

The 5-time Rejected Gamma & the Lycan King Chapter 221

Chapter 221 Two Hundred and Twenty-One

Greg looked up and locked eyes with her without question. Lucianne studied his eyes, and saw that they were partially onyx as well. Predatory, which matched her own. Not knowing what to expect, Lucianne uttered, “Whatever it is, I need them alive and conscious when you’re done.”

“As you wish, my Queen.” Greg took her hand and pecked another formal kiss on the back before getting up and standing towards Livia. Livia was certain that the onyx in Greg’s eyes weren’t lust but pure rage! She tried to run but the policewoman behind her held her in place and told her to freeze. Tears were streaming down her cheeks as she sobbed and whimpered. Upon the Queen’s affirmative nod, the policewoman uncuffed Livia and moved away from her. Greg growled as he pushed Livia’s head against the wall, making a distinct crack on the concrete. When Greg started breaking her limbs with no remorse, Livia screamed her lungs out. The sound of bone-cracking made her cousin and the others quiver in fear but Lucianne and every other police person in the room remained emotionless.

After Greg flung her body against the wall a few more times, he lifted her off the ground by her neck with one hand. His onyx eyes bore into hers as his hand fractured her neck painfully slowly. She whimpered but he didn’t care. He threw her body to the floor before he told the policewoman, “Cuff her, please.”

Greg didn’t want Livia to heal completely. Only when Lucianne gave the policewoman a nod to Greg’s request did she do just that, and Tanner knew she was next. Despite being held at gunpoint, she tried to make a run for it only to be pulled back by her shoulder. Greg stood before her, and his infuriated eyes burned into her fearful ones while the policewoman uncuffed her. He growled, “I TOLD you to do nothing.”

The second the cuffs came loose with the sound of a click, Greg threw her body at the marble coffee table, which broke into two upon the impact. Greg then flung her against the wall before he began breaking her bones like he did with Livia. Like Livia, Tanner's screams and cries filled the room. When he was done, Tanner couldn't even get up. She was cuffed again before she even had time to heal.

At that very moment, Toby, Phelton, Juan, Zeke and Zelena walked in with two elderly men, one elderly woman and two young men in cuffs. Toby then said, "Livia Aphael's parents and Helena Tanner's husband and sons, Lucy. Tanner's husband is acting a little...weird."

The man had cold sweat and was panting like he was just tortured. Lucianne explained, "His mate was thrashed. He just felt whatever she felt. It's nothing."

"Ah. That makes sense." Toby responded casually.

When the Aphaels saw their daughter's battered body and terror-struck expression, Mrs Aphael broke down and started screaming like a madwoman as Mr Aphael started shouting at his in-laws, demanding an explanation. Lucianne walked up to them and asked, "Are you saying that you have no idea what the people in this house have been doing, Mr and Mrs Aphael?"

"What are you talking about?! What did you do to my daughter?!" Mr Aphael cried.

Greg growled and said in a low voice, "Watch your tongue in the presence of the Queen. I did this. Your daughter had been warned to NEVER hurt the Queen. YOUR DAUGHTER ASKED FOR THIS!"

Mrs Aphael yelled at Greg, "My daughter would never hurt a fly! What have you done to her?!" Greg yelled back, "NOTHING SHE DIDN'T DESERVE! SHE PLOTTED AGAINST THE QUEEN!" Lord Kylton shouted, "SO DID YOU!"

Lucianne growled, “ENOUGH!” She locked eyes with the Aphaels and said, “Your daughter is far from innocent, and what the Duke did to her was done in service of the Crown. Treason is punishable by death or eternal torture. We are just getting started with her. You’d best pray we don’t find anything showing your involvement as well.”

The Aphaels’ mouths opened but before they could speak again, Greg and Lucianne growled at them in unison before the Queen spat, “Another word, and your daughter would leave this room in a worse condition than she’s in now. Is that clear?”

They sealed their mouths in resentment for their daughter’s sake. Lucianne then stepped forward, and her tone demanded an answer when she asked, “Is. That. Clear?”

Toby extended a claw on each hand, and the tip of both claws touched each of the Aphaels’ throats when he ordered in a low voice, “Answer the Queen.”

The couple gritted their teeth and muttered in Lucianne’s way, “Yes.”

“Yes’ what?” Greg asked, and moved closer to the fear-stricken, quivering Livia. He extended his own claws, and pressed them on Livia’s neck.

