

The 5-time Rejected Gamma & the Lycan King by Stina's Pen Chapter 191

Chapter 191

The one-month collaboration came to an official end three days later, and Gamma Tobias Tristan took the stage once again as the Gamma representative and as the stand-in Minister of Defense.

“Good morning, everyone. We’ve come full circle back to this ceremonial room, and yet the events from the past four weeks have been anything but normal. For one, I now have a private jet.”

Laughter ensued, and many wolves laughed so hard that tears started coming out of their eyes. When it died down, Toby continued, “It goes without saying that this month has been phenomenal. In a historic collaboration between the government, the monarchy and the alliance, we brought down a rogue corporation and arrested its founders who initiated the corruption scheme within the government; dismissed and replaced many incompetent, untrustworthy and undignified ministers; and werewolves now hold temporary positions in government, which may turn permanent if we win the election in nine months time
COUNTING THE VOTES OF WEREWOLVES!”

A deafening applause and cheers followed, and Lucianne pecked a kiss on her mate’s cheek as she clapped with the others, and her mate pecked a kiss on her lips and temple in return.

Toby’s voice continued to ring through the speakers, “Representation is something my species had never dreamt of getting. And speaking of dreams, I must admit that it was never in my wildest dreams that I thought I would see the Lycan King OR Queen fight alongside us. But the battles we fought in the past few weeks showed that our King AND

Queen will NEVER leave us on the battleground to fend for ourselves ever again.”

Another round of applause followed as Xandar’s fingers entwined Lucianne’s own before he pecked a kiss on her small hand, resting their joined hands on his lap.

Toby proceeded to say, “They prioritize our lives over their own, which is more than we can ask for as their subjects. Of course, my speech wouldn’t be complete without addressing the elephant in the room: the fact that I am now one of the few people who can address His Royal Highness by his shortened first name.”

No one laughed louder than Xandar at that point. While everyone laughed and clapped, Toby locked eyes with Lucianne as he started talking about the REAL elephant in the room, “My best friend found her mate. And for once, it was someone who is serious about her; someone who is capable of loving her and protecting her; someone who would do anything and everything to keep her; someone who doesn’t need her to give up who she is and what she loves; and someone who is terrified of losing her.”

Lucianne held back her tears as she started stroking Xandar’s hand. Toby continued, “And I would like to take this opportunity to convey an announcement requested to be made by the SECOND scariest creature in the room, who is also my new friend, Xandar, that...” The burst of laughter forced Toby to pause and laugh with everyone. The audience knew that Toby was trying to imply that his best friend was the scariest creature despite her small size.

When he could compose himself, he announced, “Our Queen will be crowned next month, which is long overdue if you ask me.”

The Gamma fixed his eyes on his mentor, who had taught him so much, and said, “You’ve been a Queen long before you were bonded to the King, Lucy. Most of us saw you as the Queen of Gammas who didn’t need a King. Everywhere you go, you make the people there better. I cannot thank you enough for everything you’ve taught us, everything you’ve taught me, and everything you’ll continue to teach everyone in your years as the Kingdom’s official Queen.”

A booming applause followed. “It’s without a doubt that this year’s collaboration created history. At the beginning of the month, if you told me that Lycans and werewolves would sit amongst each other as all of you are now, I would’ve laughed at you, and recommended that you visit a mental asylum. But look at us.”

The Lycans no longer only sat in front and wolves behind. Seating was free now, with both species sitting together, amongst one another. There were smiles, nods of agreement and murmurs of concurrence at what Toby just said.

“Look at how far we’ve come in just a span of four weeks, and imagine how much further we can go in the span of four months, four years and four centuries!” The power and enthusiasm in his voice made everyone clap again.

“It’s time we brought the acceptance and respect we instilled for each other back to our own packs, to show them that we can live as one. There’s still a long way to go in terms of policies and whatnot but for the first time, I have faith. We have faith that this is a start of a new era, a hopeful one, one with great potential. To our cousin species, I thank you as this year’s Gamma representative for accepting and respecting us. And thank you for letting us know that you won’t kill us.” More laughter ensued, mostly from the Lycans. Weaver was already leaning against Yarrington’s shoulder for support as the latter chuckled uncontrollably with his mate.

Toby then started wrapping up his speech, “It has been a pleasure to meet and work alongside so many of you this year, and it is an esteemed honor to speak on this stage twice when the Queen herself was only allowed once. Even then she spoke as the elected Gamma, not the Queen.”

Toby braved through the urge to laugh with the audience again as he finished up, “Before I take my leave; I would like to wish His

Royal Highness the very best of luck when he meets his future adoptive father-in-law, who, from what I’ve heard, hasn’t exactly warmed up to him yet. The former Alpha of Blue Crescent, Ken, is no joke. Like Alpha Juan now, Ken was one of the fiercest Alphas of his time. So, Our King would either come back in one piece, or we would have to settle with only the Queen running the Kingdom in the near future. Let’s hope for the best. Have a safe trip home, everyone. And thank you.” 3

The crowd got on their feet, laughing and clapping as Toby stepped away from the microphone. Christian laughed so hard that he was out of breath and was in tears. Annie and Lucianne were no different. Xandar took the last part of his speech a little more seriously than the rest but his mate’s beautiful laughter was enough to make him laugh with her.

Xandar and Lucianne handed the reins of the Kingdom to Christian and Annie as they left for Blue Crescent with Juan and Hale. Lucianne could feel that Xandar was nervous during the whole trip there, and tried her best to calm him, telling him that Ken was actually really nice once he got to know him. They even picked out gifts for Ken and Janice to make sure that the former pack leaders won’t be too hard on Xandar.

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At Blue Crescent, Lucianne dashed to the packhouse first while Xandar, Juan and Hale took a little more time. She wanted to butter up her overprotective adoptive father before he met her mate. Ken and Janice didn't live in this packhouse after retiring as Alpha and Luna but they stayed here for the past month to babysit the grandkids. Juan and Hale's kids were still in school, so it was just the adults and the two servants in the house now.

Ken was already waiting at the entrance when Lucianne ran into his open arms as she called out "Daddy!" like a little girl. After squeezing the girl he raised as his own, he managed a small smile and asked, "Buying brownie points for your mate, baby girl?" 3

Lucianne showed her doe eyes and said, "Xandar is really nice, dad. And I really love him. Promise to go easy on him?"

Ken narrowed his eyes and retorted, "No man is nice, baby girl. I thought I taught you that."

"What about you, dad? You're nice." Lucianne continued to speak with innocent eyes.

Ken sighed His heart always melted whenever Lucianne looked at him like that, and he patted her twice on the head like he did ever since she was merely a child as he said, "You know I'm only nice to my little girl. As for your mate...if I kill him, I promise it'll be a quick death."

