The 5-time Rejected Gamma & the Lycan King by Stina's Pen Chapter 141

Chapter 141

After flipping his light brown ponytail tied with a maroon ribbon to the back, Riven cleared his throat and spoke, "Your Highnesses. Your Graces. I am of the view that any replacements should only be temporary. Deciding otherwise would just be the government coming to its own Verdict for our arrested colleagues before the courts deal with the crimes themselves. And, as much as it pains me, I must say that wolves are nowhere near ready to help run the Kingdom. I am not saying that there should be an indefinite bar of their species but it is dangerous to include them in discussions in the near future."

"Dangerous how, Riven?" Xandar asked as he tried his best to control his temperament.

Lucianne's sarcasm came to mind but Riven knew better than to insult the Queen. So, he chose to say," Well, there may be certain...traits of theirs that may be...abhorrent and...detrimental to the proper

functioning of the government."

"Such as?" Xandar continued to press.

Riven was running out of arguments, and he tried to avert his eyes from Lucianne and Xandar as he continued to rummage through his thoughts.

Christian then prompted him, "We haven't got all day, minister. Enlighten us. What traits do our cousin species exhibit that are, in your words, abhorrent and detrimental to the proper functioning of the government?"

"Well..uh..."

Yarrington was getting impatient as well. "Did you even think this through before making your suggestion, Riven?!"

"Of course!" Riven exclaimed defensively at the Minister of Education.

Weaver then spat, "Then, what's taking so long?! Just lay it on the table. What evidence do you have for saying what you just did?"

Riven's eyes inadvertently and mistakenly glanced at Lucianne, making the King and the Duke glare at him in rage as Lucianne let out a light chuckle. Everyone's eyes fell on her. Xandar's hand went over her shoulder protectively as he continued to scorn the minister.

Lucianne then said, "We're all adults here, minister. What is it about me that's abhorrent and detrimental? Tell me."

"Uh..." Riven's lips were beginning to quiver. Everyone saw it.

Lucianne pecked a sweet kiss on Xandar's cheek to calm him before she turned back to the minister and said, "Well, if you can't say it. I'll have to guess it won't I, minister? Is it how I look?"

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"NO!"
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"How I dress?"

"No, my Queen."

"How I speak?"

"Ah, so it's how I speak. What about it? Too much sarcasm?"

"There you go. That wasn't so hard."

Weaver immediately defended Lucianne, raising his voice as he said, "If the Queen sees the need to use sarcasm, it's because the recipient very well deserves it. You have no...".

"Thank you, Sir Weaver." Lucianne said with a gentle tone, and Yarrington got the cue to calm his agitated mate.

"How dare you..." Xandar began before Lucianne pecked another kiss on his cheek and whispered into his ear, "Thank you, my love. But I got this."

With a plastered smile, Lucianne said, "Apart from my sarcasm, minister. Are there any other traits that you deem abhorrent and detrimental?"

"N-No, my Q-Queen."

"Really? That's it? Are you sure there isn't anything else? Our lack of class, prestige or fortune, perhaps?"

"N-No, my Queen." Riven continued to stutter.

"Well, if that's the case, then I can assure you that I'm one of the few in my species who chooses to use sarcasm whenever I see fit. Not all wolves do it. In fact, most of them don't. And if it makes you feel any better, minister, many wolves find my sarcasm inappropriate as well. And to those wolves I say this:" Everyone in the room straightened their backs in anticipation.

Lucianne's smile dropped and her voice came out stem and strong, "My behavior is the result of your actions. I'm genuine to the genuine, fake to the fake, lethal to the lethal. Fortunately or unfortunately, I will not be stupid to the stupid. So, instead of matching their low level of thinking, I choose to use sarcasm because I can see no reason to justify or explain myself. Those people will only hear what they want to hear, and I do not

have a habit of begging people to understand me or my point of view. I only take the trouble to explain something if I can see that one is not a lost cause. Otherwise, I really couldn't care less what happens to this creature, so long as he or she isn't harming anyone in the process of being stupid." 2

The room felt it, an energy radiating from Lucianne when she said those words. But it wasn't a daunting one like Xandar's, or the one she herself used on Dawson the previous night. It felt...enlightening and inspiring. Xandar gazed at her dreamily as her black orbs fixed on Riven. The minister was lost for words. 1

After a whole minute of silence, Lucianne asked in a gentler tone, "Would you like another opportunity to make a submission, minister? We can come back to you after we've heard from the others."

All eyes fell on Riven and he managed to mutter, "Y-Yes. Thank you, my Queen." He didn't expect Lucianne to offer him another chance to submit his views. If anything, he thought he was going to be kicked out, suspended or sent to jail after he was caught implicitly insulting the future Queen. Perhaps having wolves with them was not completely a bad thing after all.

Lucianne nodded once and said, "Alright, then. Sir Weaver, you're up."

As Weaver spoke, Xandar couldn't help but run his fingers down Lucianne's hair. The way she handled the situation was absolutely amazing! The King was ready to throw Riven out for the day. The anger from him and many others in the room was evident yet Lucianne managed to simmer them down with nothing more than a few words directed to the minister who offended her.

Lucianne was finding it a little harder to focus with her wolf purring under her mate's affectionate touch but if this was what Xandar needed to stay calm then she was not going to stop him.

Weaver cleared his throat and began with a smile, "I am all for having wolves amongst us as well. After the Queen has introduced me to a few of our cousin species, I realize that there is a huge disparity in how Lycans and wolves are faring environmentally."

"Up until the introductions, I had no idea that close to forty packs had problems getting clean water, and twenty are still suffering from air pollution seeing that our predecessors have authorized the building of factories close to their packs. And I haven't even spoken to everyone yet! Imagine what else we're failing to see as we take our comfort for granted. We need them here. It's the fastest way forward, and the quickest way to form solutions that the people need and deserve."

After Weaver was done, Yarrington spoke, "I am of the view that we need wolves as well, for the reasons which have been eloquently explained by my leamed colleagues before me. For education, in particular, I believe it is time to restructure the syllabus for both werewolves and Lycans. I've spoken to many at the collaboration, and some over the phone."

He glanced at Lucianne with gratitude before continuing, "I dare say that our cousin species have a lot of brilliant ideas on what future generations should be learning, and how they should be taught. In fact, I already have a few candidates in mind for the position of Deputy Minister, if not the Minister, of Education."

Yarrington's humility wowed and touched Lucianne. Her species did have governing members who wanted to help them, who wanted to hear them out, who wanted them to be a part of the governing body. After centuries of neglect and bullying, what she saw before herself today moved her.

Annie was up next. "I doubt it is any secret that I would support having our cousin species among us. However, I also recommend that current ministers undergo a vigorous assessment to see if one's skill set, intentions, goals and attitudes are the ones needed in a 21st century government."

"Are you questioning our abilities, your Grace?" Harold asked defensively with a glare at the Duchess, which the minister quickly hid when he met the Duke's scorn.

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Annie thought for a moment before she met Harold's gaze as she said, "Yes, minister. I am." The Duchess's non-apologetic answer and confident tone made Christian smile. Lucianne and Xandar were proud to see Annie standing her ground as well.