Like the Kyltons, the Aphaels were never forced against their will. How dare these wolves and that outcast of a Duke make them oblige a small-sized, low-born wolf! But for their precious Livia, they swallowed their pride and uttered, “Yes, my Queen.”

“YOU’RE NOT THE QUEEN! I AM! I AM!” Kelissa’s fear evaporated, replaced with anger when even her own uncle and aunt addressed the scum of a wolf by that title, HER title! Apart from Kelissa’s own crew, everyone growled at her, Greg being one of the loudest and most barbaric.

Lucianne scoffed as she turned to face the heiress, and asked with an arrogant smirk, “Are you?” 4

Kelissa then spat, “You will never wear the Crown! You will never be Queen! I will NEVER kneel before you! YOU ARE THE ONE WHO WILL KNEEL BEFORE ME!”

Chapter 222 Two Hundred and Twenty-Two

When the second round of growls followed, Lucianne laughed hysterically for a short moment before her black and onyx eyes turned sapphire, and her Authority radiated from her being. It was the first time Greg felt that energy from her, and it felt magnificent! In fact, it felt stronger than the late King Lucas’s Authority! Everything about Lucianne was just so... different.

Lucianne directed her Authority at Kelissa, compelling her to kneel. Kelissa felt something from Lucianne but she didn’t know what it was. Suddenly, her legs gave way, and she fell on both knees, her head was forced down as Lucianne stood right in front of her, allowing the heiress a good view of her white stilettos. When Lucianne decided that she had made her point, her human eye color returned, and she asked Phelton to escort Greg to fetch all the recording devices scattered in the residence. Greg approached the deputy minister, and extracted one of the devices from under the couch before handing it to Phelton as they left the room together.

Even when Lucianne’s Authority wasn’t radiating anymore, the heiress was still stuck to the ground. Neither Kelissa’s body nor her head could move. It was getting uncomfortable. A few more inches lower and her neck may break. Sasha, who was compelled by the King’s Authority before, recognised the compulsion, and she muttered, “No, it’s not possible.” Lucianne walked towards Sasha as she ordered, “Uncuff this one.”

As soon as the Oleander cuffs came off, Lucianne threw a blow in Sasha's face, making her slump against the wall. How dare this low-life of a wolf punch her like that?! Sasha's rage took over, and she pushed herself off the wall before she charged at Lucianne. Lucianne waited for the minister's daughter to charge towards her before stepping to the side and tripping her, making Sasha fall to the ground with a loud thud.

Lucianne then noted aloud, "It seems that prison walls can't hold you, Ms Cummings." Sasha got back up, and tried to land a few punches on Lucianne, who easily dodged her efforts with crossed-arms as she continued speaking, "You know, I've had so many opportunities to kill you, Sasha, and so many reasons to do it but I never did it."

Lucianne blocked Sasha's punch with a firm grip over her fist, and started cracking the bones there before Sasha's other hand came to attempt to land another blow, which Lucianne also blocked as she started cracking the bones in that one, too. Sasha let out an agonizing scream as she tried to retract her fists but to no avail.

"Prison would have kept you safe and alive but you had to come out, didn't you? It's time | stopped giving you chances, Ms Cummings. This ends here. But don't worry, the death sentence I'm offering you is the easy way out." Sasha's animal was surfacing, and Lucianne threw Sasha, face down, against the floor.

The sharp tip of Lucianne's stiletto plunged through Sasha's nape. The heel went right through her neck and broke the bone there, making drops of blood splatter on Lucianne's leg and the lower part of her white dress. As she moved away from Sasha's lifeless body, Toby muttered to himself, "Hm. So that's why she chose to wear heels for this occasion."

5

The rest of the alliance and policemen came in with the Kyltons' twelve bodyguards who tried to flee as soon as they saw the magnitude of the attack against their employers. Christian and Xandar came in last, and

the King made a beeline for his Queen right after Lucianne made Kelissa stand and lift her head up with her Authority. 3

Xandar's eyes zoomed in on the splattered blood on her dress and legs, and he grabbed her arms to turn her to face him as he exclaimed in worry, "Baby! What did I say about being careful?! Are you hurt?"

Lucianne heard the palpitations of his heart, and she furrowed her eyebrows at his unnecessary panic before saying matter-of-factly, "No, Xandar. You'd know that." Realization hit him that their emotions were interwoven, and he didn't feel any pain when he was away from Lucianne so she couldn't have been hurt. His animal cooed at the thought of being bound to the amazing creature before them forever, and his heart rate steadied. His human part locked eyes with her and muttered in bliss, "Mm. That's true."