Before Lucianne could protest, Ken smiled wider and said, "It was a joke, Lucy. Lighten up. Go help your mother. She's in the living room arranging the cookie jars."

Lucianne was not going to leave until he did. She knew Ken. In her schooling years, guys have come over to the packhouse for tutoring

sessions since she did well in science and mathematics, and Ken was strict with all of them even though Lucianne assured him that they were just classmates, nothing more. Now, Ken was going to meet her fiancé. There was no telling how he would behave when he met Xandar.

Xandar, Juan and Hale were waiting patiently behind the father-and-daughter pair, being careful not to interrupt them. They heard the last part of the conversation, which did not ease Xandar's anxiety at all. Juan went to his father first, and the two shook hands like formal acquaintances rather than embrace each other like father and son. Ken then hit Juan at the back of his head with his palm, as if it was for disobeying him.

Juan knew exactly what that was for. Ken had been complaining non-stop about Juan giving Xandar his blessing to propose to Lucianne BEFORE Ken gave his own. And Ken didn't even want to get started on the fact that Lucianne was already marked BEFORE he met the idiot who did it!

As Xandar watched Juan's interaction with his father, he began to wonder if Lucianne was really the adopted one. Maybe he would have had an easier time courting Juan instead. 4

After Ken patted his daughter-in-law on her shoulder to acknowledge her return, it was Xandar's tum to step forward. His animal took a deep breath as Xandar approached the old man and shook his hand, trying his best to not look too intimidated by his hard stare. Lucianne and Juan exchanged tense glances, both hoping that Ken wouldn't throw a punch on the new addition to their family

Ken's expression was unreadable, and when he released Xandar's hand, the Lycan King uttered a properly-rehearsed, sincere apology for not

making the effort to meet Ken and Janice sooner. That seemed to cool Ken a little.

‘At least he isn’t too egotistical to own up to what he did wrong’, Ken thought to himself. He knew that Lucianne was watching, so the adoptive father didn’t say or do anything that may upset his little girl. Everyone then adjourned to the living room, where Janice was.

Xandar presented Ken and Janice the gifts that he and Lucianne picked out for them. Ken got a leather wallet, and Janice got a necklace. Janice was elated and impressed. Ken was not, but nonetheless grudgingly thanked Xandar after being nudged by his wife.

Janice was more welcoming with Xandar. She even offered him a hug before they all sat in the living room. The former Luna took a great interest in Xandar’s life, and asked him all sorts of questions, from his family to his hobbies. When Xandar sheepishly mentioned that he liked reading anything on history, Ken was pleased despite not showing it. It was almost impossible to find another person who loved to read as much as his little girl did these days, so the seemingly-cold father would admit that he felt... grateful Xandar and Lucianne shared this in common.

When Janice ran out of questions to ask after two hours, Lucianne talked animatedly about her dates with Xandar. She only told Ken and Janice over texts and short mind-links before, so she was elaborating further now. The sight of their adopted daughter glowing when she mentioned that Xandar bought her all those books made Janice smile wider, and made Ken scowl less. And when Lucianne got out her phone to show them the reading wonderland that Xandar built for her in his villa, the ice in Ken’s heart

thawed a little more.

When Ken asked about their infiltration in Wu Bi Corp, Lucianne, Xandar, Juan and Hale all knew they were walking on eggshells from here. Juan and Lucianne agreed to share the details with their parents face-to-face, and they were to do it together. Since Ken was softest to Lucianne, she took the lead. Lucianne tried to water down the severity of her situation but to no avail.

She couldn't lie about it since Ken would just see right through her. And Ken threw sharp glares at Xandar and Juan when Lucianne reached the part of the rogues pinning her to the wall before Jake tried to mark her by force. Janice had to hold her mate's hand when Lucianne reached the part of the Oleander.

Lucianne tried to lighten the mood by speaking cheerfully about how the Queen's Authority could be emitted in her human form but was strongest when she brought her animal forward to combine its strength with her own. But even the mention of the Queen's Authority didn't seem to make Ken any less enraged. If looks could kill, Xandar and Juan would have died right then and there. When Lucianne finished the story, even she held her breath to wait for Ken to say something.

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Ken's face was still as hard as cold metal when he turned to Janice, and exploded, "I knew I should've killed Idris's b*stard son when he looked at Lucy like she was a piece of meat! How dare he try to take my daughter's choice from her!"

Upon hearing that, the four of them holding their breaths relaxed visibly. He was mostly mad at Jake. Thank Goddess!

“OUR daughter, dear.” Janice corrected her husband. She wasn’t comfortable after listening to the tale either. 1

“Sick b*stard!” Ken spat. He then scowled at Juan and shouted, “And what the h*ll was Faint Moon’s doctors doing?! How could they not have enough blood on hand?!”

Juan argued meekly, “Dad, they brought all they had.”

Ken yelled, “It wasn’t enough! Gonna give those Faint Moon idiots a call and...” Lucianne’s eyes widened in fear before her hand reached for her father’s arm to stop him from getting up as she spoke with her doe eyes, “Dad, there wasn’t more than what they brought. They did everything they could. And it was enough. We came out fine.”

“You could have died, baby girl.” Ken said with more restraint over his rage.

“But I didn’t, daddy. I came out stronger like you always said I would.” Lucianne justified meekly, praying that he won’t call Luna Emilia to give her a lecture.

As Ken’s heavy breathing steadied, he looked at Juan and said in a low voice, “Make sure the issue of blood supply is raised in the next pack leaders’ meeting.”

Juan rolled his eyes and responded, “We already had one after the infiltration, dad. Blood is not going to be an issue anymore.”

“It better not be.” Ken warned.

Lucianne saw that her brother was getting increasingly agitated, so she answered Ken, “It won’t be, daddy.”

Ken wasn't done when he glared at the remorseful-looking Xandar and exclaimed, "And you better make sure that doesn't happen to my daughter again!"

Lucianne defended Xandar. "Daddy, that's not fair. Xandar shielded me from the blades."

"And gave you the poison after that." He uttered in a low voice.

Lucianne was getting angered now. "I TOOK it from him, dad. Xandar had already lost consciousness. He couldn't stop me. No one could. I would've used the Queen's Authority to force them to do the same thing if it came to that."

Xandar's face hardened in guilt, and Ken's disdainful glare made him feel worse. Lucianne felt Xandar's guilt, and she stroked his hand to comfort him while trying to reason with her enraged adoptive father, "Dad, think about it, mom would've done the same for you. Are you saying that she would be wrong to do what I did?" 2

"YES!" Ken exclaimed without hesitation.

Luna Janice roared, "KEN! YOU TAKE THAT BACK!"

Juan scoffed, then leaned back into the couch as he smirked and declared, "And it's showtime."

The former pack leaders shifted their sharp glares to their son, who simply looked at them in amusement as he said, "Admit it, dad. What happened was the rogues' fault. None of us could have stopped Lucy. And any one of us would've done what Lucy did if it were our mates in Xandar's position."

