

The Rogues Who Went Rogue Chapter 141 - Tips

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The Alpha of White Blood got cheers and claps even before the bride emerged. He was pleased to see that his pack members were not giving the vampire guests odd looks, and he was proud that, when he raised this matter with everyone weeks before the wedding, they seemed more excited and welcoming than reluctant and disapproving.

What surprised him most was that the vampires didn't sit at one place, but were scattered among the wolf and lycan guests. The Alpha wanted the integration but he definitely didn't expect to get it this soon.

Tate took a good look around to commit the sight before him to memory – the memory of his closest friends and pack members here to celebrate his and Margaret's special day.

When his eyes fell on Lucianne, she linked, 'Margaret's more than everything, Tate.'

He instantly replied, 'Not 'more', Lucy. She's 'my' everything, the same way that you are his.'

Lucianne's sights reflexively went to Xandar, whose eyes were only on her. Those lilac orbs held so much devotion and affection even from a distance, promising her the world, promising her everything.

The music started playing, and Lucianne reluctantly tore her eyes away from him. Everyone's heads turned to the back to watch the bridesmaids walk down the aisle that was decorated with yellow and blue baby breaths on each side.

The bridesmaids were mostly women from Margaret's old pack and members of another rogue pack whose leader was friends with Margaret, all of whom had merged with White Blood when the vampire affair was over. The last one to appear was Margaret's maid-of-honor, Annie.

When Margaret came into view in an elegant, sleeveless white dress with a low V-neckline, holding a bouquet of estellas, everyone stood and many gasped at the picturesque sight of White Blood's Luna.

Stella herself opted to be a photographer instead of a bridesmaid. In the early weeks of planning the wedding, Tate specifically told Stella, in private, to mentally count to five before refusing to walk down the aisle with a bouquet in hand, then act sheepish when she told her mother that she wanted to take photos instead. However, Tate soon learned that things would not always go as planned when it came to his stepdaughter.

Before Margaret could finish asking Stella about becoming one of her bridesmaids, her daughter refused and said, very bluntly and shamelessly, that she wanted to take photos instead. Tate remembered Stella throwing him a cheeky grin right after. What was surprising was that Margaret didn't mind, and actually found Tate and Stella's exchange amusing, much to his relief.

Stella practiced for weeks with the camera that Tate got her back in lycan territory, even looking up online for any tips and tricks that she needed to learn. So, while everyone was watching her beautiful mother, she was recording the march with steady hands, finally including Tate in the video when Margaret joined him there.

Tate muttered something to Margaret while taking her hands into his, making her chuckle lightly and glow even brighter than she already was. The marriage officiant began reciting from the Scriptures of Matrimony before it was time to exchange vows.

Tate began, "Mar, saying that I fell for you because of the mate-bond or your beauty would be speaking like someone who didn't just spend the best months of his life with you. I fell for you when I saw the lengths you'd go to save your pup on the very first day we met; I fell for you when you let me in on how horrible your past had been, yet you still found a way back up; I fell for you when I saw the way you smile at the sight of greenery."

"And I still fall for you everyday, regardless of whether you're just getting out of bed, helping someone, scrolling through your phone, or watering and fertilizing the plants in our home or within the pack. It's amazing how you can look effortlessly perfect even when you're doing the simplest things, like walking across the room or just sitting on the couch. The way you collect leaves and put them in your scrapbook makes me smile; the way you smile makes my heart skip a beat; and the way you touch me and put yourself in my arms makes me feel like the luckiest creature in the world."

“I’ve never been acquainted with a leader of a rogue pack, and I surely didn’t think I’d be blessed with a bond that gave me the strongest and most perfect one. I have no idea what I’ve done to deserve someone like you, Mar. You’re so sure of who you are, so firm in what you want, so protective over the ones you love, and so determined and resilient that nothing from your past seems to be holding you back.”

