will be."

"Huh." Lucianne continued to ponder before muttering, "I was definitely motivated by the need to keep Blue Crescent safe when I glared down at Dawson."

"Did you feel a warmth in your chest forming an invisible field around your body?"

"Yes, but isn't that just radiating anger?"

He took her hands into his as he continued to ask in excitement, "And did you feel like you were deliberately directing that warmth towards Dawson?"

Lucianne looked at him in confusion as she said, "Of course. Isn't that what everyone does with their emotions?"

Xandar chuckled before cupping her cheeks and pecking a kiss on her lips before saying, "No, Lucy. Not everyone can do that. Everyone can emit an energy around their bodies but no one can direct it to another individual, not unless they're cloaked with an Authority."

Lucianne was lost for words, and the only thing she could say was, "Huh. Probably explains why the

wolves listened to me without question when I'm pissed-off with their pack-to-pack rivalry." Another short moment, and she said, "I wasn't

able to do such a thing when I defended Luna Hale in the ladies room last year though.”

“It takes very strong emotions to activate the Authority, Lucy. Odds are, you were holding back to avoid a confrontation with a Lycan.” That was true. Rule number one for any wolf: never pick a fight with a Lycan, any Lycan.

Lucianne then asked, “But if I do have...such a power, why wasn’t I able to use it on the Lycans before until tonight? I wasn’t always in control of my temper. But I definitely didn’t radiate such an energy with Martin’s sons, Caunterberg and numerous others who pissed me off last year. Why is it that I’m only able to do it now?”

Xandar sighed as he stroked her cheek, and said sadly, “Maybe it’s because your need to defend Blue Crescent far exceeds your need to defend yourself.”

Lucianne couldn’t mask her surprise. That was true. It had always been true. She’d fight to death to protect her pack and everyone in it. But she couldn’t remember the last time she put herself first. There was always something or someone that would take priority over her own life.

After taking a few breaths to calm herself, she asked, “So, I have this... Authority-like thing because—”

“Babe, it’s not ‘Authority-like’. What you have is an Authority. Own it.” Xandar said with a large and proud

grin.

“Uh...do I have it because I was adopted by a family of pack leaders?”

Xandar thought for a moment before he said, “No, I don’t think so, Lucy. Lunas don’t have such powers, do they?” 1

“Oh, good point. Hm...too much time with the then-Alpha Ken and now-Alpha Juan, perhaps?”

Xandar narrowed his eyes. “Lucy, you and I both know the only one among the wolves with such a power are the Alphas. No matter how close anyone is with them, the power doesn’t...spread. And I can tell you right now that I feel nothing when Alphas radiate their Authorities to their pack members. But I felt yours, sweetheart. What you have is something stronger. With enough knowledge on how to channel it, yours may be even as strong as the King’s Authority.” 2

Lucianne just stared at her mate, unable to believe that she was bestowed the archaic power that was only known to be wielded by Alphas and Kings. Xandar grew worried with her ensuing silence so he stroked her cheek as he asked, “Baby, you okay?”

She blinked and shook her head a little before she said, “Yeah, yeah. It’s just...” she took a deep breath and exhaled before she exclaimed in a whisper, “Wow!”

Xandar chuckled lightly before kissing her forehead and said, “Let’s just take a shower and get some sleep, my love. We have a busy day tomorrow.”

Lucianne came out of her shock and smirked, “No, darling. Not ‘we’. You have a busy day tomorrow. I’ll be here reading up on techniques to weaken your animal before I eventually take it down.”

Her challenge turned on a switch in Xandar, and he pressed her waist to the wall as he uttered in a tone which left no room for argument, “Lucy,

you're the Queen. You are expected to be at the meeting with us tomorrow."

Lucianne tried to ignore her wolf which got excited whenever Xandar pinned her to the wall like that as

she asked, "Has an unofficially-crowned Queen ever attended such a meeting before?"

"No, so you'll be the first." Xandar insisted.

"Darling, I love you but don't you think you're breaking a few too many rules for me? Getting everyone to call me by that title is one thing but allowing me to attend government meetings and be privy to those discussions when I'm not supposed to isn't exactly legal."

Xandar smirked cockily as he peered into her eyes and asked, "Says who?"

"The law, I guess?" Lucianne responded meekly

Xandar scoffed, and his hands moved down to both sides of her bum before he said, "My dear, the law says that the Queen may attend to 'any' government matters. And the Queen', by legal definition, means the King's mate. There is no mention of a need for a coronation before the King's mate can exercise the powers and enjoy the privileges of a Queen." 1

After pecking a kiss on her lips, he uttered in his deep, alluring voice, "I'm the King. You're my mate. So, you're the Queen. And, by law, you have every right to be with us tomorrow."

"Oh." Lucianne responded as she internalized his words, controlling her arousal while she was at it. Her wolf really didn't make things easy for

her with how it was walking seductively in her mind, prompting her human part to do the same to their mate.