The Duchess continued, "Despite my absence, I know what has been going on in recent weeks. Cummings and Whitlaw have proven to be incompetent in defending a significant population of the Kingdom. Caunterberg is a perpetrator of the very offence he was expected to safeguard the Kingdom from. One of the two sons of our Finance Minister saw it fit to make false sexual harassment complaints for slanderous motives. What's worse is that this son of hers even hoped to succeed his mother."

"I recommend a review of all current ministers. We should have every contribution or lack thereof recorded in black and white. And for the next

six months or one year, we should assess if any improvements are being made to right any wrongs."

As soon as Annie was finished, Cora was visibly furious when she said, "I think that's a waste of time and resources. If assessments need to be done, then let it be done on the newer ministers. We have been here long enough to justify our positions in this government."

Lucianne spoke again, "Cora, perhaps you've misunderstood the Duchess. The assessment she recommends is to ensure that govering ministers are capable of leading in the 21st century, which means that we are looking for creatures who can keep up with changing times. Conventional thinking may have served the generations before but those who have been here 'long enough' and who can't find it in themselves to...grow with the needs of the future should have the decency to step aside."

"Decency?" Cora questioned Lucianne's choice of word.

Lucianne uttered firmly, "Yes. Decency. I am going to assume that all of us here share a common intention, a mutual goal, that is to do what's best for the people, not for ourselves. There will come a time when our knowledge is no longer enough, and our skills are no longer relevant. When that time comes, we should have the decency to allow another individual, one who can maneuver in the modern ages, to take our place, since it would be in the best interest of the people to do so." 1

After she said those words, it was clear that not everyone in the room was there for the people. Many were there for themselves, for power and influence. Lucianne knew this too, and to keep slackers on their feet, she said what she did to wake them up.

Cora was seething in anger at the insulting way Lucianne and Annie spoke. Xandar then prompted her, "D o you require any further

clarifications on the Duchess's recommendation or the Queen's explanation, Cora?"

She swallowed a lump in her throat before shaking her head in response to the King's question.

Christian went next, "My recommendation builds on the recommendation made by my Duchess." It didn't take a lot for everyone to hear the affection in his voice when the Duke said the words 'my Duchess'. Lucianne couldn't help herself from smirking cheekily at the blushing Annie as her husband continued.

"The assessment of ministers should be done by our people, not us, seeing that there will be a clear conflict of interest if we assess our own colleagues. I suggest every pack leader and every Lycan representative from each state be given the right to ascertain whether a particular minister should remain in power. Only the people can tell us if whoever we have in place meets their best interest."

Alivia was already controlling her temper from Annie's recommendation, and she couldn't hold it in any longer after Christian built up on his mate's efforts, so she asked, "I mean no disrespect when I ask this but isn't that a little tedious to do that, your Grace?"

Christian then affirmed, "It is. But unfortunately, it has proven to be necessary, in my opinion."

Lucianne was up next but she asked Riven if he would like a say first. After thanking the Queen, he uttered nervously, "I recommend that replacements be made as well, and the appointments should be based on merit, not species."

The shortest recommendation garnered a surprising number of glares. Alivia, Cora and Harold were not happy with what came out of their ponytail friend's mouth. They had a deal! They agreed to insist that only Lycans be nominated and appointed. They already failed to get Barrington onboard, and now Riven was leaping to the opposing side! Traitor!

After Xandar gave a firm head nod, he turned to his mate and said softly. "Go on, sweetheart Don't hold back, okay?"

Christian snorted and muttered to himself, "Like she would ever." 2

Lucianne's thumb stroked her mate's hand once before she turned to face the room. "I, too, believe that replacements are the best way forward. Seeing how urgently these positions need to be filled with the ongoing rogue attacks and claims for financial aid, I have to admit that anyone appointed would be on a temporary basis. This is also to respect the fact that the ministers who have been charged are not found guilty by the court of law as of yet."

"Nominations and appointments to temporarily replace the five who are not here should be done here and now. Further delay would only stifle the progress and efficiency of the other ministries. However, nominations and appointments for a permanent minister should undergo a standard operating procedure. One who wants the job should have the opportunity to apply for that particular position. A standard route should be in place to ensure that applicants of any species and background stand a chance to represent the people."

"The governing body should then scrutinize their credentials, to see if a creature's actions are aligned with the interest of the people. Only after that should the best candidates be allowed to compete against each other in an election, which should involve every creature above the age of majority."

"I am not against a minister's child succeeding his or her parents. But I am against such an appointment i f this child is not the best candidate out

there for the job. I am against it if the sole reason they were appointed was because they were born to a minister. I am against it is that child abuses the power he or she is entrusted to wield wisely."

"I agree that all current ministers should undergo a vigorous assessment, and the ultimate judge should be the people, as the Duke and Duchess have proposed. This is not only to ensure ourselves that we have the best people for the job but also to ensure that we have who the people want for the job. Those are my recommendations."

When she was done, Christian muttered, "Damn, that's going to be tough to beat."

Xandar didn't mind that his mate's recommendations were going to be tough to beat. On the contrary, hearing her speak like that just makes him fall even more in love with her. With his hand still holding ont o hers, it was finally his turn to offer his views.

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The King commanded the attention of the room as he spoke, "To be honest, I was going to push for a permanent appointment of ministers today. Seeing that it is unwise to do so when the verdicts of the arrested ministers have not been reached yet, I must withdraw my prior intention. It is also an indisputable fact that a more democratic nomination and appointment would require a notable period of time. As many of you have pointed out, time is something we don't have. We need creatures to stand in now."

"But clearly, not all of us agree with who we shall appoint for the vacant positions, so, as always, this matter shall be put to a vote. Yes, Alivia?"

Xandar noticed Alivia's raised hand so he granted her permission to speak.

Alivia smiled pretentiously and said, "Your Highness, don't you think it is unjust to put such matters to a vote when a significant number of our colleagues are absent as they fight off corruption charges?"

The King responded without needing to think, "It is their absence that made today's meeting necessary, and a vote necessary as well. These are temporary measures. If they can be proven innocent, their positions will be restored."

Xandar could say this so calmly because he knew it was unlikely that those four ministers would get a get out-of-jail gift card from the court. The evidence piled against them would undoubtedly destroy them.

Harold then said, "With much respect, my King. Perhaps we should keep the right to vote among members who have been serving for the past five years." That meant Lucianne and Annie would not be allowed to vote.

Xandar tried to focus on his mate's small thumb as she stroked his hand when he asked, "What reason do you have for preventing the Queen and Duchess from voting, Harold?"

The atmosphere in the room became tense. Harold didn't seem bothered by that fact when he explained," Well, for one, the Duchess has not been with us in almost two decades. Forgive me for suggesting this but her sudden presence seems to be for tactical purposes. It is as if she is merely here because her vote is needed. As for..."

Christian cut him off, "If that is so, minister, why do you think my Duchess didn't tum up to vote every other time before today?" He glared down at Harold before he said in a low voice, "If I wanted to use her to win a vote on any issue, I would've done it from the very beginning.

Most of you in this room know why m y wife has refused to join us for a long time. I'd suggest you rethink the past before you accuse me of harbouring tactical intentions."

Before Harold could come up with a response, Xandar said, "You may also want to rethink what you were going to say about our Queen while you're at it."