“Running into your daughter has been the best thing that’s ever happened to me, because it drew you out and led me right to you. You have no idea what it means to me to be able to call her mine, and to call you mine. Thank you for letting me in despite your past, despite what I am. I promise to always have your back, to always make sure you’re never alone, to always let you know how grateful I am that you let me in, and to let my timing issues stay as timing issues. I love you, Mar.”

Margaret was chuckling before she began crying, and Annie came with some tissues to dab away the tears. Everyone else wasn’t doing any better. Weaver blew his nose a little too loudly that drew attention to him and his slightly apologetic-looking mate. Azalea was dabbing away her own tears. Lucianne wondered why she even bothered with make-up when she had a front row seat to such a touching scene, especially when she had been the lucky few to witness the progress of the bride and groom’s relationship.

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After Margaret managed to compose herself, she cleared her throat, looked into Tate’s eyes that held so much love and assurance, and began reciting her own set of vows, “Tate, when we met, I thought that our bond wasn’t going to last. I thought that a rejection would follow, from you or me, or even from the both of us. You haven’t the faintest clue of how relieved and happy I am that I’ve been proven wrong. Very wrong.”

“I was wrong to think that our bond is a mistake; I was wrong to judge you based on the title you inherited; and I was wrong to think that you could never love me the way I didn’t know I needed to be loved. Never in my wildest dreams could I’ve imagined falling in love again, and never did I think it was someone as perfect as you are, Tate. I held so much hate from my past, carrying it throughout my life, even scaring away a few acquaintances with my untamable inferno, yet you never judged me for the scars that some people would criticize and frown upon, and you certainly didn’t run away.”

Some laughter from the audience followed as Tate chuckled lightly before smiling broader. Margaret continued, “There’s this...thing that you do. I’m not sure if it’s the way you look at me, how you touch me, the things you say or the way you speak, it just...soothes the flames, and I know for a fact that it isn’t solely because of the mate bond. You have a way of making me feel...safe to be at my most vulnerable with you, to let out any sadness or vent off any frustrations. I love how you make time to sit with me whenever I need a listening ear, how you drop whatever’s in your hands when I peek into your office and insist that you want to hear me out first. Your presence itself is a constant assurance that I’m never alone. In anything.”

“I was convinced that I was a damaged soul, doomed to living a life filled with dangers and darkness that I would have to fight through on my own, that I have to lead on my own. At that time, my only hope was that my daughter would have a better life than the one I was forced to live. It was fat hope seeing that she was born a rogue, but I never stopped hoping. It didn’t occur to me that my prayers would be answered in the best possible way – through you.”

Tate’s animal cooed as his own eyes began pooling with tears. Margaret proceeded to say, “I love the way you interact with our daughter. It’s amazing how you try so hard to bond with a child that isn’t yours by birth, and I especially love that you can get her to do things that I clearly cannot.”

Tate and Margaret’s eyes went to Stella, who rolled her eyes in response, making the attendees erupt in another round of laughter. Tate shook his head at the teenager with a proud but slightly irritated smile, and Stella grinned and chuckled at his reaction.

When the bride and groom’s eyes returned to each other once more, Margaret vouched, “I promise to barge into your office or onto the training ground and pull you out of there whenever I can feel that you need a break; I promise hear you out whenever you need a listening ear; and I promise to be with you whenever you need me to be.”

She then added a line that wasn’t in her original draft, “Thank you for welcoming me into your heart despite my past, despite what I am, and I love you too, Tate.”

After exchanging the rings that were made from rose gold and brown diamonds, the officiant pronounced them husband and wife. They shared a sweet k!ss and the attendees burst into a round of loud cheers and wild applause.

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In the middle of the wedding banquet, the wedding planner announced that it was time for the bouquet toss. The single females who wished to be the next one to walk down the aisle gathered at the open space next to the banquet tables.

Gerella had heard about this tradition before, and was excited to see her first one. A thought came to her: maybe she could even be in her first one! Her eyes shone in anticipation when she gave Toby's hand a squeeze and asked, "Can I go?"

"Of course. Go ahead." Toby pecked a k!ss on her temple before she sprinted to join the rest. Lucianne was next to Toby, and there was a knowing smile that couldn't be blocked by her sipping the water from her glass.