“Hmm...that’s still not a yes, my Queen. Looks like I have to seduce you until I get the answer that I want.” Xandar’s arousal began filling the air around them.

Lucianne gave up holding back her own arousal as she replaced her look of contemplation with a flirtatious expression when she asked, “Weren’t you already going to do that in the shower, my indecent beast?”

Xandar was surprised by her response, and the way she looked at him made his animal emit the dangerous yet alluring growl, the one which instigated Lucianne’s arousal. Xandar lifted Lucianne up and carried her over his shoulder, squeezing her bum with his free hand to elicit her cute moans as he made his way to the bathroom.

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Some significant distance from the hotel, an underground casino just opened for business. The place was filled with large roulette tables, brightly-lit slot machines, gambling chips and numerous decks of cards. Lycans who crowded the place cheered for their friends, booed their opponents, slammed the tables at losses, and treated everyone to a round of drinks at victories.

A female Lycan was searching high and low before finally locating the person she came for. She casually slid into the seat opposite him in his private booth, seemingly undaunted by his menacing expression. When she smirked, he asked, “Do you want me to throw you out again, Livia?”

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## Chapter 136

Livia was undaunted despite Greg's hostility. She flicked her high ponytail to the back to expose her bare shoulders, and leaned towards the table between her and the Duke. Her red-colored, sweetheart neckline dress did everything to advertise her cleavage as she said, "I came with a proposition, your Grace."

"Not interested. Get out, Livia. Don't make me tell you again." Greg snapped, and took another sip from his glass as he averted his eyes from her and started staring into space while he waited for her to leave.

Livia simpered, and leaned back into her seat as she signaled the bartender for a drink before returning her sights to Greg. His eyes had turned onyx, and it was nothing close to lust. Livia was well-aware of that this time.

"That's it." Greg signaled his men and the bouncers approached his table in quick steps.

"Before you do that, you might want to think about what would happen to a certain wolf if you threw me out." Livia uttered his way in a taunting manner.

Greg's hand raised without needing to think, halting his three men at the exact moment they had reached his table. His voice was low when he asked, "You're threatening me?"

Livia's lips pursed in contemplation for a brief second before they flatten themselves out when she said, "No, a threat seems murderous. I prefer the word 'warn' or 'caution'."

"And if I don't heed to your warning, you'll do what? Hurt the Queen?"

“Something like that.”

“I applaud how you’re not turning red in embarrassment right now. We both know you have no skill set to accomplish that. And you’re far from having such connections.”

“Who said that the connections are mine?”

Greg was a little surprised to hear that. “Hm. Been making friends, I see.”

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“Something like that.”

“You’re an idiot to think you can hurt the Queen, by the way. She’s stronger than you think, and her allies would do anything to defend her.” Greg said in utmost confidence.

Livia smirked arrogantly as she said, “Funny how they couldn’t protect her from her most recent...mishap.”

His eyes burned into hers when he asked, “What mishap?”

Livia mocked a surprised expression as she said, “You don’t know? She went off to fight a few rogues with her friends yesterday. They thought they were winning until an arrow no one saw impaled right through her flesh.”

“Wolves heal, you fool.” Greg muttered. But internally, his heart clenched when Livia mentioned Lucianne was hurt by an arrow. What the f\*ck was his cousin doing?! How many times will he let Lucianne get hurt before he learned to protect her?!

Livia saw the flash of hurt come and leave Greg's eyes. Her calm demeanor was beginning to fade with the jealousy building in her chest as she spat, "No, your Grace. You're the fool! You're a fool if you think the arrow was just an arrow!"

If it were possible, Greg's already-onyx eyes turned a shade darker as he demanded to know, "What did you do to her?"

Livia emitted a low growl at how protective he was to another woman before she declared firmly, "Nothing she doesn't deserve! You've always been proud of your connections and resources. Well, now's the time to put them to good use and find out for yourself what happened to the woman you can never get."

Greg growled ferociously, and the casino started to quiet down. One of his men held Livia by her neck on the Duke's command. The crowd watched in shock at Livia gritting her teeth to cope with the discomfort of being strangled, her fingernails scratching the bouncer's large hand, a desperate plea to be released, but to no avail.

Livia adamantly fixed her eyes on Greg as she choked out, "If.....die...so will...she."

Greg's merciless gaze turned hesitant. He knew that Livia never had the resources to hurt a fly, let alone kill Lucianne. But she was never one to make empty threats. She never made any threats, to be honest. He thought hard about whether Lucianne would be harmed if his men killed Livia right then and there.

Lucianne was strong. But the people around her were not. The Oleander blade she took for the child proved that she was still susceptible to injuries and even...death. The thought of Lucianne's death on his hands

was too painful to be pushed aside, and Greg reluctantly gave a hand signal for his man to release Livia.

After Livia fell on the floor and took in the air she needed, she pushed herself up, and Greg asked impatiently, “What’s your price?”