Ken never liked it when Juan talked back at him but when his sights moved to the doe-eyed Lucianne, his anger evaporated, and h

e sighed and muttered in discontent, “Fine.”

After taking a quiet moment to himself, Ken’s sights fell on Xandar, and he thrust out his hand, which Xandar took, as the former Alpha said, “Apologies for...blaming you.”

Xandar’s response was immediate, “Don’t be, sir. I don’t take what happened lightly either. I’ll do better by your daughter, I promise.” Janice smiled at his response, and Ken nodded, internally... satisfied with his answer. Not happy. Just satisfied.

The kids returned shortly after, and they met Xandar. The youngest, Liam, was a little sad that he didn’t have Aunt Lucy all to himself anymore but Lucianne assured him that he still had a special place in her heart.

They had dinner together, and talked a little more with the kids before hitting the hay. Ken then invited Xandar for a fishing trip, just the two of them. The tone he used for the invitation obliged Xandar to accept.

With Janice’s relentless persuasion, Ken decided to be more open with his future son-in-law on their fishing trip the next day. They talked mostly about Lucianne, and Ken was pleased with whatever Xandar was saying and showing, especially when he

looked hurt and remorseful when he mentioned the times Lucianne got hurt, and how he blamed himself for each and every mishap.

The pain and fear in Xandar’s eyes became apparent when he talked about the times he thought Lucianne was going to reject him. Ken saw

and felt his sincerity, devotion and love. Maybe he wasn't so bad after all.

When he returned home, Ken told his mate about his time with Xandar, and said that the boy' may be right for their daughter. Janice rolled her eyes at her husband and said, "He's the Lycan King, Ken. Did you even think that there could be someone better?"

"Titles are just the surface, Jan. You know that. It was his intentions that I was worried about." Ken noted.

"Xandar is fine. I'd say he's the right fit for Lucy, and he's spoiling her like a princess."

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"Like a Queen." Ken corrected her with pride, and added, "And I can't believe I'm saying this, honey, but I think he's right for Lucy, too."

Xandar and Lucianne stayed in Blue Crescent for a week before returning to the Kingdom when Christian informed Xandar that the trial against the Kyltons and the others was about to start:

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The next three weeks passed in a blur, with the Kyltons', Aphaels', Tanner's and Greg's lawyers trying their best to save their clients. Some of the arguments and rebuttals got so ridiculous that the judges held their heads like they were getting a migraine.

One day before the verdict was scheduled to be delivered, every pack leader and Gamma boarded flights to the Kingdom and stayed over in hotels before making their way to court the next day. When the wolves saw each other in court, they embraced and chatted. The noise died down when the accused persons were brought into the courtroom. Almost everyone scowled at the Kyltons, Aphaels and Tanners, emitting low growls as they walked past with police escorts to be seated in the area designated for them. When Greg was brought in, however, no werewolf or Lycan made a sound.

They had been following the news, and were well aware of the magnitude of his contribution to the present case. Most of them were conflicted in what they thought of him. They hated him for helping the rogue corporation at its inception but they respected him for turning against the crooks and giving himself up to the authorities.

Those who still blamed him for the lives lost from rogue attacks chose to keep their comments to themselves since Lucianne emphasized that the losses would have continued, or even exacerbated, had the Duke not done what he did in recent weeks.

Dalloway's task force managed to track down and arrest two of the rogues' suppliers. Any silver, Oleander, serums and poisons found were seized and sent to the labs to be neutralized. The last supplier managed to clean out the hideout and flee before the task force arrived, so trackers were brought into the task force to help continue the search. 1

In the course of four weeks, the wolves caught and handed over about fifty runaway rogues, and killed another forty who tried to escape custody. These were caught not because they tried to attack packs but because they had to run through certain packs in the course of their escape, resulting in their capture. When questioned about where the rest were, every rogue said that they didn't know because after coming out

from the submarine, they dispersed, running in all directions since they weren't sure which was the safest route to survival anymore.

Without the shelter, supplies and support from the corporation, the rogues were more vulnerable than ever. Since there was no longer any aid for the ruthless creatures, no pack reported any attacks in the past few weeks for the first time in so long. Tate and Toby were leading an expedition to hunt down the rest of the rogues in wolf territory, while Phelton and Langford were doing the same in Lycan territory. No wolf could deny that their packs were only safe now because of what Greg did in recent weeks, yet they still couldn't let go of the fact that he was one who made all those years of attacks possible.

Conflicted. That was the only way to describe how most of them felt.

Two minutes after the accused persons were brought in, five judges entered the courtroom and everyone stood to exchange bows with them. After everyone was seated, Judge Cook began, "Good morning to everyone present. This case, as everyone knows, has

taken weeks to come to its end. And after much deliberation, we have come to the verdicts of the accused persons."

The courtroom was so full that many had to stand. Many more were outside the courtroom, relying on their hearing to keep up with what was going on inside. Fortunately, Judge Cook was considerate enough to read out the judgment louder than he normally would. "The facts of this case are unheard of, and what the accused persons have done is unacceptable not just in the eyes of the law but also in the eyes of any decent creature."

"The evidence mounted against the accused persons have been authenticated, thus are irrefutable. Such evidence not only included voice recordings but also hard drives seized by the police force, which shows the grand scheme of Wu Bi Corporation, a company founded and

established by the distinguished Kylton family, aimed to siphon funds from the government AND the monarchy before seeking to...demand that the King take their daughter's hand in marriage."

Low growls filled the room, from werewolves to Lycans. Xandar's eyes turned onyx in an instant when he growled as subtly as he could with the rest. For once, the judges didn't shush the attendees. Lucianne's thumb stroked Xandar's hand, and she looked at him with a soft gaze in hopes of calming him down. He pecked a kiss on her temple as the lilac shades returned. 1

Judge Cook's voice continued to ring loud and strong in the courtroom, "Building a corruption scheme is one thing. Building it to challenge the monarchy amounts to treason at its highest degree, and treason justifies a punishment of death or eternal torture."

Judge Cook cleared his throat and continued, "On with the sentencing: we shall start with the perpetrators, the Kyltons. It is the unanimous decision of this court that the assets owned by the Lord, Lady and the heiress of the Kylton family be seized and sold to recover double of the amount stolen from the government over the years. The family shall each be subjected to solitary confinement for life, and only brought out for the daily whipping of ten strokes, and an electrocution for thirty minutes three times a week. The judiciary concurs with the monarchy's request to install speakers in their confinement units, playing audiotapes of radio stations which reported on wolf pack massacres in the past. We thank our cousin species for digging up their archives and making copies for us."