Harold snorted before he said, "That's the thing, your Highness. She is not our Queen. Well, not as of yet, that is. I don't recall attending a coronation ceremony. And this is clearly her first time in,"

Xandar's low growl, followed by those of Christian's, Annie's, Weaver's and Yarrington's, halted Harold in his speech. Xandar challenged, "Under which particular provision of law can the King's mate not exercise her right as Queen?" 1

Harold answered without hesitation, "It's not a written law, your Highness. More like a convention. A tradition, an unspoken rule, if you will."

"Where is this unspoken rule found?" Xandar continued to press.

"It's there as common knowledge."

"Perhaps it's because I'm the most senior member here. It's a very old rule that's not normally mentioned since no Queen has ever entered through those doors before being crowned."

It was Lucianne's tum to speak, "I'm sorry, minister, but I'm confused. If it's not normally mentioned, how could it be common knowledge? If it's a tradition, why is it that the generation after yours is unaware of it? And if it's not discussed, don't you think it has already become obsolete?"

Harold tried to look at Lucianne with as little spite as possible when he said, "Lycans started the tradition, your Highness. I believe it is best for Lycans to say whether it is obsolete."

Weaver didn't have to think twice before he said, "Fine. Lycans, let's put it to a vote and settle this here and now. Those in favour of rejecting the convention that no one has ever heard about?"

Harold exclaimed, "No! You can't just vote as such!" The hands that shot up clearly showed that Harold had lost. Even Riven voted against him.

Xandar spoke again, "Since that's been settled, both the Queen and the Duchess can exercise their right to vote. Let's nominate the candidates we have in mind and decide who's the best we have for the job, starting with the Defence Ministry."

Christian snorted and playfully suggested, "Can the Queen be our Queen and our Defence Minister?" This garnered much laughter from those in favour but only got forced smiles from those who didn't like the proposition. They didn't even like her being their Queen, let alone both a minister and a Queen!

After everyone has thrown in names, which were, surprisingly to Lucianne, many members of the alliance, save for a few Lycans. They voted and their choice of temporary replacement was Gamma Tobias Tristan as Defence Minister, and the Lycan warrior Phelton as his deputy.

Next up was the Finance Ministry. This one took a little more time because Lucianne got more questions from everyone around the table about the wolves she nominated. She spoke in a neutral manner, giving them scenarios about how her nominees handled financial crises within their own packs and even those of their allies

Lucianne talked about their respective strengths and weaknesses as objectively as possible. For some reason, Marie Martin's other son, Henry Martin, was nominated as well. His credentials? He has a degree in Finance and has shadowed his mother with his brother for years.

It wasn't much of a surprise when the vote ultimately made Luna Lovelace the temporary Finance Minister, with Alpha Tate as her deputy.

As for Health and Welfare, Luna Hale was deemed to be the most suitable candidate for the position, and Pamela nominated her fifteen-year personal assistant, Kenneth, who spends any leisure time in hospitals and blood drives as a volunteer,

Gamma Benedict was made Deputy Minister of Education,

After the decisions had been made, Xandar dismissed everyone and thanked them again for making the time to attend the meeting. Of course, Alivia, Harold and Cora were not happy with how things played out but everyone else didn't stop them from storming out of the room as soon as Xandar gave the greenlight for everyone to leave.

When Alivia was out of sight, Weaver couldn't help but start laughing as he replayed the King and Queen's sarcasm from earlier. Yarrington smiled as he rolled his eyes at his mate's uncontrollable chuckles and dragged Weaver by his arm as he said, "Come now, dear. You can continue laughing in the car."

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After saying their goodbyes, Xandar and Lucianne got into the car, and Lucianne kicked away her heels as she let out a relieved sigh. Xandar waited for her to take another breath before smashing his lips on hers and squeezing her thigh. Only when he released her did he whisper, "We have the rest of the day off, sweetheart. What do you want to do?"

Lucianne's cheeky switch was flipped on when she said, "Isn't it a little unprofessional to offer such an invitation to someone who's not crowned Queen, your Highness?"

Xandar emitted the dangerous and alluring growl as he pressed his forehead on hers and warned, "Don't challenge me on this, my love. The moment I give out the order, you can bet you'll be crowned tomorrow."

"Without the consent and agreement from the one who is to be crowned? A little uncivilized, don't you think?"

A light peck on her lips and he uttered, "Perhaps. But it'll definitely shut those idiots up."

Lucianne's cheeky eyes turned soft with tenderness before she pecked a kiss on his cheek. "Thank you for what you did for me back there."

Xandar's eyes softened as well when he kissed her nose, "Well, I had help. And you really don't have to thank any of us for defending what you can and cannot do, sweetheart. It's your right. We were just fighting for what was already there."

Her voice turned into a shy whisper now as she said, "I love you."

Xandar smiled and responded with ease, "I love you, too, my little freesia. And since you love me, you have to say yes to my unprofessional invitation to bring you somewhere."

Lucianne rolled her eyes and pushed him back to his seat as she said, "You very well know I was going to say yes when you first asked, Xandar."

"Well, then. Pick a place, babe. Was there anywhere you wanted to visit but never got the chance to?"

"Hm." Lucianne pondered for a moment before her eyes met her mate's when she said, "I want to go to your favorite place."

Xandar's eyebrows raised in surprise before his smile broadened when he said, "My favorite place is with you, Lucy."

Lucianne narrowed her eyes and said, "Fine. Then, your second favorite place."

"Where are you going with this, sweetheart?"

"I want to go where you love. I want to see what you love, and feel why you love it. You've already brought me to the freesia field. Is there anywhere else you'd go to just be...happy?"

Xandar was moved. His mate really wanted to know him, even the little things about him. He contemplated with a smile before he said, "Well, I've always been into history. So, maybe we could go to one of my favorite museums... In fact, it just occurred to me that there's a piece there that you should see."

Lucianne sparkled in awe before she asked excitedly, "You're a history geek? Why didn't you tell me?!"

Xandar looked a little embarrassed when he said, "Babe, let's just...not use that term."

"Why not? I'm a geek myself if you haven't noticed." Lucianne declared.

"Yeah, but sweetheart, let's face it. You do not look like a geek. At all. You're much too attractive."

"Geeks can be attractive too, Xandar. Just look at yourself." Lucianne noted.

*I don't know, babe. I guess I'm still trying to get the stereotypical version of a geek out of my subconscious. A geek doesn't sound very... deserving or capable of being with you." 2

Lucianne retorted in confidence, "Xandar, geeks are more than capable of accomplishing anything. And they're cute!"

Xandar started getting suspicious so his hand pressed her abdomen against the seat, his predator eyes fixed on her as he asked in a low voice, "And which geeks in your past have you found cute and capable, m y little freesia?" 1

Lucianne realized she let that slip so she muttered 'oh, boy'under her breath before she said, "It was just a few study buddies, Xandar. There was never..."

He planted a deep kiss on her lips before he asked in his deep voice, "Did you ever find me cute?"

added, "You've always looked more handsome and confident than anything else. Cute doesn't suit you, darling. You're the scary Lycan King, despite your efforts of trying to be a softy from time to time. But knowing about your geeky side now, I'd bet you are going to look cute really soon, my love."

His animal's anger evaporated, and it was dancing around in his head with its head held high. Xandar nodded with a smile and said, "Hm. Good answer. For a minute there, my animal was going to go berserk."

"Let's not blame the fiercest animal for everything, dearest. Your human part may have encouraged it as well."

Xandar couldn't believe his own animal was laughing at his human part. When was the last time that happened? He pecked a kiss on her temple before he muttered in bliss, "Absolutely amazing."