Livia scoffed darkly. “You think that’s what I want? Money?”

“In the black market, ‘price’ includes favors of some kind, newbie. Now, name your price.”

Livia smirked like she struck gold. With her forearm on the table, she leaned in to whisper into Greg’s ear, “My price...is you.”

Greg tried not to show how nauseated he felt by her perfume and her request. His face remained unperturbed when Livia pulled herself back to study his reaction. When she got nothing, she asked, “Well?”

“You have to be more specific. What does that entail? My resources?”

“No. We just want you on our side.”

“Our side?”

“Yes. The more capable minds we have on board, the quicker we’ll be able to get what we all want.”

“And you’re saying you can help me get what I want?”

“We can. If you help us, too, that is.”

“And what do I want?”

Livia responded in confidence, “You want everything the King has. The throne, the power, the influence.”

‘Not even close’, Greg thought. After he realized that he had fallen for Lucianne, all he wanted was for her to be safe and happy. But he wasn’t going to give Livia a reason to hurt her. So, he continued the conversation as if Livia had hit the jackpot, “And what makes you think you can get me those things?”

“Unfortunately, due to...competing interests, we can’t give you the throne. But...when our work is complete, and the dust has settled, you will be second-in-command. That’s also something you feel that you’re entitled to, isn’t it?”

In his mind, Greg’s animal was chuckling at how poorly Livia chose to ask her question. From memory, he only told Sasha about his frustration of not being second to the King. So, Livia inadvertently threw her friend under the bus without even realizing it.

To give him that position, Christian Blackfur would either be forced into resignation or killed. As tempting as it was to get rid of that upper-level servant to his cousin, Greg couldn’t deny the fact that there was a dangerous game being played against his cousins and Lucianne, one that he doubted any of them knew about

As he kept Lucianne at the back of his mind to not give himself away, he asked Livia, “What is it that you want me to do?”

Livia smiled broadly as she said, “Well, first thing’s first. We need you to live with us. It’ll be easier to keep track of your movements and monitor your loyalty. And if you choose to betray us, any of us, we won’t kill you. We’ll go after her.”

It was one of the most difficult times to stop his animal from coming forward to tear Livia to shreds. He cleared his throat and remarked, “So, you’re offering me a job without telling me about the job description?” 1

Livia sneered, “I am making a proposition on behalf of the team. You will know the full extent of what we require you to do and NOT do when you choose to join us. Join us, and you can stop hiding in some underground business place. Join us, and you will wield the power as the second most powerful man in the Kingdom. Choose otherwise, and we’ll bury you with the rest of the creatures we’re going to bury when we’re done.”

Her voice was a little unsteady when she talked about burying Greg, and Greg couldn’t help but think how pathetically naïve Livia was to expect any real intimacy with him just because they had sex. He slept with so many women. What made her think she was any different from them? He would fire a stream of condescending comments at her but angering Livia would put Lucianne’s safety at risk, and Lucianne’s safety took precedence.

Giving into Livia’s request now was unwise. She knew how he felt about Lucianne, how he wouldn’t go against her. He had been in this game long enough to know that the most tactical move was to ask, “How long do I have to decide?”

“Twenty-four hours.” She took out a white business card from her purse, and placed it on his table as she continued, “Call this number and cite this code. Someone will come to get you.”

As Greg studied the upper row of digits and the lower row of jumbled up numbers and letters, Livia made one last comment, “I hope you make the right choice, your Grace. It really isn’t a hard decision to make when you think of the benefits you’d reap.”

As she turned and left, Greg couldn't help but agree with what Livia just said. This really wasn't a very hard decision to make. He would take any side that kept Lucianne safe. Period.

After Livia left through the doors, Greg stood and looked around the quiet casino before locking eyes with a man holding a pint of a beer in his hand and had a cigarette in his mouth. After motioning the man to come over to his table with two fingers, Greg resumed his seat as he yelled out, "Show's over!"

Greg took some comfort in repeating Lucianne's words from the training ground. The murmurs in the casino filled the space once again. The man Greg summoned put out his cigarette before taking a seat in front of the Duke. "Your Grace, was there something you needed?"

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### Chapter 137

"You're still plugged in to the rumours in the Kingdom, Lance?" Greg asked with furrowed brows.

Lance's fingers stroked the sun tattoo on his arm, something he did when he was nervous as he responded, "I am, your Grace. In a family of drug mules, it's rather impossible not to be. We have to stay on top of things to avoid getting caught."

"What's the latest news on the Queen?" Greg's finger circled the rim of his empty glass as he waited for Lance's answer

Uh the last we heard, she was questioned by journalists and reporters about her presence at the royal family's doctor."

Greg gritted his teeth. Doctor. That meant the arrow injury that Livia mentioned was more harmful than he thought. He swallowed a lump in his throat before prompting, “And?”

