

## The Rogues Who Went Rogue Chapter 23 - Tips

0 6 minutes read

With his fingers laced tightly together as his forearms pressed on the dining table, Tate explained, “Stella and I went to see her today. Margaret spoke to her briefly, still asking her to lie or do something to get them out. Stella fought back, as usual. Came out drained after that, so I bought her a soda before I went in next.”

Tate cleared his throat and continued, “Margaret...is still not talking to me, and I tried everything I know: I asked her if she needed anything, I asked if she wanted to eat something in particular, I asked if she'd like me to take her out for a walk for an hour or so.”

He ran his hand through his light brown hair as he heaved a sad but frustrated sigh, and exclaimed as softly as he could, “She's not talking to me! She doesn't even want to look at me!”

Lucianne's eyes watered with each word, and Xandar's thumb drew small circles on her shoulder to try to comfort her as he, too, empathized with their friend. Tate held back tears and cleared his throat again. “Lucy, I really didn't want to ask you this but I'm out of options, so I really hope you won't mind.”

He took a deep breath and asked almost apologetically, “Is Margaret's behavior...normal for a rejected wolf? I mean, I only met you after your third rejection, and you seemed...okay. No, 'okay' isn't the right word. You looked a hundred percent like someone who had never been rejected before in her life. Were you anything like Margaret after your first two rejections?”

On a usual day, Xandar would have thrown a fit at anyone who brought up Lucianne's rejections. Tate's situation with Margaret made this a very unusual day. The king was even beginning to mentally apologize to the Moon Goddess for thinking that he had it hard with love.

After Lucianne wiped away her tears from whatever Tate just told her, she spoke with an unsmiling face and a deadpan voice, “It differs with each creature, each experience and each reason leading to the rejection. After my first rejection, I was more...closed-off. For a while, I became insecure about walking into the world with my size that could be seen as unbecoming for a werewolf. After the second rejection, I wondered if fighting was even...my thing.”

“WHAT?!” Tate exclaimed at the ridiculousness of that thought. Lucianne was the best warrior even before she was a lycan. Every wolf knew that.

As Lucianne stroked Xandar’s arm that tightened around her abdomen, she told Tate, “Like I said, it’s different with each experience. But you must know that,” she chose her next words with extreme care, “It’s different for everyone. After each rejection, I had Juan and my pack, and later on, I had you and Toby and so many others to...encourage me as I pull myself back up again. I don’t know if Margaret had that kind of support. And...Tate, if I were being extremely honest, I must tell you that you can’t compare what I was to what she is now. We are on a completely different spectrum because I was never...impregnated by any of my rejected mates.”

Xandar’s grip around her tightened even further as he closed his eyes and buried his nose in her hair. In the silent dining room, she continued to explain in a pained whisper, “Margaret is not only hurt. Odds are, she was almost destroyed. If she wasn’t r.aped, imagine what she felt when, after mating, she had to come to terms with the fact that she was betrayed by the person who she entrusted her heart, soul and body to. She trusted someone to love and protect her but he used his Authority to get her to leave after putting his seed in her like she was just another woman he’d sleep with on a regular night.”

Tate scoffed sadly and muttered, “She thinks I’m like him, doesn’t she? Guess this is karma for sleeping around.”

Very cautiously, Lucianne said, “I wouldn’t say that. I think it’s more likely that she closed off all thinking in that department.”

Tate was confused. “What does that mean?”

Lucianne elaborated, “After that experience, she may have given up on the possibility of love and intimacy entirely. Remember what Stella said, that Margaret swore to reject her second-chance mate if she’d ever get one? Those words are only said by those who had given up.”

Xandar tossed in a gentle, encouraging reminder, “But she didn’t recite the rejection when she saw you, Tate. This is a good sign. Maybe she’s thinking about giving it a chance.”

Tate’s eyes stayed on Xandar as he asked, “How did you get Lucy to give you a chance?”

It was on the tip on Xandar's tongue to say that he got lucky, but this was not the time for jokes or inapplicable solutions, so he scratched the back of his head before recalling the facts, "Well, I exploded when Lucy brought up...rejecting each other upon our first meeting. I followed her and stuck around her at every chance I got. And I kept trying to get her to talk about herself. I made sure she knew that I want to get to know her more than anything in the world."

Tate was lost. Their situations were so different. Lucianne was never a rogue who attacked a royal and was now subjected to prison custody. How was Tate going to follow her around and stick to her, or explode in a room to show Margaret he was different? At least Lucianne talked to Xandar. Margaret wasn't even looking at Tate, let alone talk to him.

Lucianne saw his hurdle, too, so she added, "You don't have to do what Xandar did, Tate. Besides, it was more about how he made me feel when he did those things. When he exploded after the rejection issue was raised, I was surprised, surprised that he was the first creature I was bonded to that was so sure that our bond wasn't a mistake. When he followed and stuck around me even before knowing what I've accomplished with the rest of you, I felt...seen...and wanted, not for my skills or reputation but for just...me. When he kept asking questions about my past, especially the most difficult parts, it made me feel heard and...special."

Her hand reached out to give Tate's a gentle squeeze as she said, "What worked for Xandar may not be suitable to you. But there's still a way to let Margaret know that you're different, to make her feel those things that Xandar made me feel. Taking care of her daughter is a great start. Only someone who's serious about starting a family with her would think of doing that."

"I'm not taking care of Stella because I want to get to Margaret. I'm doing it because I want to. My wolf wants to."

"Well, that's even better. It means our Goddess trusts the girl with you. As for Margaret, you just need to know more about her as a person for now. Maybe try talking to Stella?"

"I have," Tate murmured as he checked to make sure the corridor was still empty before he continued, "She didn't give me much, and I didn't want to go too far. Stella said that Margaret likes taking long walks, skipping stones and anything green in nature, even weeds. She hates the rain, brick roads and roses."

Lucianne digested the facts and muttered to herself, "That's a very specific list."

Xandar went on, "Probably specific enough to know that her first mate used to give her roses, and the day she was forced to leave was a rainy one."

Tate mumbled, "My thoughts exactly. I didn't get the one with the brick road, though. Do you remember any packs with brick roads, Lucy? Did Fleet Wood have that?"

Lucianne's head c0cked to one side as she pondered. "Not the parts of the pack I walked through when I visited with my adoptive parents before Juan became Alpha. But I do remember it being very green. There were trees, bushes and plants everywhere, even on their roofs. It was like they wanted to live in a greenhouse."

Tate connected that information to Margaret's love for all things green before he muttered sadly, "She misses home."

Lucianne added, "And she misses the simpler times when she was home."

When Xandar felt sadness engulfing her being, he pecked a kiss on her temple before whispering in assurance, "She can have those things again, baby. Once she opens up, she'll have Tate and the rest of us."

Lucianne muttered, "If the law doesn't put her behind bars first."

Right. Xandar forgot about that.

Suddenly, Tate asked, "Lucy, I was wondering. Could you talk to her?"

Lucianne blinked in disbelief. The only time she and Margaret 'talked' and got actual answers was when she used the Queen's Authority. With furrowed brows, she leaned towards him and asked in a whisper like they were up to no good, "You want me to use the Queen's Authority on your mate again?"

"No! That's not where I was going. But, you know, you don't have the best past when it comes to mates, so maybe this common ground would somehow...make her listen?"

"Tate," Lucianne bit her bottom lip, already feeling bad for having to disappoint him. "I can't talk to her. No one can. At least not yet. She's not ready."

Not making sense of anything Lucianne was telling him, Tate asked, “When will she be ready?”