After driving for twenty minutes, they came to a large castle with shrubs trimmed to mould the strongest Lycans of the past. Xandar explained, "This was where my parents and I lived. After they passed away, Christian and I decided to turn it into the Kingdom's largest museum. Kids love coming here not for the history but for the fact that it's a castle." 2

Lucianne chuckled as she touched his arm affectionately and said, "I think it's a brilliant idea. It does give the public access to where the Kings and Queens of the past once lived."

Xandar took her hand and pecked a kiss on the back before he said, "I'm glad you think so."

"And be honest, darling. You chose to live in your villa now because it's closer to Christian's place and the freesia field, didn't you?"

Xandar was pressing back his smile when he said, "Those were...highly influential factors when I made the decision to move there."

When the valet took care of the parking, Xandar led Lucianne through the large brown wooden doors with paw engravings. Lucianne was amazed

by the interior. The castle looked really old from the outside but the inside was sophisticated,

The tiled floors were pale against the light brown walls. The light colored-tinted glass ceiling was high, and the light from the sun penetrated through it to light up the space. With a hand on her abdomen, Xandar pecked a kiss on Lucianne's temple from the side and whispered in a husky voice, "What are you

thinking about, my love?"

Her head turned to meet her mate's lilac eyes filled with affection when she replied, "I honestly didn't know an old castle could look this beautiful."

Xandar pecked another kiss on her temple and said, "Anywhere can be beautiful as long as you're there, Lucy."

Lucianne smirked despite her blushing cheeks, and she said, "Well, where should we start, geek?

Xandar narrowed his eyes and protested, "Really, babe? Geek?"

Lucianne pursed her lips for a moment while she thought and finally said, "Where should we start, my handsome geek?"

The Lycan King was starting to blush as well when he admitted, "That actually sounds a lot better." He kissed the back of her hand before he suggested, "I'm going to do away with all the bullsh*t we had to learn in school and skip to the parts they left out of the syllabus, which would be down this hallway."

"The Lycan King saying that school history on Lycans is bullsh*t. This is a good start." Lucianne taunted with a suppressed smile.

"Well, Yarrington already suggested doing away with whatever the schools have now, so I'd say my views are aligned with the 21st century, my dear. The history we learned was all very one-sided, and clearly written to brainwash rather than to enlighten future generations about the past."

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When they came to the end of a broad hallway with bright lighting, Xandar started with the first portrait Unlike what Lucianne and everyone else learned in school, the Lycan in this first portrait was actually more influential than the King at that time.

Xandar explained that the plump woman with auburn curls in the picture was the late King's sister, who has offered the King back then loads of ideas on how to detect if foreign species, such as vampires or human hunters enter their territories. In school, credit for such revolutionary ideas were given to the King, not his sister. She wasn't even his second-in-command because of the sexist laws which forbade such an appointment at that time.

The second one was a man with a thick moustache and beard, and his eyes, to Lucianne's surprise, were painted onyx. Xandar explained that this was a very powerful minister who always made himself heard. His intelligence and no-nonsense attitude was the very reason why even the King of that time chose to listen to him over the second-in-command. Sadly, he was assassinated when he was asleep, and the murderer behind his death was never found. 1

When they reached the third, it was a woman with dark brown hair reaching her lower back. Her blue eyes shone brightly against her pale,

freckled, skin. Xandar then said, "This is the one I wanted to show you. Her name was Rosalie Tatiana Caberel. She was an expert in medicine, and was both loved and hated for her quick mind and sharp tongue. She went through two rejections in her lifetime before meeting her third chance mate, the Crowned Prince."

Lucianne's surprised eyes locked with Xandar's smiling ones. Lucianne herself went through rejections before meeting Xandar, too. What a coincidence!

Xandar then continued, "Rosalie was conducting an operation on the King when she met the Prince, Reagan. Some books suggest that she wanted to sever the bond as soon as they found each other."

Lucianne blinked at the second coincidence. Xandar stood closer to his mate, and held her hand tighter. She then asked in a small voice, "What happened then?"

Xandar gazed at his mate as he whispered, "He didn't let her. Practically begged her for a chance despite his engagement to a noblewoman. Rosalie managed to recite her part of the rejection in the end but Reagan never accepted it."

"Even so, the bond would sever by default upon the second full moon." Lucianne pointed out in a whisper.

Xandar's features softened further as his thumb stroked her right cheek. "In that period of time, he did everything he could to win her over. The first thing he did was to call off the engagement. Our textbooks say that the reason behind the revocation of the engagement was because the Prince wasn't in the right frame of mind. But other books, those which are more difficult to access, say that it was because he found her. He found Rosalie."

"From the way this is going, I have a feeling they didn't end up together." Lucianne muttered ominously.

Xandar smiled sadly and kissed Lucianne on her forehead before he continued, "He was only a Prince. The King and Queen, along with the long line of government ministers and commentators strongly opposed their union. Prince Reagan then submitted his intention to renounce his title to be able to marry the woman he loved. But his parents were...crafty."

Lucianne had a bad feeling about how the story was going to develop. Her mate looked upset as well when

he went on, "They allowed them to mate and mark each other because, as you know, being marked by a bonded mate improves one's strength and abilities more than if one is marked by a chosen mate."

Xandar took a sharp breath. "A week after the marking, the King and Queen got a kitchen staff to poison Rosalie's morning tea with a lethal amount of Oleander. She died in less than a minute."

Lucianne took a moment to digest that fact before she said, "But the sensations she and Prince Reagan feel would have already been entwined with each other when they've marked each other. Didn't the late King and Queen know that their son would also feel the effects of the poison when Rosalie was given it?"

"They did, which is why she died a quick death. The King and Queen didn't want their son to suffer any more than they needed him to. You might know this next part, Reagan attacked his parents, and today, he is known as..."

"The Unhinged Prince." Lucianne recalled.

She matched her mate's sad eyes. Xandar then said, "Almost no one knows why he killed his father and almost killed his mother. They say that he was unstable, inclined to make poor decisions when in truth, he was denied his greatest happiness, the mate gifted to him by our Goddess."

Something came to Lucianne's mind so she uttered, "I remember learning an idiom in school: A love as strong as..."

"As two Rs." Xandar finished it for her. "Reagan and Rosalie." 1

Lucianne took a moment to digest this before she admitted, "I always thought it was just two Rs drawn back to back, reflecting each other to shape a heart supported and strengthened by three stilts."

Xandar smiled sadly again as he said, "It's deeper than that. Much deeper. Tragically deeper. Reagan was locked in prison for the rest of his life, never allowed out because he threatened to kill everyone who treated Rosalie badly when she was alive. He tried to take his own life but never managed to do so. Rumour has it that he cried himself to sleep every single night, apologizing to Rosalie for failing to protect her, for failing to save her. At around four in the morning everyday, he'd wake up calling out her name."

"Why four in the morning?"

"That was when Rosalie took the poison. She was having breakfast before an early shift at the hospital."

Lucianne was so engrossed in the tale that she stood impossibly closer to Xandar, wanting to feel his warmth. His arms wrapped around her without hesitation, and he pecked a kiss in her hair before he continued, "Rosalie was not without friends and family. After the truth of her death came to light, medical professionals across the Kingdom went on strike,

demanding that line of royals abdicate the throne. Hospitals stopped taking in patients. Pharmacies refused to open. The royal family's doctors left their employers despite the significant length of their tenure."