Xandar was the first to suggest installing the speakers and playing those tapes, crediting his mate for the idea she gave him after Sasha hurt them both on the training ground. Lucianne immediately clarified that she never intended to execute such an

inhumane thing but it didn't stop everyone at the meeting from getting onboard with her brutal idea. Christian, Juan, Tate, Toby and Zelena were the most enthusiastic when it came to pushing for this to be in the recommendation.

Lucianne didn't fully agree with putting that in at first, and was only swayed because everyone else supported this form of punishment, from her mate to the second-in-command to her brother and friends. Even Phelton, who normally didn't advise her on what to do, urged her to support the motion, reminding her that many of her kind were lost because of the Kylton family. When Lucianne recalled the friends she lost, along with the children who were killed in the process, it wasn't very difficult to get on their side.

“For the first accomplice, Livia Aphael, solitary confinement for life, brought out only for the daily whipping of five strokes. Her parents, Dax and Cornelia Aphael, for being wilfully blind to the crimes being committed under the same roof and for speaking against the Queen, imprisonment for forty years and a fine of two hundred thousand dollars each.”

“The second accomplice, Helena Tanner, solitary confinement for life, brought out only for the daily whipping of seven strokes and an electrocution of thirty minutes three times a week for obstruction of justice when she disobeyed the Duke's order to surrender herself to the police; for attempting to murder a child with Oleander which ended up hurting Her Royal Highness instead; for blackmailing her employees to commit treason and assist in her crimes, and for participating in the corruption scheme. Her assets shall also be seized and sold for the government to recover twice the amount that was stolen.”

“As for her husband, Vincent Tanner, who remained wilfully blind to his wife's crimes despite having felt the anguish when his wife was battered by the Duke when he demanded she turned herself over to the authorities,

one whip a day for an imprisonment period of fifty years and a fine of three hundred thousand dollars. As requested by his counsel, Vincent Tanner shall be anesthetized when Helena Tanner is being whipped and electrocuted so as to ensure that he bears only his own punishment. Helena Tanner shall NOT be given anesthesia when Vincent Tanner is being whipped.”

“Rico and Ridalpo Tanner, for being wilfully blind to the crimes being committed under the same roof in the period of time they were in the Kyltons’ residence, imprisonment for forty years and a fine of one hundred thousand dollars each.” “Finally, the Duke, Greg Claw.”

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Lucianne sat up and held her breath, as did everyone else. On the side, Greg seemed like he couldn’t care less what happened to him but it did concern him that Lucianne looked worried. She shouldn’t be under any stress given how hard the past few weeks had already been for her. He was only stealing momentary glances of her before but he was finding it difficult to look away now, until his cousin threw him a glare, 1

Greg rolled his eyes just to annoy his cousin one more time before reluctantly looking away. Lucianne felt Xandar’s jealousy, so she pecked a quick kiss on his jawline to calm her beast. Xandar’s face softened, and he closed his eyes to take a whiff of her hair, indulging in her scent.

Judge Cook cleared his throat and continued reading the judgment, “By law, the Duke’s act of poisoning the Duchess to render her infertile justifies invoking the punishment of death or etemal torture. And conspiring against the King, which enabled the perpetrators to establish the very corporation to siphon money from the government and for countless rogue attacks to be launched against our cousin species should

subject him to, at the very least, solitary confinement, electrocution, whipping, a hefty fine, and even the stripping of his dukedom with the monarchy's permission. However..."

His stem voice turned a little gentle when he continued, "This court acknowledges that as much as the Duke is culpable for the crimes perpetrated against the government, monarchy and werewolves, this court must also acknowledge the fact that the said Duke had been instrumental in the successful prosecution of corrupt ministers, the founders and accomplices of Wu Bi Corporation, and also those who sought to harm and murder the Queen. As much as he is to be blamed for the lives that were lost, he is also credited for the lives that were saved when he surrendered credible and reliable evidence and himself to the monarchy."

Judge Cook was careful to not say that the evidence was surrendered to Lucianne in particular, being sensitive to the King's temperament. Greg rolled his eyes again at the old man's consideration for his cousin's feelings.

The judge continued, "The monarchy's recommendation for the said Duke is, in this court's very humble opinion, too punitive for an accused who has willingly offered more incriminating evidence than any accused person in history without asking for anything in return"

"The said Duke has also fully cooperated throughout the entire legal process, and had already returned the commissions received by him from Wu Bi Corporation, which he kept in a separate bank account under an alias, as verified. He has also offered to pay the fine with revenue generated from his long-established stationery export business which has been verified to be legitimate, the fine of which is double of the stolen value. Taken together, this bench of judges has unanimously agreed to mitigate the sentencing imposed by the law."

“Contrary to the monarchy’s recommendation of imposing two whips per week for a period of fifty years imprisonment, this bench finds that it is fair to impose only ten whips. Not ten whips per week but only ten whips in total. His imprisonment term shall be thirty years. The Duke may be released earlier, or placed under house arrest for good behaviour if and when such a time comes.”

Judge Cook placed the sheet of paper he held in his hand back on the bench table and said, “Crimes are taken seriously in the Court of Law. The violators shall be punished in order to protect the society at large. That being said, those who choose to come to the law by...admitting to their crimes shall be shown...an appropriate amount of mercy, depending on the severity of the crimes and the circumstances of each case. Our job as judges is to find the right balance, and after much deliberation, this is our decision.”

Judge Cook stood, and the other judges followed suit, leaving the courtroom through the side door which they entered from.

Lucianne was relieved that they went easy on Greg. Annie was satisfied, too. Their mates, on the other hand, were still in the midst of adjusting that this wasn’t one of Greg’s tricks, and that he helped them, really helped them, with no strings attached this time,

Xandar unceremoniously buried his face in Lucianne’s neck, greedily taking in her scent as Greg stole one more glance of Lucianne when he was being escorted out by a policeman.

Disregarding all the growls being thrown her way, Kelissa was screaming like a madwoman on her way out, shouting about how everyone would regret taking those pictures of her and reporting on the case, that she would ‘come back and make you all pay!’. She also kept repeating that

when she returned as their Queen one day, they would regret prosecuting her.

When she was finally out of sight, Christian muttered, “Psychotic, delusional b*tch.”

Xandar’s lips trailed up Lucianne’s side profile, and stopped at the top of her head, where he pecked a kiss and said, “The...podcasts in her confinement cell ought to help with the craziness.”

Lucianne narrowed her eyes, and questioned, “That’s your choice of word, Xandar? Podcasts? And what do you mean ‘help with the craziness’? She’s going to be driven more insane than she already is, darling.”

Christian chuckled at her response to his cousin, and Xandar met his mate’s annoyed gaze before he uttered, “Then the next step would be to transfer her to a mental asylum, sweetheart. I’d say we’re right on track.”