“And, well, she didn’t seem happy about it. The King defended her, and...” the loud slam of Greg’s glass on the table stopped Lance.

Greg glowered impatiently as he said, “What I meant, you idiot, is why was the Queen at the doctor’s.”

“Oh, of course. My apologies, your Grace. Uh...there was word that she may no longer be capable of bearing children.”

Greg’s eyebrows furrowed in disbelief as he asked, “It’s confirmed?”

“It’s a rumour, your Grace. I’ll be happy to verify it if...”

“How long do you need?”

“Only two minutes. I can do it here if...”

“Do it.”

Lance got out his phone from his side pocket and began typing furiously. He tried to hide the beads of sweat forming on his forehead with Greg’s fingers tapping on the table in agitation. The wait was an ordeal for the Duke, and it was torment for poor Lance.

Three seconds before his two minutes were up, Lance got what he asked for. He smiled in relief as he pushed his phone to the Duke and explained, “My brother managed to get the records from the Queen’s visit the other day, your Grace.”

Greg took it immediately and started reading the document. When his eyes fell on the cause of Lucianne's hormonal imbalance, his breathing got heavy when the words 'unknown substance' entered his eyes. In the 'further comments' section, the doctor listed the chemical composition of the unknown substance.

To Greg's dismay, he recognized the poison as the same one he gave to the Duchess almost two decades ago. He recalled the night in the bar where he boasted about his handiwork in poisoning the Duchess to Sasha. The minister's daughter was definitely one of the player's in Livia's game.

Out of nowhere, Greg muttered to himself, "Me and my big mouth." Chances are, this was Sasha's pitch to the team. Seeing how effective it was on the Duchess, it was a given that they would now use it on Lucianne. This was his fault. He flaunted his success to the dumb blonde, and now he was paying the price when the person he thought he was secretly protecting succumbed to the same poison.

He pressed the corners of his eyes to control the tears forming from the guilt and anger at himself. But when he recalled Livia's threat, he immediately pulled himself out of his sorrow. The infertility poison was just the beginning. There were definitely worse things up their sleeves to hurt Lucianne, and being privy to this knowledge, he was not going to sit around to see it unfold.

Greg gently tapped the lower corner of Lance's phone against the table as he pondered on his next course of action. He had to join Livia and whoever the h\*ll she was working with, that went without question. He had to know who he was up against. But no one had to tell him that his loyalty amongst them would be questioned. Seducing Livia too soon would just be giving himself away. It was better to act like he was slowly falling for her as they kept him hostage.

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The thought of having to be intimate with Livia sickened Greg and his animal but what choice did they have? He already caused Lucianne's infertility. He couldn't fail to protect her again. He was not his cousin! When a plan slowly formed in his crafty mind, he smiled menacingly to himself before he returned the phone to Lance and dismissed him.

He then barked from his seat, "Ivory! Alissa!"

The two approached the Duke's space from far sides of the casino. They stood before him and as they bowed in acknowledgment. Ivory adjusted his eye-patch before locking his one good eye on the Duke. Alissa took her hands out from her black leather jacket, and took the bubble gum out of her mouth as she awaited to be instructed.

"Watch the Queen Protect her at all costs. If possible, don't be seen." Greg demanded.

Ivory asked, "How often would you like us to report, your Grace?"

Very firmly, Greg responded, "DO NOT reach out to me for any reason. When I want a report, I'll mind-link either one of you."

Alissa nodded once in compliance as she confirmed, "Understood. So, it's only the Queen, your Grace? No other wolf or Lycan?"

"No. It's just her. She's their only target. My cousin has proven to be more incompetent than he once was. Sitting on the throne and expected to protect a whole damn Kingdom when he can't even keep his own mate out of danger." Greg sighed in disapproval before he affirmed his order, "Watch the Queen. Don't let her out of your sight." 1

“Will do, your Grace.” They both uttered with a slight bow. Greg dismissed them with a hand gesture, and they returned to their games before leaving shortly after to pack what they needed and making their way to the Kingdom.

Greg himself sat for another ten minutes as he mentally visualized his plan before getting out of his seat. He approached the bartender who was wiping a glass with a dishcloth. Greg motioned the bartender towards him. When they both leaned close enough to each other, Greg said, “Billy, activate Codes Orange and Black. Effective immediately.”

Billy’s eyes widened in horror before he glanced around and whispered, “Is there no other way, your Grace? And what about you?”

“This is the best way for everyone. You won’t be hearing from me for a while.”

“You could give us a timeline. We can assemble a team to...”

“No.” Greg uttered firmly. “Billy, from this point on, the less I know, the better.”

Billy looked at Greg sadly before he sighed in despair and nodded. Greg patted him on the shoulder before leaving for his apartment, and Billy set-off to carry out Greg’s instructions. 1

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The next day, thirty minutes before his twenty-four hours were up, Greg made a call to the number on the card and cited the code. Within ten minutes, a black limousine with tinted windows arrived at his doorstep. The chauffeur got out and opened the door for him. He saw a pair of legs with turquoise nail polish on the toenails. These didn’t look like they belonged to Livia or Sasha.

