

# The Rogues Who Went Rogue

## Chapter 9

Xandar caught up to his wife, and wrapped his arms around her small body, hiding her in his warm chest and pecking kisses in her hair, trying his best to comfort her. After a moment, he muttered, "You didn't have a choice, Lucy."

In a small, chopped voice, she murmured, "We could've waited. But then Stella..."

"Exactly. Stella wouldn't have been able to see her mother if you didn't make Margaret cooperate. You put Stella before her mother. It's not wrong, Lucy."

When she got a better hold of herself, she whispered, "I know I'm just shifting blame to think this but I wish Tate had stopped me somehow."

Xandar assured her, "Margaret may not see it now, but if she's smart, she'll come to see one day that Tate was only giving her what she wants: to see her daughter, though not the way that she would have preferred. You already did everything within your power to protect her, baby. The situation worked out. Stop stressing over it, okay?"

His thumb reached to smoothen the creases on his mate's beautiful forehead before his hand went down to her cheek, where she leaned into his touch in the most natural way, taking a deep breath to calm herself while she let the sparks from his touch soothe her soul.

After a short moment, Lucianne looked at her mate with an affectionate gaze and uttered, "I love you."

Xandar's worried frown melted into a smile as he pecked a kiss on her forehead and responded, "And I love you, my little freesia."

The king's eyes sparkled in anticipation, waiting for the usual response, and his queen whispered, "I know. Thank you."

Tate came out of the room and shut the door behind him gently before joining Christian. His exhausted face and sad demeanor was undeniable. The duke wasn't even that close to the Alpha, yet on this occasion, Christian felt so bad for him that he offered him a pat of encouragement on his shoulder, which Tate responded with a meek smile.

'And I thought you were bad,' Xandar linked his wife.

When their eyes met, he continued, 'I honestly didn't think anyone else could beat you in pushing their mate away upon the first meeting. Looking at Tate now, I have to say...I'm very grateful that you didn't fire insults like bullets at me and shut the door in my face during our first encounter, sweetheart.'

Lucianne's eyes narrowed. "There wasn't even a door for me to shut in your face when we met at the dining hall, Xandar. And in Tate's situation, he was the one who shut the door.'

'But why do you think he did? It can't be because he wanted to leave her there.'

'Why are we even talking about this?'

"There seems to be a slight similarity in how Tate and I met our mates. Mine was, fortunately for me, less aggressive. Probably equal in hostility, but much less aggressive.'

'Margaret is just hurt, Xandar. Very, very hurt,' Lucianne linked as she thought about Margaret's demeanor. Lucianne couldn't help but see some of her past self in her. The hate. The rage. The bitterness. Of life. Of the situation she was in. Of everyone and everything.

Xandar argued, 'That doesn't justify taking it out on people she hardly knows, especially not her bonded mate or her queen.'

'It's more complicated than that, Xandar,' Lucianne retorted. When she got his attention, she went on, 'She has a daughter but no husband or partner. There was nothing but fear in her eyes when she was almost made to give the identity of Stella's birth father. It only points to two things: either she was impregnated by force, amounting to rape and was shunned by the people around her because of that, thus forced to become a rogue; or the intercourse was consensual before a betrayal eventually broke things apart.'

Xandar blinked and digested the two scenarios she painted out before he linked in dismay, 'She was raped?'

'I don't know. But it's definitely a possibility.'

A few silent moments passed before Xander asked, 'Why would people shun away from rape victims?'

'Let's not call them 'victims', darling. These creatures, women and men alike, are very much survivors, heroines and heroes for managing to get back up again after what was done to them. As for why, let's just say many out there can be very judgmental, and still blame the survivors for the rape. You know, things like, her skirt was too short, or she was wearing a thong so what did you expect, or she went out alone at a particular time

when perpetrators are out hunting, those kinds of baseless reasonings to put the blame back on the survivors when it should be put on the perpetrators.'

Xandar ran his fingers through his hair in frustration and held Lucianne closer before he muttered, "That's just inhumane. I thought we were done with vict, with blaming the survivors."

"In certain regions, maybe. But not in many parts of the kingdom, especially in the wolf community. Hale is working really hard on this very issue at the moment. The last time I spoke to Juan, he said that we should be ready for a very heavy topic of discussion at a government meeting soon."

Luna Hale was now the Minister of Welfare, and this was among the many major issues that she had been researching on and questioning creatures about for months.

Xandar nodded at whatever he just heard and said, "Better to discuss and deal with it soon

than to continue letting innocents pay the consequences later."

It was Lucianne's turn to reach for his forehead to smoothen the creases there. His features softened a little, and Lucianne pecked a kiss on his cheek. "We will solve it, Xandar. Together with the rest of the ministers. As one. Okay?"

The softest smile replaced his frustrated features as he muttered dreamily, "Okay."

"Cuz. My Queen," They turned to Christian, and Deputy Chief Laurent was by his side. The duke stretched out a hand with two earpieces and said, "Margaret Rouge is going to see her daughter now. Want to know what they'll be saying?"

Lucianne looked hesitant. Yes, she knew about the hidden bugs in the room but should it even be used on this occasion? Tate put her doubt to rest when he admitted, "I'll be listening, too, Lucy. We all should. Let's just put the mate-bond aside for now. We don't know what she's capable of doing as a rogue. We don't know if..."

Lucianne knew what he was going to say. No one knew whether Margaret's people were the cause of part of the rogue attacks they've been fighting off for years. Seeing that it was painful to let him finish, she butted in, "Let's hope that she's not."

She took an earpiece from Christian's hand and Xandar took the other one. The four stood with Deputy Chief Laurent outside the holding unit and looked through the one-way mirror after Officer Laila brought Stella in, reminding the teenager that she only had fifteen minutes.

After the door closed behind Officer Laila, Margaret began with a straight face, “Stella, whatever you do, show as little emotion as possible. They’re watching us through that mirror. Now, what did they ask you and what did you tell them?”