Lucianne shook her head and got up because it was time to leave the courtroom. She then muttered, “Indecent beast.” Her body was immediately spun around, and before Xandar’s lips crashed on hers, her fingers came between them and pressed on his lips as she whispered, “MY indecent beast.” Xandar kissed her fingers and declared, “Always.” A peck on her forehead, and he continued, “And forever.”

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A week later, the wolves flew to Lycan territory again to attend Lucianne’s coronation. Every living creature from Blue Crescent flew

over, and they left the safety of their pack to the warriors from an ally pack.

Every Lycan and werewolf who wasn't at the ceremony turned on their televisions or went online to watch the live broadcast, even the prisoners. Greg sat in the cafeteria with a few new friends he made, beaming as Lucianne's face came on screen.

In a separate prison, the Aphaels and Tanners stared at the screen with zero enthusiasm. Livia was the only one with a scorn when Lucianne's face came into view.

In each of their solitary confinement units, the Kyltons were barking expletives when the police brought in high resolution televisions in compliance with the order of His Royal Highness. Their legs were tied to a chair, and their hands were tied together as two policemen held each of their chairs from behind. Although distasteful to their sights, none of the Kyltons thought to close their eyes to avoid having to watch the coronation.

Kelissa shouted and screamed as her tears of anger continued to stream down her very-flustered face. Her nostrils flared and beads of sweat appeared on her forehead from how much strength she exerted when she screamed like a mentally-unstable patient. When the policemen with her decided that they didn't want to go deaf, they got some duct tape and taped it over the heiress's mouth, appreciating the more tolerable muffles as they watched the coronation on the television with her.

At the ceremony, Lucianne walked down the red carpet in a lilac gown designed and made by Hale. Her half-tied hairstyle showed her full face. Many from the press took the liberty to point out that Lucianne disregarded royal tradition when she smiled and waved to attendees who were mostly her friends and allies instead of looking straight ahead and walking down the carpet with a poker face like past Queens. Her favorite

nephew, Liam, suddenly had the physical strength to pull his tiny hand away from Hale, and he dashed towards Lucianne before his parents could stop him.

Instead of asking him to return to his seat, Lucianne held Liam's hand and continued walking down the carpet. Russell came shortly after, taking Lucianne's other hand. These two boys who succeeded in breaking away from their parents' hold seemed to have encouraged the other kids to do the same.

Many more children left their parents' side, and dashed towards the Queen without knowing that it violated the formalities of the ceremony. The guards could only catch and stop a few of them but most of the children got through with their small size, and they crowded around Lucianne, walking with her with wide grins and cheeky smiles, disregarding their embarrassed parents who were hissing at them. Juan himself hid his face in his hands before Lucianne mind-linked him that it was okay.

Christian and many others in attendance were already laughing at how the guards were struggling to scoop up a few kids at once. Only when Lucianne told them that it was okay did the guards set the children back on the ground. The sight of a group of children around Lucianne was humorous for some like Christian and Toby: was heartwarming for those like Annie and Hale; and was beautiful and amazing for Xandar. 2

Before he met Lucianne, he had only ever scared kids away. This was a sight that he could never conjure up even if he stretched his imagination to its limit. "Thank you, Moon Goddess. You've given this Kingdom your most precious gift, and I swear that I will love and protect her for as long as I live", Xandar muttered in gratitude. The crown and cloak he wore were bothersome on a warm day but his mate seemed to have melted away any discomfort that he was feeling.

When Lucianne reached the raised platform where Xandar and the archbishop were, she told the kids to wait for her on the lower step, and they all nodded obediently. Liam let go of his aunt's hand, and Russell did the same when Xandar came to offer Lucianne his hand. As soon as she stepped on the elevated platform with his help, the audience went wild, cheering and clapping even though Lucianne wasn't technically crowned yet.

The archbishop had a microphone pinned to his robe, so he commented in amusement, "Looks like my services are not needed after all. How about we just skip to the buffet, everyone?"

The crowd burst out laughing, and the journalists took note that even the archbishop broke tradition when he joked like that. The archbishop then got Xandar and Lucianne to stand a meter apart facing each other. After requesting Xandar to thrust his right arm and holding it straight in Lucianne's direction, the archbishop asked Lucianne to do the same with her left arm. Their hands held the area below each other's wrists, and the archbishop opened his small notebook and began reciting from it.

Xandar's gaze of pride never left his mate's black and lilac orbs, which she held with honor. At the end of the archbishop's short recital, he got Lucianne to repeat after him. "I, Lucianne Freesia Paw, solemnly promise and swear to rule and gover the creatures of this Kingdom in accordance with its laws, alongside His Royal Highness, King Alexandar Thomas Claw." 1

"I promise and swear to protect the Kingdom and the creatures herein, doing what is needed and required of me."

The archbishop then said, "...as I have always done before this day."

Lucianne blinked in surprise before she turned to the archbishop, a way of asking him whether he made an error on that part. That

wasn't in the rehearsal when they practised two days ago. He simply smiled and waited for her to repeat after him, and when Lucianne's sights returned to her mate, he was looking at her with a cheeky glint in his eye and a more visible upward curl of his lips. This was his doing.

She pressed back a smile and repeated, "As I have always done before this day."

The archbishop beamed and continued another set of lines that were neither in the rehearsal nor were they in any oath taken by rulers before Lucianne. Christian's not-so-subtle chuckle in the background and Xandar's glowing smile showed that they planned this with the archbishop.

The archbishop came to the end, which was the cue for Lucianne to repeat everything he just said. She blushed, and couldn't press back her smile any longer as she repeated those words, the very same set of words she uttered in the dining hall after Xandar spoke about the Jewel Pack incident, "You can be assured that I will not stop until every last threat has been neutralized. I will not give up even when I'm weakened. I will fight alongside you, and together, we will win."

A roar of enthusiastic and deafening applause and cheers followed, and the media was excitedly taking note of the modified oath. The oath was never altered in any way for centuries, so it was a surprise for it to be changed today.

The fifth tradition that was broken was the fact that Lucianne remained standing when Xandar began lowering the crown over her head Xandar explicitly told her and the archbishop that he will not have Lucianne

kneel and bow to him like past Kings. If she did so, even by an inch, they would have to redo the entire ceremony.

When the crown had been placed on his mate's head, the King planted a deep kiss on her forehead, which was the sixth tradition that was broken. The final one broken for the day was when Xandar held onto her small hand, and got down on one knee before tilting his head downwards. His voice rang through the microphone pinned to his robe and amplified through the speakers when he said in a firm, thunderous voice, "My Queen."

Everyone knelt and bowed to their Queen with nothing but eagerness, devotion and admiration. Lucianne bowed to the crowd in return, and everyone stood when she stood. As the King rose, the Queen pecked a kiss at the back of his hand, a gesture he returned by pecking a light kiss on her forehead.