Lucianne asked in a small voice, "But wouldn't that cost too many innocent lives?"

He pecked another kiss on her hair and responded, "Thankfully, it didn't. The medical professionals still offered treatment at their patients' homes. They just didn't turn up to work for the government. So, the Kingdom's medical revenue plummeted to zero for the first time in history, even suffering a deficit at one point. The defining moment was when the Queen's own mother was ill and needed medical attention."

"Unfortunately for them, no one wanted to help, and the old woman died. It is said that she would have easily survived the illness if she had seen a doctor. Any doctor. When the royal family finally decided that a parley with medical professionals was necessary, the doctors, nurses and pharmacists only had one request: unless it's Reagan, no one in the King and Queen's bloodline should ever sit on the throne ever

again."

*Of course, they couldn't let Reagan out He'd just go on a killing spree, and many powerful people were afraid of unleashing that beast So the title was passed on to the second-in-command the Claws who have no blood-relation whatsoever with the then-royal family. They actually did a blood analysis and publicized the results throughout the Kingdom'

Lucianne remembered that part of history where the title was passed to the Claws It was said that because the Unhinged Prince was incapable of running the Kingdom and he had no siblings to take the throne, the royal title had to be passed on to the second-in-command What bothered many of her classmates back in school was the fact that it wasnt passed on to the late Queen's nephew or niece. She had a few. But when the question was raised in class her teacher said that history didn't answer that question

Lucianne then whispered, "If Rosalie was such a signincant part of history, why hadnt I heard of her? The syllabus can hide it but why arent there any myths legends folk law or some kind of her story with Reagan?"

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Chapter 146

Xandar looked at the ground in guilt for a moment before meeting his mate's black orbs as he said," Because they hid it, Lucy. The Claws hid it. They shared a good relationship with Reagan's parents, so they ordered historians to write Rosalie off completely. The first Claw King...used his Authority to compel them to do it. With his Authority, he compelled the rest of the Kingdom to never speak about Rosalie ever again."

"Portraits and any written work documenting her life story was burnt. The only reason a part of her has been successfully incorporated into a school idiom was because linguists were clever enough to work their way around the King's Authority and subtly...inserted her and Reagan into something that lived on, transcending lifetimes and generations."

"But if everything about her is gone, how is it that this portrait exists?"

"This wasn't kept by our kind." Xandar's eyes were serious when he said, "This portrait is a duplicate copy gifted by the vampires to the descendants of Rosalie's distant relatives long after the first Claw King passed away."

"Vampires?" Lucianne asked in disbelief.

"Amazing, wasn't she?" Xandar said with a smile. "As a doctor, Rosalie treated everyone, regardless of species. She even successfully operated on a high-ranking vampire once, which their entire species was eternally grateful for. The vampires were not affected by the King's Authority, of course, not being a wolf o I Lycan. So, they kept Rosalie in their history."

"Whatever I just told you was what I read from books published by their species, and hidden by mine. It took me decades before I was able to find enough material to piece her story from head to tail. Some historians even went so far as to suggest that her death was one of the many reasons why the vampires declared war on the Lycans, and the werewolves bore the brunt of it when they were sent to the frontlines first."

Lucianne returned her sights to the woman in the portrait, and her heart felt heavy for what happened to her. Xandar wrapped his arms around Lucianne's abdomen and whispered, "Rosalie's eyes are lilac like the rest of us in human form. But her eye color painted here is her animal's. They were as blue as sapphires...like your animal's, sweetheart." 1

Lucianne's eyes widened in realization. Her body jerked upright and she turned and asked, "Were there other Lycans like her? Those who have animals with eyes which are not lilac?"

Xandar tucked a stray hair behind her ear as he said, "Not that I know of, Lucy." They stared at the portrait for another moment before Xandar said, "It is also rumored that this is not a good depiction of what she looked like. Some argue that her hair color only looked brown under the sun, and that it was actually black most of the time. Those dots on her face could very well be faint rashes from crying too often. They're not freckles. She cried to herself a lot after her first two rejections. Some say the rashes lightened when she met Reagan but no one knows for sure."

Sapphire eyes. Black hair. Rejections. Wanting to reject their bonded mate on their first meeting. Four in the morning, the time Lucianne chose to wake up everyday was the time the Prince awoke from his sleept o call out his mate's name. The only difference was that Rosalie was bonded to the Crowned Prince, Lucianne herself was bonded to the King. 2

Lucianne was hesitant when she asked in a small voice, "Do you...do you think we're somehow...

reincarnated from them?"

Xandar had the exact same thought in the car when this portrait came to his mind. He kissed her deeply between her eyebrows before he whispered, "It's possible. If we are, then it certainly explains why the Moon Goddess saw it fit to make you immune to certain poisons, and give you the ability to smell them. I doubt Rosalie could smell the Oleander in her tea when she took it. And she clearly didn't heal from it. But you can smell it, Lucy. And you healed from it within hours." 1

"Did she also have a striped tail?" Lucianne asked all of a sudden,

Xandar looked into the bright eyes he felt guilty of having to disappoint as he said, "I don't know about that, sweetheart. I'm sorry." Lucianne leaned the side of her head against his chest and listened to his heartbeat as she continued looking at Rosalie.

With his arms around her, Xandar spoke again, "I'm grateful for two things that my parents have already passed on when we met; and that the King's Authority cannot be used to compel creatures to mate and mark a creature that they themselves don't want. I would've never been able to forgive myself if what happened to Rosalie happened to you, Lucy."

Xandar noticed her biting her bottom lip. After smoothening it with his thumb, he asked, "What is it, baby?"

Lucianne's eyes glistened when she said, "I wouldn't be able to forgive myself if you ended up like Prince Reagan, living the rest of your days alone in pain, devastation and suffering. It hurts to picture you like that."

Xandar held her tighter as he muttered, "Not as much as it hurts picturing a life without you." He kissed her hair and uttered firmly, "I love you, Lucy."

Lucianne didn't trust her voice to be steady so she linked, 'I love you, too, Xandar. So much.'

Tell me you know that I love you, baby.'Xandar linked in response.

She chuckled lightly before parting their bodies slightly for their eyes to meet as she said, "I know. Thank you."

After sharing a kiss, they moved down the other portraits and tales before pausing for the day to head for dinner.

A man in a cap pretended to be looking at some scriptures when he noticed Xandar and Lucianne leaving the castle. As usual, he took note of the time and got his comrade to take over watch duty from there, What he didn't know was that he, too, was being watched, by a woman who had to forgo chewing gum as she disguised herself to look like a cold, knowledgeable professor studying the artifacts in glass casings

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Chapter 147

When they were having dinner at a restaurant, Lucianne's phone was suddenly bombarded with 'breaking news'. Xandar was going to ask if

everything was okay until his own phone started buzzing like his mate's just did.

Xandar reached for her hand and held it tight as he read the first headline: Ministers' Lawyers DENIES the Validity of Corruption Charges.

After tapping into it, the short article read: In a hearing of the charges against the ministers, the presiding judge concluded that, due to the very conflicting version of events given by the prosecution and the defence, the matter should proceed with trial for a detailed examination of evidence. Evidence had been exchanged between the parties as part of due process.