Greg tried not to look too nervous or too excited to get in. When he was at the door, the chauffeur stopped him and motioned him to lift up his hand. He complied. The old man then fastened a watch-like device around his right wrist, which had a blank, circular black screen. Greg knew exactly what this was for. 1

When the chauffeur motioned him to get in, he stepped inside the vehicle to see who the mastermind behind the whole scheme was. Greg was surprised to set sights on the woman seated in front of him. His animal didn't know whether to let out a sigh of relief, laugh at its unnecessary worry, or roll its eyes in boredom.

Honestly, Greg expected the mastermind to be someone more. More capable, more composed, more experienced, more infamous even. Despite his animal's thoughts and emotions, his human part remained unperturbed

The woman smiled the same sinister way Greg remembered from decades ago as she said, "So nice of you to join us, your Grace."

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### Chapter 138

Greg rolled his eyes as he responded to Kelissa Kylton's inauthentic hospitality, "Like I had a choice."

"Good that you know who's in-charge here." Kelissa smirked bumptiously,

"No, I don't. I just know that it's not me." Greg lied with ease. This was going to be easier than he thought. Whoever was harming Lucianne already assumed that Greg had voluntarily surrendered superiority the

moment he made the call and cited the code. But nothing could be further from the truth.

Greg Claw was inferior to no one. No one! ...Alright, fine. No one, except Lucianne. 3

Kelissa scoffed darkly at Greg's response and asked, "So, are you saying that I don't look like someone who's capable of leading this work?"

"No. All I'm saying is that until I meet the full team, I cannot gauge who's leading it."

"What if I tell you that there's a consensus that I'm the one who calls the shots, and the rest are nothing more than mere advisers?"

"I stand by what I said, Kylton. Until I meet the whole team, I won't know who's really in-charge. If I learned anything, it's that the official leader isn't always the leader. Some 'advisers' can be so influential that the official leaders are just mindless puppets."

"Are you trying to agitate me, your Grace?" Kelissa was getting impatient. If Greg were being honest, yes, he'd very much like to agitate and tear up anyone involved with hurting Lucianne.

Still, the Duke kept his thoughts to himself and chose to say, "Do you want me to give you my honest opinions, or did you recruit me to sugarcoat everything, Kylton?"

That made Kelissa pause for a brief moment. "Hm. Well, I suppose I would have to respect your perspectives and judgments, seeing that you've been in this line of work long enough."

Greg muttered monotonously, "Wow, I'm flattered."

“And don’t think of mind-linking anyone, by the way. The device on your wrist would know.” Kelissa warned, and lifted up her phone as she continued, “And I’ll know, too.”

“Yeah, I figured. Would’ve done the same thing if it were me.” Greg said, unperturbed.

A smile graced the heiress’s features. “Thank you for approving.”

Greg retorted flatly, “I’m not. I just agree that this is a good precaution to take.”

Her smile faltered as she noted, “You really don’t make it easy for people to work with you, do you, your Grace?”

“Why do you think I work alone?” Greg needed to annoy Kelissa until she was angered. He needed to act as if he was reluctant to join them, and how he was now taking out on those who threatened him.

There should be a gradual willingness on his part to work with them, not a total change of heart overnight. Only then will it be believable that he had actually switched sides, from protecting Lucianne to harming her. In truth, Greg knew that nothing can ever tempt him to hurt the Queen.

After a moment of silence, Kelissa decided to change the subject to keep her cool, “It wasn’t me who was supposed to come. It was...”

“Livia?”

“For once, can you just not imitate me when I’m trying to be nice?!”

Score! Greg’s animal celebrated the heiress’s erupted temper. “Apologies, heiress. Please, continue.”

Kelissa took a deep breath to calm her nerves. Her onyx eyes regained some lilac shades before she continued, “No one was supposed to come. It was just the chauffeur. But I came because I wanted to personally tell you about the rewards you’d reap from working with us.”

“Didn’t you already send someone with that information to my casino last night?”

“Livia didn’t set out the full extent of your rewards last night.”

This caught his attention, and his eyes fixed on hers as he said, “I’m listening.”

“Livia only told you that you’d be second-in-command. She didn’t mention another gift I have in mind for you because I didn’t tell her this.”

There was a pause, and the only sound came from the limousine and the soft music playing in the background. Greg leaned back into his seat and asked, “Are you going to go on, or is this you prompting me to irritate you?”

Kelissa took another breath before she responded, “Apart from being the third most powerful person after the King and Queen, you’d get her: the wolf.”

Greg’s eyebrows raised in genuine surprise. His animal’s ears perked-up as well. “I don’t follow.” He confessed.

