

## The Rogues Who Went Rogue Chapter 25 - Tips

0 8 minutes read

In government headquarters the next morning, NO ONE was pleased that Greg was 'demanding' pardon for his ninety-eight people in exchange for cooperation to track down and annihilate whoever was in on challenging the Queen's Authority.

"Lucy," Toby began with an anger-suppressed tone, "You DO know you can just use your Authority and make him and his people comply, don't you?" He tried not to sound condescending, and he didn't. He just sounded angered. He couldn't understand why Lucianne wasn't just taking the shortcut. The Moon Goddess gave her the damn shortcut. It was meant to be used!

Lucianne knew this was coming. She was surprised that whatever Toby said didn't come from her mate first. She had been cracking her head for a plausible argument ever since Greg asked for the pardon, and she only came to one mental block after another with each argument.

"It doesn't feel right," Lucianne said.

Although her voice was softer than usual, she still held the attention of the room. "He is willing to cooperate. He just needs those people safe. He didn't even ask to be pardoned himself. Don't you find it...not malicious, and maybe even a little noble? He's asking for a chance for his people to redeem themselves by asking for permission to let them help the kingdom."

Christian had his lips pressed together since the meeting commenced, and had been suppressing his rage at Greg's demand in the police station from the moment he heard the other duke made it. Who the hell did he think he was? He was behind bars! After what he did, he was the last creature to have any right to negotiate anything!

"My Queen," the usually-cheerful duke took a deep breath to avoid losing his cool before he proceeded to say in a low voice, "Greg may have helped us once. But what he did in the past is a thousand wrongs that cannot be corrected by a single right. We are not at his mercy in terms of information. You and the king can make him do whatever you both want. You both have the power."

"But should we use it, is the question," Xandar uttered in a firm voice, which shocked everyone, even his own mate. Lucianne thought she was the only

one onboard with granting the conditional pardon. This was probably the first time Xandar and Christian weren't on the same page when it came to Greg.

On the table, the king took his queen's hand as his thumb stroked it affectionately while he continued speaking, "We're gifted this power because we're entrusted to use it only whenever necessary."

Christian took a moment to digest what was happening before he asked with furrowed brows, "And you think it isn't necessary to use it now?"

"It's hard to say. That's why we're here," Xandar responded simply.

"He's been housing rogues for Goddess knows how long, cuz. When he gave up those from Wu Bi Corp, he conveniently omitted to mention his own. We can't just grant a pardon, conditional or not, to rogues to hunt down another set of rogues. And how do we know we're not being played here? When was the last time anyone has heard that rogues went rogue to help the government or monarchy? I'll tell you, NEVER. Rogues don't go against their own kind, especially not to help law enforcement."

"Greg did."

"Greg was never a rogue, cuz. For some unknown reason, his scent was never that of a rogue."

"He's been hiding ninety-eight of them, Christian. If you put the mystery of his scent aside, are you really not seeing him as one of them?"

"Cuz, if he was a rogue who went against his kind, he would've given up his own people's names and location."

"Christian, we can't forget that he gave us Kyltons' rogues."

"I'm not saying that we should. All I'm saying is..." he heaved another sigh before saying, "They aren't innocent. Greg isn't innocent."

Xandar casted more doubt in the room when he said, "I'm not saying that he's a decent creature by normal standards either, Christian. But we need to balance what we know him to be, what he became recently and the threat at hand. I concur that Greg isn't innocent, but are he and the rest of his followers guilty? Completely guilty?"

Christian scoffed darkly before he declared, "Yeah, I'd say they are! Why would one hide from authorities if they weren't up to no good? As for Greg, you don't need me to recite whatever he did to the monarchy and to you and me personally in the years before he decided to help in that ONE CASE after falling for the queen."

Lucianne bit her bottom lip to cope with the rising tension as Christian continued to argue with Xandar, "Greg is bound by law to divulge any information pertaining to national security. Everyone is. There is ZERO reason for us to give in to his demands. He's caused more damage than he has helped."

Xandar refused to return his cousin's angered, onyx glare that was persuading him to give in. As he laced his fingers with his mate's, his lilac orbs held an assurance when he responded in an even voice, "I don't disagree. But if we continue closing opportunities for him and others like him to help, how are they expected to offset the damage?"

Christian threw his hands up in the air and heaved a frustrated sigh before Annie started mind-linking him, asking him to calm down and behave as professionally as possible.