Toby muttered, "Goddess, I hope this works." He downed the last of his wine before getting up, and Lucianne hastily got up too. She already missed his first k!ss with Gerella. She wasn't going to miss this. Xandar took Reida out of the baby highchair and into his arms, following Lucianne to make sure that she wasn't exerting herself with the excitement that was about to come.

The females got ready, and Margaret's back faced them. One, two...

Before the toss came, Margaret turned back around, walked straight to Gerella, and placed the bouquet in her hands. Gerella didn't know what was happening. This was not what she remembered from the tradition at all. She then felt someone taking her right hand. Her blue eyes darted to the source, and found a smiling Toby getting down on one knee.

She was so shocked that she didn't hear the creatures around her gasp and squeal. Her mouth gaped when Toby took out a small jewelry box from his pocket, opened it to reveal a light blue diamond adorned by onyx diamonds along the band, and began, "Ella, from the first moment I saw you on the beach, I knew that I had to get to know you. You are one of the b.ravest creatures I met; the kindest I've ever known; and the most beautiful person I've ever seen. I promise to give you only the best as my mate." His hand

holding the jewelry box inched closer her way when he asked, “Ella, will you marry m—”

Before Toby completed his sentence, Gerella exclaimed “YES!” as she threw herself at him, making them both fall onto the ground when Gerella pressed her lips against his, and there was a mixture of chuckles and cheers from everyone who watched.

When their lips parted, Toby looked into her joyful eyes when he muttered, “Ella, as much as I love what you’re doing, I really do need to put the ring on your finger before I can feel at ease.”

Gerella chuckled lightly before sitting herself on the grass next to him, and he took her hand before slipping it into her ring finger, after which he let out a relieved sigh and planted a sweet kiss on her lips, thanking her after he did it.

When Toby helped Gerella up, Lucianne and Xandar were the firsts to congratulate them, followed by the alliance members and everyone else.

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“I’ve actually already had two. They taste pretty good.” Toby told Lucianne as they stood by the table with the trays of cupcakes. He then added, “I’m glad she decided to start a business out of this. Her baking skills are fantastic!”

Hailey made those cupcakes. She was now a probationary kindergarten teacher on weekdays and a baker on weekends. She and the other mavericks still worked for Greg, but they were free to indulge in their hobbies and passions when they didn’t have maverick duties. Some even pursued career paths that earned a salary the ‘normal’ way. Jade opened a cyber café which attracted lots of youngsters, and Hailey baked cupcakes or made pastries to sell to Jade’s customers. She offered him a small percentage of her earnings for his space. Some even came in just to buy her baked goods.

Lucianne could see how tempting the cupcakes were but she restrained herself from taking one to leave a visible hole on the perfectly arranged tray. She was so glad that she already had Reida. Lucianne had such severe cupcake cravings when she was carrying her firstborn that she had to have at least five cupcakes a day or her mood would spiral out of control. Xandar

even had to make sure that there were bakeries or cake shops in their honeymoon venues for this exact reason.

“Is the tie okay?” Toby asked as he adjusted the black necktie again.

Lucianne gently slapped away his hand and hissed, “It was fine, Toby. Stop touching it!”

“Easy for you to say when you’re not the one who has to think about looking perfect on your wedding day for your mate. I’m sure Xandar was just as paranoid when you were going to walk down the aisle.”

Lucianne could merely heave a frustrated sigh as she readjusted his tie because she did feel some of Xandar’s nerves on their wedding day. When Lucianne was satisfied how it looked against his white shirt and light blue tuxedo, she looked Toby dead in the eye and warned, “If you touch it one more time, I’m going to tie your hands behind your back until Ella is right in front of you, do you understand me?”

Toby gave that threat some thought and murmured, “I wonder if we should do that right now, actually.”

Lucianne had the sudden urge to punch Toby before she felt a light kiss being pressed on the back of her head which put her violent thoughts to rest. She turned to lock gaze with her husband who was carrying one of their fraternal twins as he asked in concern, “You okay, babe?”