The defence, upon receiving the prosecution's evidence, made a public statement that reliance on that particular evidence was "unjust", "irrational" and most of all "unconstitutional". The article didn't mention how it was so because the lawyers were in no position to release such evidence to the public when the court had not made a final decision on the corruption case as of yet.

Xandar made an immediate call to the Attorney-General's Chambers, enquiring about the matter. The prosecutor in charge of the case told the King that the defence lawyers argue that the audits may be fabricated since it has only surfaced very recently.

The silver lining, according to her, was the fact that they had received a court order to appoint a neutral third party tech company to analyse exactly when the audits and the rest of the documents were first created and were last modified. So, if and when the documents in Greg's microchip get authenticated, the case will proceed in their favor.

After telling his mate about it, Lucianne gave Xandar's hand a gentle squeeze as she said, "When the analysis comes out, they won't be able to argue their way out of it."

Xandar pecked a kiss on her hand before sighing, "I just hope Greg didn't do anything to those documents to make us look like fools."

"Me too. But if that happens, we could ask Ellia and the others to testify. Though we'd have to enhance protection for them and their kids if it comes to that." Lucianne said.

She was right. 'Why didn't I think of that?", Xandar thought to himself. A smile graced Xandar's features before he looked at her with starry eyes and said, "You're amazing, you know that?"

"So are you, darling."

"You don't have to say that just because I said it to you, Lucy. I mean it, you're amazing."

"I mean it, too, Xandar. I'm not just saying it out of courtesy."

Xandar scoffed before he said, "I'm the scary Lycan King, sweetheart, remember? Amazing seems a little too...good, too inspiring and too noble to be associated with a creature known to be the most ferocious monster in the Kingdom."

"That's not true." Lucianne argued.

Xandar's eyes widened as he challenged, "Oh, really? And why is that?"

His mate's response was immediate, "The way you lead and rule is so different from past Kings. I highly

doubt there was another King in the past who took the welfare of werewolves into account but you consider our wants and needs so seriously. And the way you conduct meetings is another thing that's different about you. It was clear that you truly want to know what the

others think, and when you listen... you seem to listen to understand, not just to respond. Do you know how much humility that takes, Xandar?"

Xandar's eyes glistened in pure joy as he pecked another kiss on the back of her hand and said, "Thank you, baby."

There was a glint in Lucianne's eyes when she said, "Anything for my history geek."

Xandar's eyes narrowed as he complained, "Okay, now you've just ruined the moment with that word, babe."

Lucianne chuckled cheekily at her mate's annoyed expression but internally, happiness engulfed Xandar with whatever Lucianne just said and how beautiful she looked when she laughed. How did he get so lucky? He wondered.

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In the Blackfur residence, Christian was not happy with the news he was reading on his phone as well. And his cousin's message about the conversation he had with the prosecutor did not put him in a better mood. The only thing that kept the Duke from crushing his phone with one hand was the fact that Russell was in the room with him because the little boy needed the space on the coffee table to build his next contraption. Christian didn't want to frighten the child.

Annie felt everything Christian was feeling, being his marked mate. So, she got out his favorite cinnamon rolls from the oven before making her way to the living room. After giving Russell his share, she sat next to her mate and started tearing off bite-sized chunks before putting it into Christian's mouth.

He was already smiling from the moment she entered the room, even before taking the first bite of the cinnamon roll. After indulging in the perfect dessert from his mate's fingers, he gazed at her the same way he did when he first met her almost two decades ago as he uttered, "Thank you, my Duchess."

Annie could feel his anger and anxiety easing, and she peeled off another bite-sized piece as she asked," Bad news?"

Christian's sighed as his arm went over Annie's shoulder while he explained the news articles to his mate, which he finished off by saying, "...and the most frustrating thing is that Xandar can't use the King's Authority in this case."

Annie nodded in understanding. "That's true. Even if he just used it to get the truth, it might look like he used it to get the ministers to say something that Xandar wants to hear. Skeptics would say that Xandar used his Authority to make them confess to the crimes only we say that they committed."

"Conflicts of interests are a pain in the ast." Christian grumbled.

"Well, it's there for good reason, my love. Don't worry, I'm sure there's a solution. Xandar wouldn't want you to lose your peace of mind over this."

"I just hope he doesn't lose his own peace of mind over this. Do you remember how he'd have dark circles underneath his eyes whenever we had to take care of something huge: change a policy, debate to revoke a n old law, things like that?"

Annie stated matter-of-factly, "It's kind of hard to forget. I always felt you two did too much. He's probably the most diligent King in our history."

Christian muttered to himself, "And that's what worries me sometimes."

"Hey," Annie touched his cheek and he leaned into her hand like it was second nature to him before she continued, "We have Lucy now. She will look after him as much as he will look after her. Xandar's going to be fine. Weren't you the one who said she was good for him from the very start? That you knew she and Xandar were perfect for each other from the very first time you met her?"

Christian smiled at the memory before he said in a much lighter mood, "Never have I seen a creature that size take down Xandar, and in record time too." The Duke chuckled before he continued, "Our Queen changed him a lot, as much as she won't admit it if any of us said it."

Suddenly, his eyes glazed over for a moment before they cleared shortly after. He rubbed his forehead with his fingertips, and Annie waited patiently for him to speak. The Duke continued to complain, "So much for not losing my peace of mind over his excessive diligence. We just had the government meeting this morning, and he's actually calling for a meeting with the alliance members about the rogue situation tomorrow. Seriously? Tomorrow? Of all days?!"

Annie processed the information as she muttered, "But tomorrow is..." Her husband didn't even let her finish before he exclaimed, "I know!"

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Chapter 148

Lucianne woke up a few minutes before her 4 a.m. alarm with Xandar's arm circled loosely around her abdomen. Very carefully, she pulled her shirt up her chest and over her head, trying not to alert her mate when she did it. After that, she slowly slipped off her shorts, and all that was left to do was to wait for her alarm to ring.

When it did, her body stretched over to the nightstand as usual, and Xandar's hand on her abdomen tugged her back into bed like it always did. On a usual morning, if his hand made contact with her bare skin, it would instinctively rise up her body a little to find the hem of her shirt before pulling it back down to cover her abdomen.

This moming, however, when his hand tried looking for the hem, he ended up feeling Lucianne's bare breast instead. He took a sharp breath to wake up, and Lucianne turned her body to face his. When his eyes barely opened, she trapped his lips in a deep kiss while her hand guided his hand to her bare buttocks.

He parted their lips and with dazed eyes, and asked, "Baby, what is it? Did you have a bad dream?"

"No." Lucianne said, and started pecking kisses on his chin and jawline.

When the scent of her arousal started filling the air, the Lycan King got the memo. His own arousal didn't take any more time to fill the room, rivaling hers. With a low growl, he turned their bodies over, making Lucianne lie on her back as he hovered directly above her. After taking off his shirt, his lips started assaulting her neck, kissing and sucking on it as Lucianne let out those cute moans.

His legs parted hers, making them spread wide across the bed. And his hand moved south before his thumb started massaging her swollen clit on her wet lady part. His fingers went in and out of her opening ever so slowly, building up a pleasurable ache in Lucianne's lower abdomen as she indulged in the bittersweet pain.

After Xandar squeezed and sucked her breasts until her nipples were inflamed, he pecked light kisses along her jawline as his fingers in her moist lady part began gaining speed. His mouth stopped at her ear, where he whispered, "Tell me what you want, my love."