Lucianne's neck stiffened for a brief second. She felt like she had dragged Xandar into a difficult situation, like she turned her husband against his best friend. The guilt in her chest grew and was getting debilitating. Xandar tore his eyes away from his cousin before looking at Lucianne in concern, demanding in a low but firm voice, "Baby, look at me."

Lucianne's teeth reluctantly released her bottom lip before meeting her husband's lilac eyes that held her captive when he said, "You know deep in your heart and soul that there's a solution, or you wouldn't have asked for a meeting to be called in the first place. You would've used your Authority without consulting anyone if you didn't think there was another way. You would've used it if you knew, without a doubt, that it was right to use it. You didn't use it, which means it isn't right, and that there could be another way. We'll find out if there is another way. Together. Alright?"

The guilt slowly subsided as she took in a few breaths. Xandar gave her hand a gentle squeeze of assurance, and she managed a forced smile and a dotting nod.

It was Toby's turn to feel guilty for blocking out any reason that his best friend and her mate was trying to persuade everyone to consider. "Lucy...help us understand why you don't think it's right. You've got to give us more than whatever you just did. Because I still can't see the flip side of the coin here. Most of us can't." Nods of agreement went around the room. Only Tate's and Annie's heads remained still.

As Xandar's thumb stroked her hand, he reminded her in a whisper, "Don't hold back, baby."

Lucianne cleared her throat and stared into space as she began speaking what she felt, "It doesn't feel right because Greg didn't do anything to give rise to the present threat. When I spoke to him, he seemed so...vulnerable. It was like he was conflicted and torn between two sides. He was spitting out whatever he was saying like he was throwing a dice, not knowing whether he was making the right move. When he mentioned the ninety-eight creatures he sought the pardon for, there was...fear in his eyes."

Her black-and-lilac orbs met her husband's as she explained, "The type of fear one has when someone he cares about is going to be in danger."

Yarrington spoke for the first time, sounding more worried than angered, "My Queen, how sure are you that the other duke didn't do anything to give rise to the present threat?"

"A hundred percent sure," Toby muttered, more to himself than to anyone else as he caught up with his best friend's train of thoughts.

Lucianne then explained to Yarrington and the rest who were still lost, "If Greg were behind the present threat, he would have let it happen without telling me. He has been doing things behind the kingdom's back for more than a decade as far as we know, maybe even longer. If this were some scheme to set his people free, then..."

Toby finished for her, "Then he would have supported the threat because a successful concoction keeps even his own people safe from the highest power in the kingdom. He wouldn't have to go through the hassle of asking for pardon for the rogues under his care." The defense minister sighed in defeat, knowing that the queen had convinced him to go against his initial stance.

Everyone in the room took a silent moment to understand whatever they just heard, before Weaver got the ball rolling again. “Although this feels right, I must say that it doesn’t feel safe, My Queen. We don’t know the extent of the other duke’s network and weaponry. I’m just concerned that if he decides to...backstab us halfway through the venture...” he shook his head and continued, “...we might not be able to reverse the damage that could be done. We need a safety net to fall back on, for every creature in the kingdom, if not for ourselves.”

Annie murmured, “I have to agree with that.” As the duchess continued stroking her mate’s clenched fist, she began, “Lucy, if we choose to trust him, we need leverage. It’s the best way to make sure both sides get what we’re after, and both sides come out safe.”

Lucianne pondered for a moment before she nodded in agreement and asked, “What do you suggest?”

Annie said, “A longer jail sentence if things went sideways, maybe?”

“That would work,” Luna Lovelace muttered in agreement.

Luna Hale, the Minister of Welfare, said, “Perhaps even a heftier fine.”

Christian mumbled, “Or torture before invoking the death penalty.” Annie mouthed a fierce, inaudible ‘no’ in her husband’s way.

Lucianne looked around the table and asked, “Anyone else?”

Vanessa, the Minister of Law, suggested, “I suggest he offer full and frank disclosure of ALL rogue suppliers and hideouts in exchange for the pardon of so many, My Queen.”

With furrowed brows, Phelton retorted, “I’m not sure if that would be of value when we intend to use it, Vanessa. The last two suppliers that were captured essentially alarmed the third one quickly enough to run and disappear. We’re still unable to hunt them down. If we do decide to press the other duke for information later, how sure are we that his knowledge wouldn’t be outdated and rendered useless?”

Phelton was right. Xandar, Christian and everyone else involved in following leads which turned out to be nothing but a bust knew this all too well.

An idea came to Toby all of a sudden but it was a horrible one. He decided to listen to the others while contemplating on whether he should share his thoughts because once it was laid on the table, he couldn't take it back, and he didn't want to regret his decision later.