After taking little Enora from his arms, she replied loud enough for Toby to hear, “If Toby touches his tie again, we have to break his hands.”

Toby then argued, “C’mon, Lucy. It’s not like it isn’t normal! Xandar, how many times did you mess up your tie when you two got married?”

Xandar admitted with a sheepish smile, “I lost count. Christian was very patient with me, adjusting it over and over again.”

Toby turned to Lucianne and said, “Which is what you should be right now, Lucy. You’re my best woman...actually, now that I think of it, I can see why no one else I know had a best woman.”

Lucianne smirked. "Regretting your decision?"

Without hesitation, he replied, "Nah. It'll be weird to have anyone else fill those shoes."

Toby looked at the girl in Lucianne's arms when he asked, "This is the one that hates everyone, right?"

Lucianne rolled her eyes. "She doesn't hate everyone. She just...doesn't feel comfortable around anyone else yet," she then spoke to her daughter in a hushed whisper, "But you will warm up to them someday, won't you, Enora?"

Enora merely leaned into her chest without offering any response. This younger twin, for some reason, only let her parents hold her. If anyone else took her away, she'd scream and cry until she was safely back in her parent's embrace. It was an indecipherable mystery of why she behaved as such.

Ken was a little hurt when Enora cried in his arms until her face turned red, and he quickly handed his granddaughter back to his daughter to calm the child. What the old man loved about the baby girl was that her features seemed to be following those of her mother, from the hair to the shape of her eyes, nose and lips. But neither Ken nor Janice remember whether Lucianne was shy as a baby. Lucianne didn't know this about herself either. As for Xandar, he didn't recall his parents saying anything about him being picky about who was carrying him as an infant. Not knowing where Enora's behavior came from, they let the mystery remain a mystery.

Toby smiled at little Enora when he asked the happy couple, "Where's the one you two cleverly named after former-Alpha Ken?"

With a guilty smile, Xandar replied, "With Janice and the older Ken."

Lucianne asked, "And Reida?"

"She was with Mrs Parker before Hailey took her. Uh...there," Xandar pointed at the shoreline where Hailey was carefully dipping Reida's feet into the sea water as the little girl chuckled, and the happy father uttered, "Reida seems to be having fun."

Lucianne smiled as she told Toby, "The beach was a great idea for a wedding, Toby. The trees, the breeze, the sand and the sound of waves makes this location really private and intimate."

Toby looked around in elation when he admitted, "It didn't need much thinking to decide to have it here, to be honest. This is where Ella and I met after all. I do have to thank His Grace for making sure this place was rogue-free before using it...and also for approving Ella's application to join the Service. She's having fun in their training sessions, by the way. Wakes up excited everyday."

Lucianne's brows furrowed when she asked, "Haven't you thanked Greg like...twice already?"

Toby shrugged. "You adjusted my tie four times so far. I doubt His Grace has the right to complain." His hands were subconsciously reaching for his tie again before Lucianne's hand came to gently slap them away.

When everyone was asked to take their positions, the guests took their seats in the rows of white chairs that each had a blue chiffon ribbon tied to the back. Toby marched down the aisle as he grinned and waved to friends and allies, even the hybrid families that could come.

Toby took his place next to his best woman, glanced at his row of groomsmen as he muttered to Lucianne, "I might have just broken the record for the number of groomsmen, Lucy."

"No kidding." Lucianne responded simply after she took a glance.

In that long line stood Xandar, Christian, Tate, Juan, Mannon, Zeke, Raden, Rafael, Joseph, Weaver, Yarrington, Phelton, Desmond, Ivory and Greg. Toby couldn't narrow down any further than that, as he told Ella and Lucianne countless times, despite the fact that neither of them minded the number he had in mind.

When the flower girls and page boys emerged with little baskets of petals, everyone watched the precious sight as some whispered words of encouragement which got even some of the more intimidated children to smile as they scattered the pink petals all over the ground.