Between the sexy moans, Lucianne said breathlessly, "I want you."

His fingers stopped, and his eyes widened in surprise. Did he hear her right? He expected Lucianne to say that she wanted to come or scream. The King did not expect his mate to ask for what she was asking for right now. His face pulled away from her ear to lock eyes with the sexiest and most beautiful creature that ever existed lying naked below him.

With nothing but genuine concem, Xandar's eyebrows furrowed as he whispered, "Are you sure, Lucy? There really isn't a need to rush this. I'm okay with taking things slow. I just need you to be happy."

Lucianne's eyes glistened in pure joy. She was moved. Her hand reached for the side of his neck, and she pulled his head down to kiss him deeply on his lips. When she released him, her eyes locked with his as she whispered, "I'm sure, Xandar. I'm sure that I love you, that I'm happy with you. And I'm sure that I want

you."

It was Xandar's eyes which glistened in joy now. He trapped her lips in another deep kiss as his thumb and fingers started moving again, continuing to build on the efforts to get his mate to come. Lucianne's feet were reaching for his pants, trying to push them down his legs. When his pants went low enough,

Xandar kicked them away, and they fell onto the floor.

His fingers gained further speed. It didn't take long before Lucianne let out a scream as her body convulsed in shock and arched upwards. The product of her orgasm drenched a significant part of the bed, much to her beast's delight.

As her small hands traced Xandar's hard muscles, he moaned into her mouth. His c*ck had already hardened and straightened, and it was getting stiffer with each passing second as Xandar lubricated his entire length with Lucianne's juices, moving up and down her sensitive area to coat his whole d*ck.

Lucianne was already whimpering with his enormous tool teasing her lady part, and she pleaded breathlessly, "I want you, Xandar. Please."

Xandar stopped with the teasing, and positioned his shaft right at her entrance as he peered into the black orbs that he loved with all his heart before he said in all seriousness, "You never have to beg for this or for anything you want, my love. You only have to ask, and I'll give you everything." A peck on her lips before he whispered, "We'll start slow, Lucy. If I make you uncomfortable, let me know and I'll stop, okay?"

Lucianne offered a small smile and gave him a doting nod. Xandar lowered himself, and his lips traced her cheek as the tip of his shaft touched her entrance. Lucianne could feel herself stop breathing as she waited in agony. When Xandar thrusted himself into her, her scream was cut-off with Xandar's mouth on hers.

He didn't move, giving time for her walls to adjust to his girth. For Lucianne, the sensation from the thrust was physically agonizing but it was soon replaced with more pleasure than pain. She wanted more. As her walls wrapped up her mate's shaft, she parted their lips and muttered, "Darling, please move."

Xandar's worried expression turned into an elated one as he thrusted deeper into her before slowly pulling out and going back in again. With every entry, he inserted more of himself, paying close attention to Lucianne's reaction when he did it.

Their eyes locked, and Lucianne gasped with every thrust, and moaned with every pull. Soon, his whole length was in her. Xandar increased his speed, and they were going faster and faster until Xandar himself started moaning with his mate. At her peak, Lucianne screamed, and her core locked Xandar deep inside her, making the King grunt in return as the pleasure from his orgasm engulfed his being while he emptied himself inside her.

When his mate's core released him, Xandar slumped onto the bed by her side. But his eyes never left her. They both gazed at each other while taking in deep breaths as they replayed the beautiful experience. Xandar leaned into Lucianne, and after pecking a kiss on her lips, he uttered a blissful, "Thank you, baby."

Lucianne's black orbs shone with happiness as she bit her bottom lip. Xandar's eyebrows furrowed in concern as his thumb reached out to smoothen her lip when he asked, "What is it, Lucy?"

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Chapter 149

Lucianne moved closer to Xandar, and with her doe-eyes, she asked in a shy whisper, "Can we do it again?" 3

The concem in Xandar's eyes vanished, replaced by a flirtatious, cocky smirk. Just as he was about to turn Lucianne for her back to face the bed, she turned him instead. And her small body lay on his as she kissed him deeply on his lips. His arms roamed her body, trailing down her small back and spending time squeezing her booty as she pecked kisses on his face, neck and his rising-and-falling chest.

The area between her buttocks started teasing his hardened tool, moving up and down the erected length before she nuzzled his chin and moved to his lips. Xandar pecked a light kiss on her nose before he cupped her cheek and whispered, "I want you, Lucy. I need you. Please."

Lucianne smiled and pecked a kiss on his cheek before pushing herself up. Her hand found his stiffened shaft before she placed it at her entrance with Xandar's help. When their eyes locked, he smirked and said, "Drive me insane, my arousing flower."

Instantly, Lucianne lowered herself and took in his entire length as she closed her eyes to feel him in her.

As she pulled herself up, Xandar's hands cupped her breasts, kneading and weighing them as he watched her gorgeous face, her mouth panting as she took in quick breaths with each thrust and pull. His own butt began moving, and Xandar thrusted himself into her as she pushed herself into him, making Lucianne moan even louder.

In a very short amount of time, he started moaning louder than she was as she rode his d*ck. "Oh, baby. You feel so good. Ohh..."

His breathing quickened with their increasing speed, and they both knew he wasn't going to last much longer. Suddenly, Xandar's vision blurred and he let out a scream that would've woken the entire building i f Lucianne hadn't trapped his mouth in hers. At the same time, her core sucked his tool in and held onto it like a vacuum, refusing to set it free. Xandar emptied himself inside her for the second time that morning as his hand clenched her perfect butt.

Her body rested on his, and Xandar wrapped his arms around her as they took in another set of breaths, When Xandar had caught his breath, he

pecked a kiss on Lucianne's hair before he whispered, "Thank you, baby. You're amazing."

Lucianne lifted her head up and pecked a kiss on his lips before she whispered, "Happy birthday, my love. I hope you liked your present." 4

Realization entered Xandar's eyes as he muttered to himself, "Right, that's today."

Lucianne's affectionate eyes narrowed in annoyance as she asked, "Seriously, Xandar? You can't remember the one date the whole Kingdom is obligated to know?" 1

He smirked as he said, "Well, in my defence, I have been rather preoccupied and...distracted lately." His fingers started twirling her hair as he continued, "My heart was stolen by this extraordinary creature, and it took a lot of persuading to get her to believe that she's already had me wrapped around her adorable, little finger long before either of us knew." He then traced down her arm before lifting her hand up to peck a kiss on her pinky finger.

Despite her blushes, Lucianne said, "You'd better be careful, my King. Distractions can be quite detrimental."

"Mm. Not this distraction, my Queen. She's the reason I want to be better. The most beautiful and amazing creature to ever exist, and the Moon Goddess bonded her to me. I don't know how I got this lucky." His other hand left her bare back to cup her cheek. She leaned into his touch as Xandar muttered, "If only she saw how amazing she is, what her very existence makes people do."

Lucianne was so touched that she was rendered speechless. With watery eyes, she kissed him on his lips before she uttered, "Thank you, my love."

