

The Rogues Who Went Rogue

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Chapter 16

The prisoners were jolted awake at 5:45 am, and were allowed an hour's run around the treeless, fenced-up prison track. After the guard blew his whistle to indicate that the hour was up, everyone got into the showers. Greg was surprised when a guard told him to rush through breakfast and get ready because he was summoned by the king and queen, and the meeting was at 8:30 am. Greg knew that Alissa and the others were efficient but this was efficiency on a record-breaking level. He didn't expect the meeting to be anytime before noon. The duke made a mental note to reward the team later.

After dashing through breakfast and putting on the formal shirt and trousers the policeman left on his bed, he was escorted to a police car. The three policemen assigned to accompany him remained silent throughout the hour's drive to the station, each trying their best to avoid making eye contact with the duke. Greg didn't mind. He liked the silence. These weren't the kind of creatures he liked to make conversation with anyway.

They reached the station at 8:20 am, and Greg was placed in an interrogation room with a policeman at the corner. He dove into his own thoughts, rummaging through his mind on how best to tell

Lucianne what Alissa told him the night before. The big question was how was he going to protect his people from the law while helping Lucianne at the same time? When he considered NOT helping Lucianne altogether, it sent a shot of pain right through his heart that he aborted the plan in an instant. Even so, he couldn't and wouldn't let his people down. They counted on him to survive.

His crafty mind went back and forth as he considered various options, and built up from those before he eventually hit a mental dead end. Every. Single. Time. When he and his animal came to the only plausible plan, which was flimsy with too many variables to begin with, he muttered, "This isn't going to work."

Even his animal had to agree. They just hoped that Alissa and the others would have enough time to make a run if and when Greg's plan backfired, and Lucianne used her Authority on him to hunt his people down.

The door opened, and Greg stood without needing to think. He caught a three-second glimpse of Lucianne handing a baby girl to the cousin he hated before the queen pushed her husband towards the one-way mirror and entered the interrogation room. Greg could've sworn his cousin threw him a warning glare, and his animal rolled its eyes. If the duke wanted to challenge the king and claim Lucianne, he would've done it months ago.

As for their child, Greg only had one complaint: why did it have to look so much like a Blackfur? The brown hair, the almond-shaped eyes, the thin lips. Seriously, was it so hard to copy Lucianne's raven hair, round orbs and plump lips? Shouldn't her genes be dominant over his dim cousin's? Why give the heir to the throne the less attractive genes?

Well, Greg supposed he could appreciate that the child's nose and eyebrows seem to match Lucianne's own set.

"Thank you, Cedric." Lucianne's voice prompted the policeman at the corner to leave, and he did so after offering her a slight bow and a warm smile.

Greg approached her, and got down on one knee before pecking a polite kiss on her small hand and uttered, "My Queen, thank you for granting me an audience on such short notice."

"You really don't have to do that every time we meet, Your Grace. Please, stand."

He obeyed and they both sat in the only two chairs separated by a square table. Their side profiles faced the one-way mirror, which Greg was dead certain that his cousin was looking through right now.

Lucianne began, "And just so you know, Your Grace, we asked the police to bring you here this morning before your letter arrived in the post."

Ah. So, it wasn't his people's efficiency after all. Wait,

she asked to see him? What happened?

Lucianne continued, "Before we get into the details about how you were able to send word from where you were held, let's get to the more pressing issue at hand," her eyebrows furrowed when she asked, "Who are these new players you mentioned?"

Greg cleared his throat, and the creases on his forehead amplified his worry. "My Queen, before I... make full and frank disclosure, I need to ask that...I'm pleading with you to...offer pardons for past crimes."

He couldn't even meet her gaze. He felt ashamed to ask for something like this when he should be granting her everything she asked for as his queen. Lucianne was confused. She had never seen Greg this uncomfortable, and his request was...odd. She confessed, "Your Grace, I'm not following. Why didn't you ask for this before you were tried and sentenced?"

The duke realized his plea was badly-framed. He slowly met her lost orbs as he said, "My apologies, My Queen. What I meant was, I'm pleading that you... and the king offer pardon to...certain people I know who can help in eradicating this new threat."

Lucianne blinked twice before she prompted, "And the new threat is?"

Greg was thinking of sealing his lips and aborting this whole plan but it was too late for that now, and it wasn't as if his animal was going to let him get away

with not telling Lucianne what she wanted to know. With nothing but troubled eyes, Greg muttered, "I received word that someone is coming up with a concoction to challenge the Queen's Authority."

Lucianne slowly leaned back into her seat as her eyebrows furrowed. Her analytic eyes were fixed on the table as she connected the vampire abduction to the current threat Greg was telling her about.

Greg was going insane by just watching Lucianne ponder without knowing what was going through her mind. He even got worried at one point, and wondered if he should say something to her.

After what felt like hours when it was less than a minute, Lucianne muttered, "That makes sense."

"What makes sense, my Queen?" Greg asked, relieved that something finally came out through her delicate, pink lips.

Lucianne met his gaze, and she gave her words some thought before she said something that was already agreed with Xandar and the other ministers the previous night, "There was an abduction in the vampire community. Six children were taken along with twenty-one adults."

The gears in Greg's head started turning, and he suddenly muttered, "To create the concoction."

Lucianne then continued, "The scent the abductors' left behind was that of werewolves and lycans. In your

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experience, do you have any idea who could manage such a feat without bloodshed?"

Lucianne gave Greg a moment to take things in before he asked in disbelief, "Are the vampires certain that it was our kind who were there, My Queen? Did they see any?"



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