When the ceremony was over, everyone adjourned to the dining hall for the buffet. Lucianne and Xandar took off their crowns and the King slid off the cloak before they joined the others. Xandar was speaking to Ken and many other retired pack leaders, whereas Lucianne was mingling with Yarrington and the wolves who were talking about education.

As Lucianne listened to Gamma Benedict, she noticed her vision blurring. Her legs got weaker before she heard Xandar yell her name from across the hall as she passed out.

The 5-time Rejected Gamma & the Lycan King by Stina's Pen Chapter 197

Chapter 197

Yarrington caught the Queen before she fell, handing her to the King as soon as he reached her side. Xandar rushed her to Dr Yeil's medical

centre. Christian, Annie, the alliance, Ken and Janice all waited along the corridor outside the doctor's room.

Xandar was looking at his mate's unconscious body on the examination table in dismay. He felt her blacking out from across the hall, and the next thing he knew, he was witnessing her petite figure falling before the Education Minister caught her in swift motion

Dr Yeil extracted some blood, and got one of his nurses to go have it analysed. Two minutes into the body examination with his second nurse, Lucianne let out a moan. Xandar rushed to her side without a second thought and asked frantically, "Baby. Baby, can' you hear me?"

Her eyes fluttered open, and her gaze shifted from her mate to Dr Yeil and his nurse before her sights returned to Xandar as she asked, "Wh-what happened?"

"You passed out, sweetheart. How are you feeling?"

*A little dizzy." she responded.

Xandar lifted her off the table, and held her close to his chest, using the mate-bond to ease her discomfort. Lucianne kept her eyes closed as she concentrated on Xandar's scent and heartbeat, and another three minutes later, she could open her eyes without seeing her surroundings spinning.

She reached for her mate's cheek as she muttered, "Thank you, my love."

He smiled in relief knowing that she felt better, and pecked a kiss on her forehead before he muttered, "Anything for you, Lucy."

He sat her in a chair when the nurse came in with Lucianne's blood test results. What was odd was that the nurse was smiling. DI Yeil and the

other nurse looked at their colleague in bewilderment before turning their eyes to the report. They were shocked at what they saw before a smile graced both their features.

The doctor looked at the King and Queen, and smiled radiantly as he said, “It seems you can heal from just about anything, my Queen
Congratulations, your Highnesses. You’re pregnant.”

Xandar and Lucianne froze at the statement. Lucianne blinked a few times before she shook herself out of her daze and asked, “I’m sorry, Dr Yeil. I’m quite certain I didn’t hear you right. What did you just say?”

The nurses smiled wider when the doctor said, “I doubt you heard me wrong, your Highness. You’ve healed from the infertility poison, and now, you’re with child. It’s two days old, so the heartbeat is still faint. Give it another five more days, and you’ll be able to hear it easily in a quiet room. It looks like the Kingdom can welcome a new addition to the royal family in eighteen weeks time.”

Xandar knelt before Lucianne, and pressed an ear over her abdomen, where he detected the beautiful sound of a beating drum. His eyes glistened in joy when he looked up at his mate and cupped her cheeks as he exclaimed in a hushed voice, “You’re pregnant!”

Lucianne’s own eyes glistened as well when she chuckled in elation for a moment as she looked down at her still-flat belly, her thumb stroking it lovingly. For the first time in so long, she felt that the Moon Goddess didn’t hate her. It was because their Goddess gifted her the ability to heal from poisons that she was able to conceive again. Then, something came to her mind.

With bright, inquisitive eyes, Lucianne asked Dr Yeil, “The last time there was infertility poison in my system, you said that you sent my blood to the lab, Dr Yeil?”

Xandar stood by her side and faced the doctor as the old man answered, “I did. I called the head of the department just yesterday, your Highnesses, but my colleague over there confirmed that there’s no change in your blood composition. It’s still the blood of an infertile creature.”

“But the blood in my body is now healed?” Lucianne confirmed.

Di Yeil looked at the report in his hand and said, “It appears so, my Queen. There are no traces of infertility poison in your body, or any poison for that matter. But I must say, the recovery phase did take a longer time compared to silver and Oleander.”

“Why is that?” Xandar asked.

Looking up from the report, the doctor answered, “My best guess? It’s because the hormones required to conceive took time to return to their normal levels. You see, your Highnesses, the infertility poison wipes out the hormones required for pregnancy and...is supposed to inhibit production of such hormones from the organ producing them indefinitely. To put it simply, the poison was... supposed to turn off the production switch in the organ, much like how lethal poisons such as silver and Oleander turn off the functionality switch in vital organs. But...”

Dr Yeil looked at the report again and said, “If we learned anything about the Queen’s immune system, it’s that her organs know

how to take care of themselves. Since the switch in her organs never allows anything external to turn them off.. at least not permanently, she retained the ability to continue hormonal production. It took this long because hormones may take days, weeks, or months, in some cases, to return to their normal levels, depending on one’s diet and lifestyle.

According to this report, your hormones are now at healthy levels to carry a child, my Queen.”

Lucianne was speechless as she continued staring at the medical professionals. Xandar caressed her shoulders before he pecked a kiss in Lucianne’s hair and uttered, “Amazing.”

Lucianne then asked, “So, if I gave you my blood that has healed from the poison, and you sent it to your colleagues in the lab, do you think they can study the blood composition and develop an antidote to cure someone who has succumbed to the same poison?”

Everyone’s eyes snapped wide open. Dr Yeil composed himself and said, “Technically speaking, and if we were to be optimistic, it should be possible, your Highness.”

Xandar caught up to his mate’s thoughts. She was thinking about Annie. Lucianne wanted to know if there was something in her blood that could be replicated to heal her. The thought of how selfless she was even in this made Xandar’s heart melt.

With her doe eyes, Lucianne looked up at her mate and asked, “You don’t mind if I gave some of my blood, do you? It won’t affect the child.”

Xandar lowered himself to peck a kiss between her eyebrows and said, “Of course not, sweetheart. I think it’s a great idea.”

Lucianne’s eyes sparkled when she said, “In that case,” she looked back at the doctor and nurses as she said, “Take a little more of my blood, please. See if it can cure anything else.”

“Not too much of it though.” Xandar said with worry. He didn’t want her to faint again.

Lucianne rolled her eyes and said, “I doubt Dr Yeil will take everything, darling.”

Dr Yeil affirmed her statement, “Medical protocol doesn’t allow us to extract more than three syringes of blood from a pregnant woman, my King.”

Xandar’s tense shoulders relaxed, and he heaved a relieved sigh before pecking another kiss on his mate’s forehead as he said, “That’s good to know.”

After giving them the blood, Xandar and Lucianne agreed to keep the last part of their medical consultation from the Duke and Duchess until they actually have good news. They didn’t want to get Christian and Annie’s hopes up and then shoot it to the ground later on if and when there was no cure.