Xandar pressed his forehead gently against hers as he said, "Thank you for letting me love you." There was a cheeky glint in his eye when he added, "And thank you for the birthday present, my arousing flower. But I do hope you won't make this indecent beast of yours wait another year to experience that magical high again." 1

Lucianne rested the side of her head on his hard chest as her index finger started drawing circles on his shoulder when she muttered, "I was going to ask if you wanted to do it again but I wasn't sure if you'd be too tired to"

Xandar flipped her body over in mid-sentence. As he hovered over her, his cocky eyes bore into hers when he emitted the dangerous and alluring growl. "You've challenged this beast, my love. Now, it's going to make you scream." 5

They started their third round, paused and continued their forth with Lucianne on all fours and Xandar thrusting from behind her.

When they were done, Xandar carried Lucianne to the bathroom, and they decided to use the bathtub this time. He placed her on the sink counter while he got the warm bath ready. After soaking in the tub and cleaning each other's bodies, Lucianne's soreness diminished enough for her to step out of the tub.

After wrapping her up with a towel, Xandar didn't let her take more than two steps before he scooped her up and brought her out of the bathroom. He placed her gently on the bed before walking to the cupboard to get the maroon blouse and black skirt she asked for. Xandar helped her dress up.

He then wore a grey shirt and a pair of jeans, and Lucianne stood from the mattress to help him with his belt.

Xandar held onto her waist, worried that she may still be unstable from the soreness. Maybe calling for a meeting with the alliance that morning wasn't the best idea. He and his animal just wanted to spend the rest of the day in bed with their ravishing mate to relive that morning's experience. But being bonded to this over-responsible Queen, Xandar doubted that he could cancel the meeting that was just a few hours

away.

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Chapter 150

Xandar and Lucianne reached Xandar's villa fifteen minutes before the others were bound to arrive to get Xandar's home office ready for the meeting. They pulled out a whiteboard on a roller stand from the small supply room in the office.

After locking the rollers when the board was right in front of the round table where they were going to sit for the meeting, Lucianne uncapped a black marker before starting to scribble points to note on the rogue situation. Xandar didn't even look at the board. His eyes twinkled with love and admiration for his remarkable mate as he leaned against the meeting table.

"HAPPY BIRTHDAY, CUZ!" Christian exclaimed as the Duke barged in with an excited smile with his Duchess.

After exchanging hugs, Christian took out a long black box with gold engravings and said, "I brought something to celebrate with once we're done with working on your birthday."

"Is that wine?" Toby asked as he strode in with the rest of the alliance members.

Christian responded with pride, "Sure is. It's from one of the most established winemakers in the Kingdom, and this is actually their oldest bottle. I thought it'll make the perfect birthday gift."

Toby smirked cheekily and glanced at Lucianne before he said, "As impressive as that sounds, your Grace. I'm afraid the King already got the best birthday gift this moming, early this morning." 4

Everyone's eyes converged on the Gamma in confusion. Xandar was shocked but he soon had to look away with an apologetic smile as he caressed his mate's shoulders lovingly. Lucianne froze, and was tuming red

Toby was still smirking when his voice cut through the silence, "A friendly reminder, Lucy, my room is right next to yours."

The rest of them were starting to understand what he meant, and Lucianne's hands covered her face as she muttered, "Oh, Goddess."

Toby wasn't finished. "Yeah, our Goddess was probably the one who caused it with the mate-bond and all that, so I guess it's right to call on her now."

Lucianne's hands fell from her very flustered face as she said in a soft, pleading voice, "Let's just leave that there...and move on to why we're all here today."

The alliance was already chuckling and smirking teasingly at the King and Queen. Toby then continued," For future reference, Lucy. Anytime of the day is fine so long as it's already daylight. Four in the morning is a little insane."

"FOUR?!" Christian exclaimed in shock as his widened eyes fixed on his cousin, who had already begun blushing as he rested his head on Lucianne's shoulder to take in her scent from her neck while his arms wrapped around her abdomen.

Lucianne braved through the giggles from her friends and the ticklish sensation when her beast took in her scent as she said, "Point taken, Toby. Thank you."

"Oh, I wasn't done. There's also..." 1

Before he could finish, Lucianne threw the marker in her hand at her best friend, and he narrowly dodged i

tas he started laughing with the others. He picked up the marker from the floor, and took a seat at the table before rolling the marker across the table in her direction as he said seriously. "I'm happy for you, Lucy, really

Toby waited for Lucianne to let out a sigh of relief before he started teasing her again, "But the King must've been happier this morning since his moans were much lou- oh sh*t." When Toby saw Lucianne reaching for the duster, his arms instinctively raised to shield his head. But when the duster didn't come flying at his face, he peered up in confusion.

Xandar had taken it away from Lucianne's hand right before she could throw it at Toby. The King then spun his Queen around by her arms to face him as he said in a hushed voice, "No. Bad freesia." After pecking a sweet kiss on Lucianne's nose, her embarrassment reduced as she pouted.

Toby lowered his arms, and he stretched out his body in his seat. He then rested his hands on the back of his head like he was relaxing on a beach before he said, "Ahh...Feels nice to be protected by the King."

Before anyone could react, Lucianne snatched the duster from Xandar's hand, and she threw it at the unaware Toby. It landed on his left cheek to create a stain before bouncing onto the table, and Toby groaned while the people around him laughed uncontrollably as they slammed the table at the scene they just witnessed. No dirt or dust got into his eyes since they were closed when the duster hit him. He stood from his seat and was met with Lucianne's arrogant smirk. 1

With a disappointed look, Toby looked at Xandar and said, "My King, you've let us down. For a minute there I was starting to believe that you could control that five-feet dynamite of yours."

Christian was already chuckling, and whatever Toby said just made the Duke laugh even louder as he held onto a chair for support. Xandar pecked a kiss on Lucianne's cheek before he said, "I'm afraid control between us is rather one-sided, Gamma Tobias."

Toby narrowed his eyes and shook his head to mock a look of disapproval before he muttered, "What a disappointment." This sent another round of laughter in the room. The Gamma then added, "And it's just Toby' from now on." He gave the King a warm smile as he left the room to wash his face.

Juan and Xandar locked eyes, and the Alpha smiled as he gave the King an affirming nod. Christian patted his cousin on the shoulder like he was congratulating him before the Duke took his seat. The King smiled in bliss at the beautiful creature that he was still holding in his arms. He then pecked a kiss on her hair before letting her break free from his grip to continue scribbling on the board.

When Toby returned, Lucianne had just finished scribbling. After her best friend was seated, they started with the first thing on the agenda: who is the leader of the rogue corporation?

Juan got the ball rolling, "Jake is definitely a candidate."

"So is Greg." Christian continued before adding, "Maybe even Sebastian Cummings."

"No, he isn't" Xandar and Lucianne said at the same time, and Lucianne blushed at the synchronicity of their response while Xandar reached for her hand on the table.

Toby resisted the urge to tease them again as Xandar explained how Sebastian couldn't have been involved in any manner.

Raden then said, "This may be a long shot but did any of you recognise any Lycans in Forest Gloom the other day?"

"Sadly, no, Gamma Raden." Xandar uttered

Lucianne stared at the table as she replayed the events from that fight before she said, "From how things played out, they seem to have been acting on Jake's command."

Tate then spoke with furrowed eyebrows, "The thing that bothers me is what they could've possibly done to shield themselves from the King's Authority."

Toby then looked at his friend and her mate as he asked in concern, "Yeah, Alpha Clement mentioned that, too. What happened, exactly?"

"Cuz, what are they talking about?" Christian asked with obvious worry, an expression that Annie matched.