“Livia thinks that after making you second, I’d convince you to mate and mark her. But after hearing about how you...treated her in your last two encounters with her, I doubt she sounds like a very tempting prize. And with my cousin and her dumb friend’s constant ranting around the house, it’s not very difficult to come to the conclusion that you only want the wolf.”

His eyebrows furrowed as he tried to comprehend Kelissa's goal. "So, this master plan of yours is for me to claim Lucianne so that you'd be free to steal the King?"

It was Kelissa's turn to roll her eyes. "No, your Grace. The plan is for me to steal the King first, and when the wolf's heart breaks, you'll be there to sweep her off her feet."

"I'm rather worried about the competencies of your other advisers, Kylton. Has no one told you how far fetched your plan sounds? Have you seen how my cousin looks at the wolf? Even a blind creature would know he's dead set on making her the Queen. You think he would let her go that easily?"

Kelissa's expression showed distaste as she admitted, "No. I'm ambitious but not naïve. I know it's tedious and difficult, and it's taking time. But the goal keeps me going. The more... functionality is stripped from the wolf, the less likely Xandar would see her as being capable of being his Queen. And when he finally decides that she has to step aside, I'll be there to take my rightful place on the throne with him, producing a proper heir thereafter. And the wolf will be yours to take." 1

"Ah, so you're going to break her until the King decides to let her go." Greg said monotonously.

"I promise to not over-break her, your Grace, for your sake." Kelissa said with an inauthentic smile.

"How very kind of you." Greg uttered in sarcasm.

Ignoring his tone, Kelissa said, "I just need her to be... a little damaged so that it's obvious she is not

qualified to wear the crown.”

“Hence, the infertility poison.” Greg noted as he masked his anger and dismay.

He masked it well. Kelissa didn’t suspect a thing when she said, “I hope you wouldn’t mind not being able to have kids with her.”

“Never liked them. Noisy, messy and pesky creatures.” This was not entirely a lie. But in a perfect world where Greg could be with Lucianne, he’d happily have a dozen kids with her if that was what she wanted. 3

“Oh, that’s a relief.” Kelissa’s remark brought Greg out of his thoughts.

Greg rehearsed this next part in the mirror the previous night to make sure he’d be in control when he asked, “What else are you going to do to ‘break’ her?”

The heiress immediately assured, “Nothing physical. The next one is more like a small scandal. It’s still a draft, a plan that we’ll all have to discuss as a team. I expect your full participation. But don’t worry, I’ll have your needs at the back of my mind to make sure we don’t go too far.”

“Mm.”

“You don’t believe me.”

Greg smiled to himself as he repeated Lucianne’s words to Kelissa, “I’ll believe it when I see it.”

Being oblivious to the smile behind his response, Kelissa merely uttered, “It’s going to be an interesting experience working with you, your Grace. Now, as a precautionary step, I need you to take this.”

She handed him a pastel yellow pill as she said, “Just to keep the Kyltons’ subsidiary residence private, you’d understand.”

Greg had seen the pill before and checked for its watermark just to make sure it matched the one he knew of before ingesting it, putting him into slumber for two hours.

When he awoke, it was another five-minute drive before they reached the Kyltons’ residence. The chauffeur opened the door, and Kelissa got out first as she told Greg, “Come on, let’s introduce you to the others, though I doubt you’ll need an introduction for most of them.”

She wasn’t kidding. When he entered the main sitting room, everyone was a familiar face, except for the three creatures by the corner. A man in a teal T-shirt with stormy-grey eyes had an arm rested against the fireplace as he watched the dancing flames. His scent confirmed that he was a wolf. The other two not far from him were clearly Lycans, rogue Lycans, to be precise.

The wolf studied Greg briefly before returning his sights to Kelissa, who ordered two servants to show him and his men to a meeting room down the hallway. After Kelissa had told Greg to ‘make himself at home’, he smirked as he said, “I have to agree that it’s going to be an interesting experience working with you, Kylton.”

Kelissa smirked cockily before she left Greg with the others while she herself left the room to write up cheques for Jake and his rogue Lycan bodyguards.

**The 5-time Rejected Gamma & the Lycan King by Stina’s Pen Chapter 139**

**Chapter 139**

On Saturday morning, Lucianne woke up to Xandar pulling her back into bed the moment she tried to get out. After two minutes of persistent whining of needing to use the bathroom, Xandar finally released her. They went for their usual run and spent some time in the shower together before having breakfast.

Xandar then drove them to the government headquarters. Upon entering through the high metal gates, Lucianne saw that the headquarters was a large estate on its own, and the endless rows of empty parking lots showed the numerous employees working in the white and grey building. If it weren't for it being the weekend, those lots would've been filled with vehicles.

After Xandar parked in his reserved lot, they got out of the car and hand-in-hand, Xandar led Lucianne to the entrance. The large automatic glass doors slid open when they were four steps away. Xandar couldn't take his eyes off his mate, who never failed to look like an adorable curious cat whenever she was in a new place.