In the hallway, everyone’s eyes snapped to Lucianne and Xandar, and when the smiling couple told them that they were expecting, the strained atmosphere lightened as everyone conveyed their congratulations. The two most excited people were Janice, who couldn’t wait to welcome another grandchild, and Annie, who couldn’t wait to be a distant aunt. Since Xandar was close to her and Christian, Annie doubted that they’d be distant at all!

Toby’s cheeky demeanor replaced his worried features as he said, “A dynamite carrying a dynamite. This is definitely one safe Kingdom to live in.”

The 5-time Rejected Gamma & the Lycan King by Stina’s Pen Chapter 198

Chapter 198

Six weeks later, the royal wedding took place, and it was the largest wedding in Lycan and werewolf history...because werewolves were never invited to a Lycan's wedding, let alone the Lycan King and Queen's wedding.

In the confinement units of prison, the police once again tied each Kylton to a chair and placed the same televisions from the coronation day in each of their units, courtesy of the King. They taped the heiress's mouth after her first scream this time.

Xandar decided that he would use the short period of time after the wedding and before the honeymoon to tell Lucianne about forcing the Kyltons to watch her coronation and their wedding. He didn't tell her when he sent out the order because he didn't want Lucianne to blink her doe eyes and talk him out of doing what he wanted to do. It wasn't as if he was doing anything bad. He was simply doing everything within his power to avenge her, and besides... Christian agreed that it was a good idea. 2

Xandar was standing at the altar, adjusting his sapphire blue tie which matched well with his pastel blue shirt finished off with a black tuxedo. Christian was by his side as his best man, and Juan, Toby, Raden, Tate and Zeke stood in a row after Christian, all of whom were in black tuxedos and sapphire blue bow ties which stood out against their white shirts.

The room was packed, and the parents made sure they held onto their children this time to avoid repeating what happened during the coronation. When the wedding planner gave the cue for the band to start the music, everyone quieted down and stood up.

The flower boys and girls walked down the aisle first. In pairs, one child held a basket filled with freesia petals while the other scattered them on the aisle as they walked. After them came the bridesmaids one by one in

lilac dresses, each custom-designed and made by Hale. Lovelace walked first, followed by Zelena, Slyvia, Annie and Hale. Each of them held a bouquet of freesias that were of a different color.

After the ladies took their places at the altar on the opposite side of the men, the moment everyone was waiting for arrived. Lucianne came into view with a hand around Ken's arm, and the attendees cheered and clapped, blurring out the music that was playing in the background.

Her braided updo and skilfully-done make-up highlighted her bright eyes, small nose and plump lips. Her off-the-shoulder wedding dress offered a striking view of her neckline and accentuated her regal silhouette and the visible curve of her baby bump. Also designed and made by Hale, the color gradient of the dress starts out lilac from the top before darkening into a majestic onyx towards the bottom. In her free hand was a bouquet of multicolored freesias.

The sight was so breathtaking that Xandar heaved a sigh before pressing his lips together to stop himself from crying. When Lucianne and Ken reached the end of the aisle, the former-Alpha's eyes glistened as he muttered to his adopted daughter, "You'll always be my little girl, Lucy."

Lucianne smiled even wider and wrapped her arms around her adoptive father as she whispered, "I know, daddy. Thank you."

Ken sobbed once before they left each other's embrace, and the father placed Lucianne's small hand into Xandar's larger one, uttering only two words to his soon-to-be son-in-law, "Thank you." Ken then went to join Janice at the front row to avoid bursting into tears in front of the entire congregation. Lucianne stepped onto the platform and stood opposite Xandar, who held her hands in his as he chuckled with watered eyes.

Seated in the front row with her parents, Evie studied the sight at the altar with focused eyes before starting to sketch skilfully with her pencil on a large art block paper placed on an easel in front of her.

When stray tears trickled from the corners of Xandar blissful lilac orbs, Lucianne's thumbs came to gently wipe them away. He was about to close their distance to peck a kiss on her forehead but the marriage officiant placed the Scriptures of Matrimony between their faces to stop him as he said, "You're paying me to do my job, your Highness. Let's not render my presence even more insignificant than it already is."

-A stream of laughter followed from everyone else, especially from the bride, igniting a more radiant fire in the groom's heart as his

animal cooed. With a wide smile, the marriage officiant opened the scriptures and began reciting from it. When it was time to exchange their vows, Xandar regurgitated whatever he had been practising over the past few weeks.

"Lucy, from the first moment we met, I knew that my life would never be the same again. You bring a gentle warmth, thawing the heart that I've kept cold and hardened for so many years. Your words of assurance and your solution-oriented mind give me hope whenever I feel like I'm at the bottom of an abyss with no way out."

"Your eyes have a way of keeping me awake and alert. When we're together, you awaken emotions that I could never even imagine feeling. You make me better, make me more than the man I once was. I know I said this before but I still can't fathom how I got this lucky to be bonded to you, my love. You're amazing beyond words, more perfect than any Queen from the past, and you're going to make an exceptional mother for our child." 1

Lucianne's vision was blurring from her tears as she let out a soft chuckle. Xandar placed her hand over his heart as he continued," It beats for you, Lucy. I have only ever been and will only ever be yours. I promise to hear you out whenever you have something to

say; to hold you close whenever you need a hug or a shoulder to cry on; to celebrate you not just as our Queen, but as a person and as my mate; to kiss away any doubts that you may still hold for yourself; to protect you and our child in any and every way; and to keep telling you and showing you how much you mean to me and how much I love you. I love you, my little freesia."

The 5-time Rejected Gamma & the Lycan King by Stina's Pen Chapter 199

Chapter 199

Tears trickled from the corners of Lucianne's eyes as the congregation clapped when Xandar came to the end of his wedding vows. Most of the women found it so heartfelt that they were already all teared-up. Even Christian pressed away the tears from his own eyes.

After Xandar's thumb wiped away his mate's tears on her face, Lucianne cleared her throat and began reciting her vows which went through infinite drafts before this day, "Xandar, when we met, I was so blinded by my past that I almost gave up the best thing that was presented to me. You've always expressed how lucky you felt to be bonded to me but from the way I see it, I've been the lucky one."

"You asked me for a chance, a chance to show me that you're different but you're not just different, dearest. The way you love is phenomenal beyond words. I don't know how you do it but you somehow always know what to say to make me feel...more than what I always thought I was. Your touch calms my insecurities; your words and kisses melt away

my fears and doubts; and your presence assures me that I'll always be safe, and I'll always be loved in ways that I once thought was never opened to me."

She took a breath to steady herself before she continued, "I promise to lend you my ears whenever you need someone to listen or talk to; to stay in your embrace when you need to calm any agitation or quiet any storm; to be by your side no matter how difficult or dangerous things get. I promise to always remind you how well you're already doing as our King, how revolutionary your reign is and how extraordinary your legacy will be. And I know with every fibre of my being that you'll make a remarkable father."

