

The Rogues Who Went Rogue

Stina's Pen

Chapter 13

Without warning, Pellethia came forward and wrapped Lucianne in a tight embrace. Xandar instinctively removed his hand just in time for the hug to happen, and the king began wondering why he was sure that the empress wasn't going to hurt his queen. Lucianne didn't know what was going on either but her arms developed a mind of their own when they squeezed the empress tightly in return.

Toby was beginning to feel jealous because Pellethia held Lucianne like she was her best friend. Eh, wrong! Lucianne was HIS best friend! No one else's! Toby won't share that status with anyone! 5

Christian blinked again at the sight, and shook himself out of his daze before he surrendered and said out loud, "Okay, I give up. I'm quite sure this is a dream. I must have accidentally fallen asleep instead of heading to the actual inter-species rendezvous." A vampire pointed Christian's way, and nodded in his friend's direction, agreeing with whatever the duke just said.

When Lucianne and Pellethia finally let go of each other, Lucianne was the first to speak, "Your presence

and energy feel so familiar but I don't know why. I'm quite sure we've never met."

Pellethia chuckled again as she explained, "We have met, actually. Well, in a different time, of course. Your name in that lifetime was Rosalie. I used to call you Aunt Rosie as a child."

The name 'Rosalie' hit Lucianne and Xandar at the same time. Their suspicions from their date at the museum about a year ago were true. They were both mates and lovers in a lifetime before the present one.

Pellethia excitedly pulled the pixie-haired vampire closer to her, and introduced this woman, "This is my wife and consort, Octavia."

Lucianne thrust out her hand, slowly and more carefully this time as she spoke sincerely, "It's a pleasure to meet you, Octavia."

Octavia's slightly deeper voice was firm and welcoming when she shook her hand firmly with a smile, "Likewise, Lucy. Pellethia has spoken a lot about you...well, Rosalie, that is. But unfortunately, we never had the chance to meet. I didn't expect to have such an opportunity to meet you, to be honest."

Without even asking, Pellethia reached for Xandar's hand. As she started listening to the rhythm of his

pulse, she confessed, “I wasn’t very close to Uncle Reagan. I’ve only met him a few times before the... well, before the murders. But I might still remember his rhythm. It’s unique for each soul anyway.”

Her brows furrowed as she concentrated hard. When she heard what she was hoping to hear, she smirked in Xandar’s way and declared in dissatisfaction, “You still owe me that doll, Uncle Reagan.” 4

The vampires were throwing each other looks like they were saying ‘What did Her Imperial Majesty just say?’ Some of the more conventional ones were even pressing their fingers on their foreheads as they shielded their faces in embarrassment. The empress was asking for a doll? She wasn’t five! She was 1,578 years old! Less than 500 years to go and she’d be dead since the oldest-living vampire only made it to 2000 years of age.

Unlike Lucianne, Xandar only felt a slight pull toward the empress when she stood right in front of him. It was the same pull he felt when he was with Russell or Liam, both children who were extremely fond of and close to Lucianne. This had to be right.

Xandar decided to play along. “I didn’t forget that I owed you that. I just thought it would’ve been better to...wait for better dolls to hit the market.”

Pellethia narrowed her eyes and uttered, “Excuses.”

After some chuckling among themselves, Toby coughed to remind his best friend of why they were there. Lucianne got the hint, so she began, “Pellethia ...”

“Oh, you used to call me Pelly, Aunt Ros—Lucy. Aunt Lucy.”

Lucianne couldn’t believe that she felt the warmth of a girl from a woman that was more than a millennium old. Nonetheless, she began, “Pelly, your email sounded urgent. What happened? And how can we help?”

Pellethia’s smile fell in an instant, as did Octavia’s. The warm and welcoming atmosphere from before turned heavy and serious as Pellethia cleared her throat and began, “Aunt Lucy, last night, one of our villages, Falling Vines, was invaded. Every living vampire had been abducted. The scents left in most homes confirmed that lycans and werewolves had been there.”

The king and queen stared at each other in horror. “Rogues,” Toby muttered the word running through every lycan and werewolf’s minds. The defense minister met Lucianne’s look of dismay, a look he

matched as he uttered, "Look like we haven't gotten all of them yet, Lucy. This is definitely on us." 2

Octavia immediately said, "No, we're not blaming any authoritative figure in particular but we were hoping for...a high degree of assistance in this matter. Our people are terrified. We don't know if another village is going to face the same thing."

