

The Rogues Who Went Rogue

10:30 

Chapter 19

When Pellethia left her people under Octavia's supervision and stepped onto the jet, the three policemen who stayed behind to guard Lucianne and Reida growled in defensiveness and ferocity.

"Guys. Guys. It's okay. This is the empress," Lucianne immediately said as she held Reida who started crying not long after they landed.

The embarrassed policemen bowed low in apology before acknowledging Pellethia, "Your Imperial Majesty."

"Sorry about that, Pelly. They really meant no harm," Lucianne apologized as well.

The policemen still held their heads low, and as Pellethia walked past them, she said, "It's alright. Heads up, gentlemen. You were simply defending your queen."

As she dropped into the seat close to where Lucianne was walking about with crying Reida, Pellethia mentioned in passing, "It's good to see you're being protected in this lifetime. The rubbish and blatant disrespect you had to deal with in your last life was horrifying, unbecoming for a princess and future queen. Not that Uncle Reagan didn't do everything he could to give you the best."

“You know, Pelly. I’d really love to know more about Reagan and Rosalie. Their history isn’t in our species’s archives. There there, Reida. Shh...” Lucianne was still struggling to calm her little girl.

“No surprise there,” Pellethia murmured at the memory as she watched the red-faced, crying baby girl. “Can I hold her?” She asked all of a sudden with hopeful eyes.

Lucianne’s surprised look met hers as she asked, “Are you sure, Pelly?” Normally, people would want to hold Reida if she wasn’t crying, and they would return her daughter to her when the crying started. Pellethia was doing the exact opposite.

“Only if you don’t mind, Aunt Lucy,” Pellethia smiled meekly, and looked a little disappointed because she thought Lucianne was going to politely refuse.

As Lucianne put the crying baby into Pellethia’s arms, she teased, “Good luck.”

Pellethia chuckled lightly, and held Reida close to her chest. The child screamed louder at first with the loss of her mother’s familiar scent, but as the seconds went by and the child detected that her mother was still nearby, Reida’s screams and cries subsided as she leaned into Pellethia’s chest. After a short moment, Reida stretched her chubby arms and yawned in the most adorable way before her eyelids fell.

Lucianne dropped into the seat next to Pellethia as she whispered with a disbelief smile, “How did you do

that?"

Pellethia whispered back, "I think it's because of my cold skin. This is one of the warmest regions in our territory. Reida here was probably just protesting about the heat." It was only then Lucianne realized that the surrounding temperature was indeed warmer than usual even though the air-conditioner was already set to the minimum.

Lucianne began, "You left Octavia in-charge?"

"Mm-hm. She'll be fine. She's led things like this a million times. Born an iron-monger's daughter but destined to be a leader."

"I can tell. You're both really lucky."

Pellethia's grateful eyes fixed on Lucianne's sincere orbs as the empress said, "Thank you, Aunt Lucy. I'm glad you and Uncle Xandar got lucky this time, too. What happened to you both last time was..." She shook her head in dismay as she stared into space and muttered with furrowed brows and glistening eyes, "It was so unfair."

Her emerald eyes returned to the sleeping Reida before she continued her tale with furrowed brows, "We had the tea party planned for weeks. Uncle Regan was getting me a new doll for that very occasion. Aunt Rosie never cancelled on me. I knew something was up, despite just being eight. My father was an even-tempered man, and his mood that day when he told me that Aunt Rosie wasn't coming was

nothing short of suppressed rage. I wrote to her everyday, asking my governess to mail the letters after I've written each one."

The empress's eyes watered again as she looked at Lucianne. "There were never any replies, not just because she was dead but because my letters were never sent. Only when I turned ten and tried to sneak out of home to go look for her did my father tell me the truth, that she was poisoned. I'll never forget the day when my father broke it to me that Aunt Rosie wasn't coming back. It was so surreal. I didn't believe it. I couldn't speak for a whole minute, just standing there, staring at my father, praying that he was going to tell me that he was joking, but he didn't."

