

The 5-time Rejected Gamma & the Lycan King by Stina's Pen Chapter 3

Chapter 3

Lucianne got out of bed at 4 a.m., brushed her teeth, dressed up and grabbed a bag with a water bottle before making her way to the ground floor and exited the building through the backdoor. She jogged to the nearby forest behind the hotel and stripped behind a tree. After placing her clothes in her bag, she shifted.

Her white wolf with sapphire eyes had an unusual feature – a striped tail of white and grey. She never knew why. She scoured through any book she could find on the oddities of werewolves but there was nothing on striped tails. Those who had seen her form always pointed out this peculiarity of hers. Some said she had an unknown gift; others said she was cursed. It never bothered her in terms of functionality so she just shrugged off these comments.

When her paws hit the grassy ground, she held onto her bag in her mouth and ran into the forest. The cool breeze was invigorating. The gentle rustling of the wind was a sound she loved, and the endless rows of trees drew her deeper and deeper into the forest. She only stopped when she heard the gushing sound of water from a river.

There, she sat by the riverbank and looked at her reflection. Lucianne then stared at the sky, and took a deep, satisfying breath of freedom. She did this every morning back in her pack. The stillness gave her the space to clear her head. The quietness offered her some peace.

The first ray of light was her cue to dash back. She ran through the forest from the path she came from, shifted back to her human form, dressed and entered the building before taking the elevator up to the seventh floor. As soon as she walked out of the elevator and turned around the corner of the corridor, she heard the sound of heavy footsteps coming to a halt. Lucianne was scrolling through her phone as she walked, so she didn't see who it was.

Suddenly, her body was tugged forward, and she slumped into something hard. "Oof!"

"Goddess, I was so worried! Where were you?!" The person who had his head buried in her hair exclaimed.

Lucianne pressed her hands on the hard surface of his chest to part their bodies, and when she felt the sparks and registered the scent of acacia wood and forest trees, she realised that it was the King. When their gaze locked, she saw worry, relief and some anger in his eyes. "Oh, it's you. Good morning, your... I mean, Xandar."

He gently tugged a stray hair behind her ear as he asked, "Where did you go this morning, Lucianne?"

"I went for a run in the forest at the back. Why? Did something happen?" She asked.

Xandar pressed their bodies together once more, and the sparks intensified. He then buried his head in her neck as he whispered, "I couldn't hear anyone in your room, and your scent in the corridor was faint. I thought something bad happened to you. Don't do that to me again, Lucianne, please. I can't afford to lose you."

The sincerity in his voice pulled at her heartstrings but she reminded herself of her previous mates and remained calm as she uttered, "I'm sorry that I worried you. But there aren't any attacks around here, are they?"

"No." He whispered into her ear, and his warm breath tickled her skin as he continued, "But that doesn't mean I would be any less worried if I didn't know where you were."

She tried to keep herself composed as she uttered, "You could've asked Ethan. He saw me leave."

Xandar's body stiffened, and his grip on her shoulders tightened as he pulled away to look at her face. His eyes were fierce, and his tone was laced with jealousy as he asked, "Who is Ethan?"

With furrowed eyebrows, Lucianne answered simply, "The guard at the backdoor. Six feet. Dark. Short hair. He is a guard of this place, isn't he? Or you could've asked his partner, Benjamin. He guards the front but I think he saw me leave from the back this morning."

Xandar's body relaxed, and he smiled in bliss as his thumb traced her cheek. He thought about how amazing his mate was to learn the names of the hotel guards. The King chuckled lightly for no reason other than how happy he felt when he was with her.

Lucianne's phone beeped, pulling her gaze to the screen. She then looked back at the King, and asked, "Was there anything you need? I have to get ready for breakfast. I should get there before my Alpha and Luna."

He took a glance at her phone when she held it up, and saw that it was a reminder for her to get ready. He was so worried that he hadn't noticed she was in a tracksuit. He reluctantly released her as he said, "I won't keep you. I should go get ready as well. I can't wait to see you at breakfast, Lucianne."

She managed a polite smile and walked past him. He watched her unlock her door and disappear from view when the door closed behind her. Xandar was rooted at his spot for another five whole seconds before he entered the elevator and left the building like a grinning monkey.

For once, he contemplated what he would wear for the day. He never really cared about clothes. When one is in a position of power, subordinates will bow to you regardless of what one wears. But now, he wanted to look his best for his mate. After putting on a teal green shirt and finishing the look with a black tuxedo, he ran his fingers through his dark, thick hair a few times until he was satisfied with the way it looked in the mirror before leaving his room and driving to the dining hall.

The moment he stepped into the hall, everyone who was present bowed his way, and the initial chatter died down instantly. He caught sight of the person he was looking for, and felt a pang in his heart when she, too, had her head down and knees slightly bent.

The King forced a smile as he announced, "Heads up, everyone. Please help yourself to food and drink. Wolves, you need not wait for the other Lycans to arrive. As far as I'm concerned, both species are of equal importance. Please start."