Michael was one of the last to emerge, and his eyes focused on Lucianne's warm smile to block out the hundreds of other eyes staring at him, walking stiffly to the front with the others. While the children circled around and returned to the seats where their parents were, Michael went up to Lucianne and reached for her hand.

Lucianne's eyes searched for Regina, and found the woman in one of the last rows. The vampire managed a smile, which Lucianne gently returned. Xandar lightly patted Michael on the head before he took Enora from Lucianne so that she could focus on the boy. Michael stood closer to her because he didn't want Xandar to take him away like how he took the baby. Lucianne's thumb stroked the back of his small hand, and the sensation comforted him.

The bridesmaids emerged in a mix of vampires, hybrids, wolves and lycans before Gerella finally came into view. Toby's eyes shone as he sighed in happiness at the sight of his beautiful bride in the white, lace dress that hugged her figure with a bouquet of gardenias in her hands.

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Gerella walked gracefully down the aisle, and while all eyes were on her, her sights stuck to her groom who looked like he was close to tears as he beamed at her. When she reached him, he offered her his hand to help her onto the platform. The music stopped, and the guests took their seats once more.

After the marriage officiant recited from the Scriptures of Matrimony, he announced that it was time for the exchange of vows. Toby began, "Ella, from the moment we met, I knew that my life was never going to be the same again. Not only can I now boast about being the only one among my friends to get the most beautiful hybrid for a wife, your mark practically gave me the license to also gloat about being able to see a discretus when they cannot. You have no idea how much fun I'm going to have lying about a discretus's presence when we're training."

Laughter ensued from everyone, especially the alliance members, before Toby continued more seriously, "There's something about you, Ella, something magical about your presence. Your scent, your voice, your touch...they all send the gentlest ray of light to soothe my darkest memories and my most painful losses."

Ella gave his hand a gentle squeeze as her smile and eyes grew softer. His thumb stroked her fingers when he said, "I am forever grateful to our Goddess for bonding us, and I promise to be the understanding, supportive and loving mate that you deserve. Thank you so, so much for giving me a chance after...what I did on the first day we met. I've never taken you for granted ever since we got back together, and I will never take you for granted. Never. You

are a gift that I still can't believe said yes to marrying me. I want nothing more than to hold you close every night when we go to sleep, and kiss you when we wake up."

"I promise to be your pillar of support when it comes to pursuing your dreams; to be your voice of reason whenever you need an input; and to be your main source of comfort, protection and laughter. Thank you for making me yours, baby. I love you."

As everyone sniffled, Ella quickly wiped away her own tears. She took a moment to breathe and clear her throat before reciting her vows, "Toby, I've never met anyone quite like you. You emanate a gentle warmth that feels welcoming, yet that warmth carries a protective presence that looks daunting but feels assuring. Your sense of humor always brightens up my day. The way you speak and your choice of words never fails to improve my mood or lighten any heavy atmosphere. I love that you have an impeccable balance of humor with seriousness, knowing immediately which to choose at any given time."

She took a deep breath and continued, "Thank you for rejecting me when you found out who I was and what I was up to. It was painful, but it was a much needed wake-up call. Thank you for telling me how wrong I was to take the path I took, and for showing and offering me an alternative route that makes me feel happy and fulfilled. I only hope that I'm able to match your bravery, nobility and ferocity one day, but your humor is something that I have no intention of beating."

Light chuckles followed before Ella finished up, "I promise to be in your embrace whenever you need a hug; to hear you out whenever you have something to say; and to support you in your endeavors, however difficult they may be. Thank you for making me yours, Toby. I love you, too."

Upon the marriage officiant's request, two hybrid children came with the wedding rings. Right after Toby and Gerella slid the rings into each other's fingers, Toby pulled her into a deep kiss even while the officiant was still making his final pronouncement. The congregation erupted into a wild applause as they celebrated the newly-wedded couple.

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During the banquet, Pellethia sat in between Lucianne and Annie, sharing details about the ceremony to return the lycan's royal title that was to be held the following week, repeating at least three times that 'it has to be perfect'.