She gave his hands a gentle squeeze as she said, "You're more than what you think of yourself, Alexandar. You'll always have me as your mate and as your Queen. This little freesia is yours, my indecent beast. Only yours. And I love you, too, my acacia."

Xandar's tears started streaming down his face, and he was secretly blaming his animal for not helping him to hold it all in. Lucianne wiped away his tears, while the entire congregation wiped away their own. Weaver could be heard blowing his nose into a handkerchief. Toby and Christian, who betted against each other on whether Lucianne or Xandar would produce the more impressive vows, concurred that both were equally powerful, that it was a tie when they wiped away their tears for the second time. 3

After the marriage officiant sniffled once, he cleared his throat and asked for the rings, which were brought by little Liam and Russell on a violet, velvet pillow.

Xandar bent down and ruffled the boys' hair with a warm smile, and took Lucianne's princess-cut diamond ring from the pillow, sliding it into his

mate's finger as he uttered the words that had been engraved on the band, "I love you."

Lucianne smiled even wider, then turned to the little boys and touched each of their cheeks before taking the other ring from the pillow, which was emerald-cut, and it shared the same set of diamonds as the ones on her own. After sliding Xandar's ring into his finger, she uttered the words engraved on his band, "I know. I love you, too."

The marriage officiate then declared, "With the blessing from our Goddess when she bestowed the bond between these two creatures, I now pronounce you husband and wife. You may kiss the bride."

With his animal's strength, Xandar pulled his mate into a deep kiss as the congregation erupted into a wild applause.

###

After that, everyone adjourned to the next room for the wedding banquet. The children who were fond of Lucianne took this opportunity to hand her their gifts by hand. They were very protective and possessive over their presents, and refused to hand them over to the staff member in-charge of collecting gifts from guests.

One by one, the kids came to Lucianne's side, handed her their gift and hugged her before returning to their parents. Xandar lost count after the eighteenth child. The braver and more curious ones gave him a high-five before leaving but he concluded that he still scared some of them.

One of the last children was an eleven-year-old named Suzy, who came with Tate. Odd. Tate was mateless. Why was he close to this child? Suzy was visibly daunted when she refused to look at Xandar as she handed Lucianne a laminated leaf. Lucianne's grin fell for a moment as she stared at the gift. Xandar then felt a deep sentiment spreading from

the deepest parts of the being. He looked at the leaf that was in his mate's hand, and saw that there was a collage of a firefly on it. It must mean something, but what?

Lucianne teared-up as she traced the firefly with her fingertips, and let out a soft chuckle. She thanked Suzy, and gave the little girl a gentle squeeze, reminding her to keep scaring away the cockroaches and beetles in White Blood like they practiced, which made Tate chuckle.

It was definitely a memory the three of them shared because Suzy managed a wide grin. After she hugged Lucianne again and stepped to the side, Lucianne stood and gave Tate a hug. The Alpha held her for a moment before Lucianne parted their bodies, after which he uttered a line he rehearsed before walking up to her, "We're really happy for you, Lucy. Congratulations."

"Thanks, Tate." Lucianne responded with a grateful smile.

He then added something that he didn't plan on saying, "And thank you, Lucy, for...everything."

The way he said the word 'everything' sent a shockwave of realization throughout Lucianne's being. Her smile fell, replaced by genuine surprise, She could only stare at the Alpha with widened eyes because she had only ever seen him as a close friend and a brother. Registering her revelation and increased heart rate, Xandar rose from his seat, and secured his hands on his bride's bare shoulders in hopes of calming her with their bond.

Tate held his smile, and moved on to shake the King's hand diplomatically, congratulating him as he did so. After Xandar muttered a meek 'thank you' and released Tate's hand, he was conflicted on how to respond to what Tate just did to Lucianne,

It was very inappropriate for Tate to make Lucianne realize that he was in love with her when she and Xandar were already together. But Tate didn't look like he was trying to steal her away or make her question her choice. He looked like someone who was genuinely conceding to an outcome, sincerely accepting that she chose someone else.

Before Tate could leave with Suzy, Lucianne called out, "Tate," Their eyes locked, and she continued, "I'm still here for you and for White Blood. I'll always be here."

Tate nodded with the same smile, and uttered, "We know, Lucy. Thank you."

He and Suzy then returned to their seats. Lucianne heaved a sigh before she met her mate's worried gaze. She pulled herself up, and pecked a kiss on his lips. Her black and lilac orbs penetrated into his soul when she uttered firmly, "I love you, Xandar. I'm yours. Only yours." 1

Her beast felt her certainty, her devotion and the depth of her love, making his animal coo in tenderness. Xandar's insecurity subsided, and he pecked a kiss on her forehead before holding her in a tight embrace as he whispered, "Thank you so much, baby. I love you, too."

The next child got impatient, and barged forward to tug at Lucianne's dress to get her attention, so Lucianne made Xandar release her before bending down to greet the little girl with a smile.

###

Before the newly-weds left for their two-month honeymoon, they handed the reins of the Kingdom to Christian and Annie once again, along with a surprise gift.

Dr Yeil's colleague in the lab developed an antidote for Annie's infertility issue, and when Lucianne and Xandar handed her and Christian the doctor's appointment sheet, Christian swore he heard them wrong. "I'm sorry, my Queen. I think I'm still deaf from the applause at the wedding. What did you say this was for?"

Xandar chuckled, and Lucianne said, "They studied my blood, and found a way to reverse what happened to Annie. This antidote turns the switch of pregnancy hormonal production back on, so you both can choose to have children if you want to. The doctor says that more than one dosage may be required, and recommends frequent check-ups to monitor the foetus as it develops but he is confident that this can allow you both to have a healthy child, if you decide that you still want a child, that is."

Christian was still stunned but Annie was already crying when she wrapped her arms around Lucianne and thanked her repeatedly, forgetting that she should be gentle on the baby bump. Christian only came out of his shock when his cousin offered him a brotherly hug. The Duke squeezed his best friend in return before tears started forming in his own eyes.

"It'll work, Christian." Xandar assured.

Christian chuckled, wiped away his tears before he said, "I just didn't expect to be able to...expect anymore."

Christian then embraced Lucianne for the first time as he whispered, "Thank you, Lucy." After seeing them off at the train station, the Duke and Duchess left the platform together with a renewed sense of hope. 3

By the window in the private lounge of the train, Lucianne sat on Xandar's lap and leaned into his chest to listen to his heartbeat as her head closed his eyes to take in her scent from her hair, his hand stroking her baby bump, and his arm circled around her waist, holding her close

After some quiet moments, he pecked a kiss on her temple, and uttered, “I love you, Lucy.” She looked up at him with twinkling eyes and responded, “I know, Xandar. I love you, too.”