Some older Lycans were particularly displeased by what their King just said but most of the younger ones were pleasantly surprised. Many whom the King had spoken to the night before walked up to him with the sole purpose of greeting him. 'It feels different', he thought. In previous years, wolves and Lycans would approach and greet him but it always looked obligatory. This year, he felt their sincerity oozing when his subjects wished him 'good morning'.

He made a beeline to his mate, who had her back against him when he was approaching her. She was speaking to Luna Lyssa, who was listening attentively until the Luna noticed his presence and bowed in greeting. "My King. Good morning."

Lucianne turned ever so gracefully in her turquoise dress. The sleeves reached her elbows and covered her scar. There was a glass of water in her hand. Her head was beginning to tilt downwards when Xandar held her shoulder and lifted her chin up as he pleaded in a whisper, "Lucianne, you don't need to bow to me, please. It really hurts me when you do that."

Lucianne was shocked to hear that the King was hurt to see her bow to him but she stubbornly muttered, "It would be rather odd if I don't though, especially when everyone else's heads are down."

He smiled and reached for her cheek as he said firmly, "It won't be odd because you're my mate. I will not have you bow to me." With that, he took her hand and lifted it up to his lips before pecking a sweet kiss on the back, and said, "You look beautiful."

He had offered her the same gesture the night before but that didn't mean Lucianne was any less shocked. She tried to say something, "Uh... thank you, Xandar." He never knew his name could sound so good until it came out from his mate's lips.

"Sit with me for breakfast?" He asked with hopeful eyes.

She hesitated, and glanced at Luna Lyssa before she asked, "Can I have a few more minutes with Luna Lyssa? We were just finishing up our discussion."

"Of course." He grinned, once again feeling proud of her selfless nature.

"Apologies, your Highness." Luna Lyssa said.

He waved his hand in the air with a smile and said, "No need. It brings me great joy to see a fruitful exchange." His graciousness and understanding earned him a smile from Luna Lyssa and Lucianne. He got lost in his mate's smile and moved closer to her before slipping his arm around her waist.

Lucianne gasped softly, and tried to ignore the sparks and warm sensation from his arm and hand. She then cleared her throat, and spoke to Luna Lyssa about her training plan. "Luna Lyssa, you need not worry about the Blood Eclipse Pack, I can assure you that they are nothing like the rumours being spread about them. They are fierce, yes. But that's only because they have to be when the rogues attack. We're all like that when we fight. Their Alpha is understanding and generous. He will help you."

“Would it be possible for you to introduce us at tea later? I was hoping that, since he knows you, he’ll be more willing to offer his warriors to train our pack.” Luna Lyssa suggested.

“That wouldn’t be a problem at all, Luna Lyssa. I should also introduce you to Luna Lovelace from the Midnight Pack. Their warriors are very well-trained as well, and their pack isn’t very far from yours so perhaps you would want to consider collaborating with them in the future.” Lucianne smiled and uttered in response.

“That would be wonderful! Thank you, Lucianne. It’s so wonderful to finally make your acquaintance after hearing so much about you. I won’t keep you now.”

“Likewise, Luna Lyssa.”

Luna Lyssa bowed to Xandar once more before taking her leave. When she was far away enough, Xandar whispered into Lucianne’s ear, “It’s so difficult to not fall in love with you after seeing you do that.”

She shrugged and muttered, "I was just helping."

"Helpful and humble." He uttered and smiled, offering her his hand as he said, "Come, let's get something to eat."

She nodded and, hand-in-hand, they made their way to the buffet table. The wolves and Lycans stepped aside when they saw their King approaching but His Royal Highness insisted that his subjects took their food first as he happily waited in line. Lucianne sighed with relief when he did this. He knew. He didn't want her to feel uncomfortable about being a royal. More importantly, he didn't want her to feel uncomfortable being with him.

Seating was free but there was an unspoken rule that wolves could not sit at a table if a Lycan was already sitting there. So, both species sat among their own. When Lucy placed her plate on an empty table, Xandar pulled out the chair for her and uttered, "If you like, you could have your pack leaders sit with us."

"Really?" Her eyes sparkled, sending an electric spark through his being.

“Of course.” His lips curled up as he chuckled lightly.

Her eyes glazed over when she mind-linked Alpha Juan and Luna Hale. Within moments, they arrived at the table, and bowed to the King before taking their seats. Conversation with the King started out careful and polite but when Xandar took an interest in Alpha Juan’s efforts to challenge ruthless Alphas to take their packs and give better care to the pack members, the atmosphere around the table eased considerably.

Cold as he may seem, the King felt touched when Luna Hale talked about how the pack, under her supervision, took care of the new pups from the packs they took over, especially if they had lost their parents. She personally adopted five of them, and said that she would’ve continued to take in more had it not been for Alpha Juan’s firm objection.

“I can’t allow her to do it, your Highness. I really can’t. We already have three of our own, and I love the five we have taken in but any more than that and we may have to build a hotel for a pack house.” Alpha Juan said, earning a playful slap on his arm from his mate.