Octavia, who was next to Xandar, muttered, "Do you have any idea how many times Pelly says those words in a day ever since she brought up wanting to return the title, Xandar?"

Xandar let out a short chuckle before he made a wild guess, "More than twenty times, I'd say."

Rafael was next to Octavia, and he snorted at the king's response before he said, "More than a hundred times would have been a better guess, Your soon-to-be Majesty."

Octavia added, "Neither Rafael nor I recall Pelly being this paranoid when she and I were going through the details for our wedding. Our WEDDING."

Xandar felt a little bad, and uttered, "Lucy and I really don't mind something small and simple, and it really doesn't have to be perf—"

He was cut off by Octavia and Rafael shushing him, both nervously glancing at Pelly and was relieved to see that she was too busy talking to notice what they were up to. Octavia then whispered to Xandar, "Don't tell her that. It upsets her. She loves doing this, and takes pride in the planning. If the empress wants grandeur and perfection, she will get exactly that, or the ceremony would be postponed. She wanted a type of flower that wasn't in season on the date that we initially chose for our nuptials, and we ended up changing the date, not the flower."

Rafael clarified, "We're not telling you this to make you feel bad, Your Hig—Majesty. We're sharing this to let you know how seriously we're taking this in the empire, and the uh...detail-crazy empress that our Lord has blessed us with is making sure that everything goes right."

Xandar smiled as he replied, "Thank you. No one from our generation would have thought that this would happen this soon...or even happen at all."

Octavia waved her hand and declared, "Don't thank us. After everything you, Lucy and your people have done for us, the title is the least that we can offer as a sign of gratitude. The business discussions that our people are having with yours are going very well, we're told." She patted Xandar on his shoulder

and proceeded to say, "Yours and Lucy's reign has taken the kingdom to new heights thus far, and will no doubt be breaking lots of glass ceilings in the years to come, both in terms of the inner workings of the kingdom and diplomatic relationships with the other species. Many congratulations to you both, Xandar."

Xandar's smile broadened by the second, and he stole a glance of Lucianne, who was holding Enora as she listened to Pellethia before he turned back to Octavia when he said, "I don't know what to say, other than I'm lucky to be bonded to her."

"Give yourself more credit, Xandar. Your reign was already taking the unconventional and noble route before Lucy showed up. Your Goddess wouldn't have bonded her to you had you been like past Lycan Kings. Even if she did...I doubt such a bond would have lasted. Seeing that the two of you are thriving, I'd say you've earned your right to be with her as much as she's earned her place with you. As individuals, you both may have been working on similar goals without ever realizing that you were working towards being with one another. As king, you're determined and sure in what you want from your people and yourself, and you implement changes regardless of what tradition dictates. Lucy is a gift that ensures you're going the right way, no doubt also using her own intelligence, skills and character to help speed up that process and make the reign that much more revolutionary. Like Pelly and I, you and Lucy are lucky to have each other."

Xandar was touched beyond words, and stole another glance of his wife before he turned back to the consort and said, "Thank you, Octavia."

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The ceremony to return the title was held in the abandoned castle next to the Forest of Oderem. Pellethia had an unexplainable feeling that it had to be there, as did Lucianne. When the servants went to have the place cleaned up, all praying that they weren't going to encounter anything out of the ordinary when they did their job, two among the sixty cleaners entered a room on the highest floor that was covered with a very thick layer of dirt and dust.

When the two servants assigned to clean this particular room opened the windows to let in some air, a dash of breeze came from the forest and blew at a part of the dirt on the floor, making the poor servants flinch before

instinctively holding each other as they quivered in fear. When nothing happened for the next few moments, they slowly released their hold of each other.

They noticed that there were carvings on the cement floor, and bravely cleaned the whole room within two hours, looking over their shoulder from time to time. When they returned to the castle, they shared the spooky tale with their colleagues before reporting the occurrence to the empress and consort, who went there to take a look but didn't know what to make of it. Even the experts who worked for the imperial family had to consult other experts on the matter, who all admitted that they knew nothing at present, and that they would look into it, concurring that the carving meant something. They just don't know what it was yet.