Pellethia added, "The worst part is that the village had children. Not one or two, but six."

This was a very big problem because, by some divine law, the vampire population was fixed. There were only exactly 2,022,120 vampires in existence, no more and no less. A death of one would mean the birth of another, which is why it was impermissible to congratulate a couple when a child was born, and it was very rude to celebrate birth because the child was the result of someone else's death. What one was allowed to say when they saw the newborn baby would be 'Good that it's healthy'. That was it. 2

With the divine law of fixed population and long life, childbirth was scarce, and children, in turn, were sacred. Even those with little knowledge of vampires knew this fact, so everyone understood how dire the situation was.

Pellethia proceeded to explain, "We stationed guards

around small villages and residential areas near Falling Vines but we fear that they too would be vulnerable to the abduction. We don't know what the lycans and werewolves have with them to manage such a feat. It's extremely disturbing that they managed to get every single one without bloodshed. Not a drop of blood was found. It's like our people didn't even try to attack and defend themselves, which is very strange to say the least. We have no leads. The abductors' scents lead to nowhere. It just circles around within the village itself. We don't know how to start tracking them down to get our people back."

Everyone heard the helplessness in her voice. The vampires tried everything, considered every possible option, looked under every rock, and they came to a dead end, hence the demand of an immediate meeting with the species who took the lost vampires.

Toby then hissed under his breath as he thought out loud, "How are the rogues still so resourceful?! We took down the major one less than a year ago."

Xandar noted, "The last rogue supplier hasn't been found yet. So, rogues are still operating, albeit more discreetly it seems but...our rogues had never stepped foot into vampire territory before, have they?" He looked at Pellethia and Octavia.

Pellethia affirmed his statement, “Our borders have kept most lycans out. We’ve never had a werewolf trespassing since the declaration of peace. The few lycans who did trespass did it by mistake, and were thrown back out of the border without question or exception. We don’t even feed on them anymore. We haven’t since the truce! Why are they taking us?”

Some lycans stood closer to each other at the mention of feeding on them but they tried their best to stay focused, reminding themselves that the fear of being fed on was a thing of the past, dealt with by their ancestors and predecessors, not them at present.

Everyone thought hard but they couldn’t come up with anything. Margaret, Stella and their rogue pack came to mind but they were near White Blood at the time being. White Blood was nowhere near any part of vampire territory. Plus, if they had rogue lycans on their side, they would’ve brought them along when they tried to rescue Stella.

Even if for some unexplained reason Margaret’s pack did abduct the vampires from miles away, there was no way they could trespass, abduct and leave on a flight. They wouldn’t even get past the custom officers with bags or suitcases of vampires. Were suitcases even large enough to fit a regular-sized

vampire? They doubted it.

It couldn't be Margaret and her pack. Their timelines didn't match-up.

Every lycan and werewolf had hit a mental wall. Like the vampires, no one knew where to begin. Suddenly, Lucianne's voice filled the dark space that had been quiet for too long, "We don't know why this is happening or who may have taken them, but we know someone who might have such knowledge." Her serious eyes locked with her husband's lost orbs.

It took him a moment before realization hit him like a ton of bricks and he exclaimed, "NO! No way! Sweetheart, we put him there for a reason!" Their followers and the vampires were exchanging puzzled but curious glances. Who was the king and queen referring to? Toby and Christian were racking their brains as they tried to keep up. 1

Lucianne asked Xandar, "Do you happen to have an alternative solution?"

"I don't, but he can't be our only source to get the vampires back."

Lucianne's brows raised, questioning whatever he just said. Xandar groaned, "Alright, fine. He could be our only source for now but how do we know he

didn't orchestrate this whole thing just to bargain for a reduced sentence he's currently serving?" 2

Lucianne looked at Xandar like he just told her that two plus two was five when she asked, "Why would he orchestrate this to get a reduced sentence when he could have done this earlier to avoid sentencing altogether?"

Toby and the others were catching up, and their expressions dreaded in a way like they were saying 'Oh no'.

When Xandar couldn't give his wife an answer, Lucianne said, "We have to, Xandar. We don't know anyone else with that kind of knowledge or network, and we're short on time."

Xandar's animal slammed its head against an imaginary wall, and the king sighed in defeat as he muttered to himself, "Goddess, why must it be him?"



Stina's Pen Author

" 'Oh no.' or 'Oh YES!' ? "

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