As they walked along the corridor, Lucianne's bright eyes scanned the large portraits of past Kings and Queens hung in frames against the beige walls. Her feet stopped when she reached the portrait of the late King Lucas and Queen Vera. Lucianne couldn't help but feel a negative energy from King Lucas's eyes, despite its lilac shade. And with Queen Vera, she couldn't feel anything. The Queen was smiling but the smile carried no happiness, like her lips simply curled up for the sake of the painting.

A pair of strong arms snuck around her waist, and Lucianne felt her mate's warm breath tickling her ear as she whispered, "We'll do better than them, Lucy. We're already doing better than them." He then pecked a sweet kiss on her cheek before taking in her scent from her neck.

When Lucianne heard the approaching footsteps of the cleaners, she immediately tore her eyes away from the portrait and made Xandar release his intimate hold on her. He groaned at Lucianne's need for them to behave' in public before gluing his hand on the small of her back as they continued walking down the corridor.

When they came to the very centre of the building, she looked at the statues of revolutionary Kings, heroes and heroines placed near the walls right before the entrance of each hallway. The features of the statues were highlighted not only by the outstanding craftsmanship but also the glowing lights from the chandelier that hung from the high ceiling.

When Lucianne had finished studying the hall, Xandar pressed the side of her body against his as he whispered with a smile filled with pride, "Soon, they'd have to make room for a statue of you in this hall. The first Queen standing among the Kings, heroes and heroines."

"No pressure at all, my King." Lucianne muttered sarcastically.

Xandar lifted her chin up and uttered in full confidence, "There shouldn't be any for you, Lucy. What you've been doing for the wolves all these years already makes you revolutionary. You just have to keep being...you...preferably a you who believes that she's the most beautiful and outstanding creature in this Kingdom."

Lucianne shook her head with a shy smile before standing on her toes to peck a kiss on his cheek. They got lost in each other's eyes for a brief second before they heard, "Morning, cuz. My Queen." They turned to see Christian and Annie walking up to them.

As Annie embraced Lucianne and Xandar, Christian looked around the hall like he was there for the first time when that clearly wasn't the case before he commented, "Up until I saw how you two just looked at

each other, I really couldn't see how this place is capable of being romantic. But I guess with the chandelier and quiet surroundings, it does make for a good place to make out."

Despite her flustering cheeks, Lucianne suggested, "You and Annie should give it a go, Christian, for confirmation purposes." Xandar was swallowing a chuckle with much difficulty.

Christian looked at his mate coyly as he whispered, "Hm. Maybe we should."

Before he could get any nearer to Annie, the Duchess's hand rested on his chest as she said, "Hold your horses, your Grace. This is neither the time nor the place."

Christian tried to reason with her with a coquettish smirk, "Come now, my Duchess. If the King and Queen could do what they did here, something has to be right about it."

Lucianne noticed Annie was losing. So, with a chirpy voice, the Queen said, "Well, would you look at the time! We'd better hurry if we don't want to be late. The others are probably already there waiting for us."

It was the first time Christian threw Lucianne an annoyed look while Annie and Xandar laughed at the Duke's reaction. "You offered me a romantic moment with my mate, and now you're taking it away from me, my Queen?"

"Yes, that's what I did. C'mon. Let's go."

It was Christian's turn to mutter in mock annoyance, "Over-responsible, a\*s-kicking, hearts-crushing Queen-to-be."

Christian's words made Xandar's heart swell with pride, making him peck a kiss on his mate's hand as the four of them entered through the doors of the meeting room after Xandar scanned his thumbprint and retina. Lucianne was right. Every minister who was not in police custody or suspended for ethical concerns (like Caunterberg) was already seated at the round table waiting for the arrival of the royal family members.

The nine ministers remaining immediately stood and bowed as the four of them entered. After returning the gesture and taking their seats, Xandar kickstarted the meeting.

“Thank you for attending this morning's meeting despite it being the weekend, everyone. The agenda of today's meeting requires little explanation, if any. With four ministers in prison facing corruption charges and one minister suspended for ethical concerns, we must now decide on our next step.”

“The Ministries of Finance, Defence and Welfare are no doubt important to the proper functioning of our

government. With their leaders now absent, we need to come up with the best course of action, a temporary one if a permanent one cannot be decided by the end of this meeting. As usual, let's go around the table and hear what everyone has to say on the matter. Barrington, you may start us off.”

This was Xandar's style in conducting a meeting. He would let everyone speak first before giving his own opinion at the end. His late father was the complete opposite. King Lucas always spoke first. His voice and words overpowered any other opposing argument that existed.

When Xandar shadowed him as the Crowned Prince, he realized that his father's methods produced outcomes which were half-baked at best, and disastrous at worst. Xandar didn't want his ministers to be his robots or

servants. He wanted them as team players. He wanted their perspectives, their thoughts, their reasonings. Only then could he see the full picture of any given issue.