Pellethia and Octavia now stood at the edge of the circular carving with Lucianne, Xandar, Christian, Annie and Greg in the room an hour before the ceremony was scheduled to begin. The circle was cut into five sectors – one sector had two vampire fangs; the second sector had a lycan's hand print; the third had the flipper of a merfolk's tail; the fourth had an old-fashioned bow; and the fifth one only had a line sitting right in the middle, which everyone guessed was a wand.

After a long while of staring at the structure, Greg's voice cut through the silence, "Hurry up, cousin. Just spit out whatever history sh!t this is so we can go."

Christian taunted, "You're not afraid of being in this room, are you, Greg?"

Greg narrowed his eyes and declared in a low voice, "I'm bored, distant cousin."

Enora was bored too, but she remained quiet as Lucianne held the girl over her shoulder. The baby's eyes wandered to the view outside the window, where the Forest of Oderem was. What the adults didn't realize was that the forest started growing pink and amber-colored flowers that attracted butterflies. The sight of the fluttering insects captivated the little princess, and she smiled as her head rested on her mother's shoulder.

The forest may not know how rare it was to get Enora to smile, but Greg knew. Everyone who met Enora and knew about her aversion of strangers

carrying her knew this. Her uncle caught her change in demeanor when he was looking around for something that could be interesting. He then followed his niece's sights and noticed what the forest was doing.

He approached the little girl and muttered, "That place is more than meets the eye, princess. The yellow flowers are especially dangerous."

Lucianne's furrowed brows and confused eyes went to Greg before she turned to see what her daughter had been looking at, and that was when Enora started getting restless because she was denied her good view. Lucianne positioned Enora's side to lean into her chest, letting her daughter face the forest once more as she too looked in that direction. Instead of looking at the butterflies and trees like Lucianne thought she would, Enora's huge orbs stuck on her uncle. She had never seen him up-close before, and blinked her large eyes a few times, studying him.

Greg asked Lucianne nervously, "She's not going to cry, is she?"

He saw how this princess cried and screamed even when the Blackfurs attempted to hold her. As delightful as it was to witness that, he didn't want to be the cause of such a scene.

Lucianne replied calmly, "No, this is her curious face. Her features would cringe before she cries." She then spoke to her daughter in an affectionate whisper, "This is Uncle Greg, Enora. You remember him, right?"

Enora blinked again before she raised her little hand and gave Greg a slow wave like how her sister always did. The sight made Lucianne gasp, and it shocked her so much that Xandar had to pause studying the carving.

"Babe, what is it?" Xandar asked as he came over.

Lucianne struggled to form a coherent sentence when she said, "Enora. She just...she could...she waved...at Greg."

Xandar's brows raised in surprise, and he looked back-and-forth between his daughter and his cousin before Enora waved at Greg again, which was when her father uttered, "Well, this is a first."

Greg offered Enora a slight bow and a wide smile when he whispered, "I'm honored, princess."

Enora chuckled a little before her arms reached out to him, something she only did to Xandar and Lucianne, no one else.

“Are you sure?” Greg asked the baby in genuine concern, then wondered why he did so when he wasn’t even sure if the child could understand him yet.

Lucianne was still trying to make sense of things when she asked, “Do you want to try holding her, Greg? I’ll take her back if she gets upset.”

‘Gets upset’ was the code word for ‘cries and screams her lungs out’. No one didn’t know. Even Pellethia and Octavia knew. Enora was wriggling in her mother’s hold, eyes looking up at Greg in anticipation.

Greg had never been more afraid in his entire life. He had never attempted to hold Enora because he had seen how she pushed away practically everyone but her parents. All those times secretly laughing with his animal about how even the Blackfurs couldn’t hold this princess without the child’s objection suddenly wasn’t funny anymore.

Enora looked saddened that Greg wasn’t taking her, and that put her uncle in an even worse predicament. When he reached for his niece, he murmured more to himself than to anyone else, “This is not going to end well.”