Lucianne giggled, capturing Xandar's attention. He thought her voice was the most beautiful thing he had ever heard but her laughter sounded even better! He wanted to hear more of it.

Xandar looked at Alpha Juan with a smile and said, "Should Luna Hale decide to take in any more pups in future, Alpha Juan, do let me know. I'll happily contribute financially to building the hotel."

Both Luna Hale and Lucianne laughed at Alpha Juan's terrified look. He looked nothing like the stern, scary Alpha that many packs described him as at that moment. Alpha Juan cleared his throat before suggesting, "Your Highness, perhaps we should strike a deal. For every pup we take in, you should, too."

It was the King's turn to look terrified, and he looked at Luna Hale and jokingly said, "Please forgive me, Luna Hale. I'm afraid I must take your Alpha's side on this. You should stop at the number of pups you already have."

Alpha Juan smirked victoriously in his mate's direction, and Luna Hale said in mock anger, "You spineless traitor, your Highness!" Lucianne and Xandar were about to laugh when a low growl came from behind them, "How dare you speak to our King like that, you wolf!"

Alpha Juan and Luna Hale flinched visibly in their seats. Lucianne froze. But Xandar was furious. Who dared speak to them like that?! His head turned. His murderous eyes saw that it was Cummings, his Defence Minister. His daughter, Sasha was right behind him with a man next to her.

"Is there a problem, Cummings?" Xandar growled.

"Your Highness." Cummings bowed. "Should I send security to deal with this she-wolf?" As if on purpose, he said it so loudly that half the hall turned in their direction. Alpha Juan stood, his body shielding his mate as his dark eyes bore into Cummings'.

Xandar growled furiously, obliging Cummings and the two behind him to bow. He said in a clear tone, "These people are my guests. I will deal with you before you have a chance to deal with anyone without basis."

"But your Highness, she accused you of being a traitor!" He argued, and Sasha gasped in mock surprise from behind.

“Did you partake in our conversation? DID YOU HEAR WHAT WE WERE TALKING ABOUT?” Everyone finched at the King’s outburst.

“N-no, your Highness.”

“Then how would you know the context in which we were speaking?”

Cummings shook visibly as Xandar announced, **“For clarification’s sake, our conversation trailed around humour. What your Defence Minister just heard was simply a joke. If he didn’t manage to decipher that, I must say that I’m worried about allowing him to continue being the one to protect my people.”**

Murmurs filled the room as everyone started throwing disapproving looks at the minister. Cummings bowed lower and uttered, **“A thousand apologies, your Highness. It won’t happen again. I misunderstood. I apologize for my mistake.”**

Xandar glanced at Lucianne, whose eyes of displeasure were fixed on Cummings before he looked back at his minister and said loudly, "Don't apologize to me. Apologize to Luna Hale, the wolf you've wronged."

There were audible gasps, even Sasha's, which was genuine this time but their King was unperturbed. Since Lycans were the more superior species, it was completely unheard of for a Lycan to respect a wolf, let alone apologize to one. Cummings raised his head only slightly. He was about to say something but when he saw the King's murderous eyes, he faced Luna Hale and gritted his teeth as he uttered, "Please forgive me, Luna Gale."

"It's 'Hale', minister." Lucianne's irritated voice echoed in the space between them as she remained seated.

"Pardon me?" Cummings asked, surprised by the remark from a tiny wolf whom he did not recall ever meeting. He arrived late the previous night so he didn't know who she was.

Alpha Juan then said darkly, "It's Hale, with an 'H'."

Cummings was getting agitated until Xandar's cold voice rang through his ears, "How can you call yourself a Lycan if you can't even hear a name correctly, Cummings?"

Cummings aborted his plan to retort the wolves, and bowed in their direction as he said, "My apologies, Luna Hale. I misunderstood and misspoke. I hope you'll forgive me."

Luna Hale glanced over Cummings with disdain before she locked eyes with Xandar, and stood up with poise and grace as she said in her Luna voice, "Thank you for clarifying the situation, your Highness. Otherwise, there would be a severe misunderstanding among our species that may take too much time to mend."

"I can assure you that that won't happen on my watch, Luna Hale." he smiled, and he looked around the hall as he said, "Everyone else, as you were."

Cummings and the two behind him turned and walked away, towards the buffet table. Alpha Juan, who was still standing, thrust out his hand and thanked Xandar for resolving the confrontation. Xandar shook his hand graciously as he

said, "You need not thank me. Right now, I'm embarrassed to even admit that he is one of my ministers."

When they both resumed their seats, Lucianne turned to him with her bright eyes and whispered, "Thank you, Xandar. Really."

The shine in her eyes and her adorable smile ignited a fire in Xandar's heart. He leaned over to whisper in her ear, "Don't thank me, Lucianne. It was the right thing to do." He took advantage of their proximity and pecked a kiss on her cheek, sending a visible blush to it, and he chuckled at how her body responded to his gesture.