Barrington, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, adjusted his blue bow tie as he cleared his throat and peered through his thick glasses when he said, “In my opinion, your Highness, replacements must be made.

Delegating ministerial responsibilities amongst those of us left here in the absence of one minister i

s doable; two ministers is tolerable; three, and it becomes hectic. Any more than that and I’ll have to suggest that the government pay for the psychiatric treatment that comes with the increased stress from having to bite off more than we can chew.”

There were soft chuckles at the last part of Barrington’s recommendation. Even Xandar smiled as he nodded in understanding and said, “Thank you, Barrington. Vanessa, you’re up.”

War

The Minister of Innovation, Science and Technology smiled as she began, “Your Highnesses, Your Graces. I’m of the view that not only do we need replacements. We need more ministers than we currently have. Meaning to say, excluding the royal family, we need more than fourteen people seated around this table.”

This was an interesting point of view, and everyone’s human and animal ears perked up in anticipation of what they were going to hear from Vanessa next.

**The 5-time Rejected Gamma & the Lycan King by Stina’s Pen Chapter 140**

**Chapter 140**

Vanessa entwined her fingers together on the table as she explained, “Ministerial positions had only ever been held by Lycans, which I dare say is the main reason behind the neglect of the welfare of our cousin species. Some Lycan children don’t even know what wolves are. Most Lycans shun at the thought of having to share the room with one. I’d love to say that the government is by far the most liberal and welcoming body when it comes to our cousin species, but the events from the last two weeks have shown otherwise.”

“Although there have been notable improvements in how we treat them over the decades and recent years, I must say that it is far from enough. And as much as I acknowledge the Queen’s presence, I’m of the humble opinion that one wolf alone will not enable us to meet the needs of our cousin species as quickly a sit could be with more wolves guiding us. What I’m recommending is representation. We need wolves among us in govemance, to help us see what we have clearly failed to see in our time here. Welfare, technology, education, law, environment. Everything.”

“Damn, that was good.” Christian muttered under his breath, which Lucianne easily caught since he was seated next to her.

Up until Vanessa spoke, Lucianne didn’t know that there were Lycans, other than Christian and Xandar, who saw the need to include wolves in decisions that affected the Kingdom. Vanessa’s recommendation made Lucianne feel that her species were more looked after than she once thought.

Xandar smiled radiantly as he thanked her and moved on to Pamela, the Minister of Justice, a bob-haired blonde.

“Your Highnesses, Your Graces. I am also of the view that replacements must be found. If temporary, then we should appoint creatures who have proven to be capable, trustworthy and reliable, regardless of

1. If permanent, I stand by my decision from the previous meetings when this issue was put to a vote: the election should include our cousin species because if the wolves are expected to obey the laws of a minister, then they should have a say in appointing that minister.”

Lucianne blinked in surprise. This matter was put to a vote before? And here she thought the Lycans couldn't care less who the wolves wanted as their minister. Xandar caught his mate's reaction, and he instinctively reached for her hand on her lap, entwined his fingers with hers before placing their hands on his lap as he nodded and thanked Pamela with the same smile and prompted the next minister to proceed.

The Minister of Youth was Cora, an elderly woman with grey hair. She adjusted her cat eye glasses before speaking through her crimson lips, “I, too, recommend that we seek out suitable replacements while we wait for our colleagues to clear the charges made against them. However, I do not agree with my learned ministers who spoke before me that appointing wolves is the right step forward.”

Lucianne's thumb started stroking Xandar's stiffened hand to calm his animal as the minister continued, “I say this with no disrespect, my Queen, but our species is known to be superior. We know what we're doing. We know what's best for our species and yours. There's no need for more wolves in this room. In fact, there's no need for any wolves in this room at all! You will be a Lycan if and when you're marked by our King, hence I am not questioning your presence here today. That is my recommendation: temporary replacements, but only Lycans.”

Before Xandar could say a word, Lucianne spoke calmly, “Thank you, Cora.”

Alivia didn't seem to notice, and genuinely thought that Xandar was complimenting her efforts. A wide smile spread across her face as she said, "I'm elated that my efforts are being recognized, my King."

Weaver snorted in amusement before disguising his stream of chuckles as a stream of coughs. Yarrington shook his head at his mate but he himself was smiling because, like his mate, he was well-aware of what was going on.

After Weaver had gotten a hold of himself and tried not to think about the scene he just witnessed that made him laugh, he accepted the glass of water from his mate before apologizing to everyone, throwing a subtle, knowing smirk in Lucianne and Xandar's way when everyone else's eyes moved on to the minister next to Alivia.

Riven, Minister of Immigration and Citizenship, was as young as Alivia. He inherited his position from his mother after she passed from an early death. Unlike Alivia, he wasn't deaf to the sarcasm the Queen used on Harold, which the King then found to be appropriate to be used on Alivia. He hated wolves, and what the Queen made the King do just made him hate them even more.