Pellethia wiped away some stray tears before she chuckled briefly and said, "The first question that came out of my mouth after I heard about the death was 'Did Uncle Reagan do it?'" Pellethia laughed again at the memory. "My father was shocked at my question and, of course, told me that it wasn't him, and that he'd never do such a thing to her. He told me that it was the king and queen of that time who plotted the whole thing, and I've hated lycans ever since. They took my playmate away from me like she was nothing, like they didn't just end the life of someone I held close to my heart."

Lucianne's own eyes watered, and her warm hand reached for Pellethia's cold one as she squeezed it assuringly. The empress smiled. "I only told Octavia

this but...I just get so scared that THIS is all a dream, that I'll wake up and find that you're not really alive again."

"I'm alive, Pelly. I'm right here. I'm right here with all of you. I just wish I remembered you."

Pellethia chuckled again and said, "I only want the same thing if the memory package doesn't come with the horrors that Aunt Rosie had to endure in her lifetime. Uncle Reagan was good to her, but literally everyone else attacked her left, right and centre, all because she wasn't born a noblewoman and was rejected twice. Shallow idiots."

After a moment of silence, Pellethia asked, "Does your animal still have a striped tail, Aunt Lucy?"

Lucianne's eyes widened in surprise as she exclaimed, "Yes! Rosalie had that, too? What does it do? What do the stripes mean?"

"Shh...Aunt Lucy, you're going to wake Reida!"
Pellethia whisper-yelled.

Lucianne's hand immediately covered her mouth. Pellethia continued to whisper, "I never got to know why Aunt Rosie's tail was like that. Being a child, I was only excited to sit on her animal's shoulders when she took me for a run in the evenings when she could make the time. We'd stopped by a river not far from my place, and I played with her tail while she rested. I liked furry things at that age. There was once when Aunt Rosie told me that we might share a sort of...

special connection.”

“What special connection?” Lucianne asked in curiosity.

“Did you notice these?” Pellethia tilted her head in a way to show Lucianne her blonde hair with five copper-colored streaks. “I’m born with these streaks. It’s not some stylish trend that I’m following. Aunt Rosie mentioned that because she had five stripes on her tail, and I have five streaks in my hair, we’re a special team, though I don’t know how. I wished I was older when I met Aunt Rosie. I would’ve asked a whole lot more useful questions.”

“She never mentioned anything else?” Lucianne asked in disappointment. She thought she was finally going to get some answers.

“No, unfortunately. My parents got worried about these streaks at first but the doctors said there was nothing wrong with me biologically, so none of us ever found out why I’m like this. None of the medical experts know either.”

After staring at the streaks again, Lucianne asked, “Were you ever able to do anything extra with the streaks?”

“Like what?”

“About a year ago, Xandar made me realize that my tail had an unusual amount of strength. Maybe yours isn’t strength but something...different, something

that sets you apart from the other vampires.”

“Hm,” Pellethia’s thumb continued to stroke Reida’s small arm as she pondered before finally admitting, “Apart from the shade of my eyes and the oddity of my hair, I honestly don’t know how else I’m different from my kind. I’m not even cloaked with the Emperor’s Authority.”

Lucianne blinked in disbelief. “Are you sure? Isn’t the Authority hereditary?”

“It is, but women don’t inherit it. There was only one empress before me, and she never wielded that power in her years as the empress. It’s probably just bestowed on males.”

“That doesn’t seem fair,” Lucianne muttered to herself.

Pellethia smiled sadly as she said, “That’s what Octavia says, too. Our Lord probably didn’t want women on equal standing as men.”

Lucianne continued staring at the copper streaks in her hair as she whispered, “Maybe we’ll find out how we’re a special team one day. Together.”

“I’d like that,” Pellethia responded with a warm smile.

Lucianne’s eyes suddenly glazed over, and she excused herself as she received a link from her husband.



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