He looked at her dress again. The blood still bothered him, so Lucianne casually explained, "This was just from impaling Sasha Cummings's neck with my heel, darling. She's dead now. And I let Greg beat up Livia Aphael and Helena Tanner, by the way. "

Xandar glanced at Sasha's lifeless body before he nodded in acknowledgement and muttered, "It's about time." A sweet peck on her temple, and he said, "Well done, my little freesia. We'll get you some new shoes later, okay?" Lucianne nodded dotingly, making her beast smile with radiance as he nuzzled her nose to elicit her soft and shy giggle.

Lucianne cupped his face to stop him from going any further, and that was when Xandar realized that her hand smelled different. He took her hand, and gave his mate a puzzled look. Lucianne shrugged and, with her doe eyes, said, "Greg. Just two formal pecks, darling." Lucianne felt his jealousy and insecurity before Xandar started sucking on her hand, wiping his cousin's scent off and leaving his own there. When he was satisfied, he uttered, "There. All better now." 4

Lucianne rolled her eyes despite her increasingly-visible blushes, and said, “We still have a few things to deal with, my King. Let’s stay focused.”

With nothing but affection, he responded, “As you wish, my Queen.”

Both their smiles faltered when their sights converged on Kelissa, who just stood there like a statue as tears of anger streamed down her cheeks. Xandar then said in a low voice, “I have to say, I’m impressed that you’re containing yourself, Kylton.”

Lucianne then clarified, “Oh, that’s me, darling. I used the Authority to mute her and make her stand still. Here, let me get rid of it.” Lucianne removed her Authority over Kelissa with a blink of her eyes.

Once the Authority was lifted, the heiress’s stiff body came loose, and she hissed, “You could only do that because of Xandar—”

Xandar’s voice was low when he growled and said, “My mate can do just fine on her own. And I am your King. You WILL address me by my title.”

Kelissa’s eyes of despair met Xandar’s onyx orbs when she said, “She can’t be Queen, X—” Xandar growled and pinned Kelissa’s neck to the wall, which was when Greg and Phelton returned. Greg noticed Sasha’s body, and actually felt lighter knowing that she was dead, unable to hurt Lucianne again. He wondered who killed her, and while everyone was staring at his cousin attacking the heiress, Greg’s investigative eyes traced the trail of bloodstains on the light carpet to Lucianne’s stiletto, and he smiled to himself.

Kelissa’s hands tried to pull Xandar’s fingers away but to no avail. He was too strong. So, while her air supply was running out, her hand reached out to touch his cheek, making Xandar growl again before throwing her body at the cabinet of ornaments, shattering the glass casing. He then wiped off the sensation that Kelissa’s touch left on his

cheek with his sleeve in haste, like her touch carried a transmittable virus. Lucianne could feel his disgust and his animal's anger at what the heiress just did.

His homicidal tone sent a shiver down everyone's spines when he declared, "NO ONE can touch me but MY MATE."

Lady Kylton then pleaded, "Your Highness, please. Don't hurt her! She's innocent!" "Innocent?" Greg scoffed. "She led the conspiracy to send rogues to attack the Queen on more than one occasion, discreetly asking the rogue Alpha to mark her against her will and you're calling that piece of dirt an innocent?" Upon hearing that, Xandar flung Kelissa's body against another cabinet. The glass shattered all over her body like the first.

Lord Kylton then shouted at Greg, "YOU'RE PART OF THE CONSPIRACY, YOU SCUM! AND YOU TOLD CUMMINGS ABOUT US WHEN SHE WANTED TO SENT ROGUES TO THE JEWEL PACK! YOU MADE THAT CALL THAT SENT THEM THERE!"

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Chapter 222 Two Hundred and Twenty-Two

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Chapter 223 Two Hundred and Twenty-Three

Greg didn’t deny it. The Duke only locked eyes with Lucianne, and he averted his guilty gaze before falling on both knees and uttered, “I have no excuse, my Queen. I welcome any punishment for my behavior and misdeeds.” Dalloway was ready to cuff the Duke. Xandar dropped Kelissa before he started taking large strides towards the cousin he hated to the core. But Lucianne’s hand gesture stopped them both. Her response to Greg was firm and immediate, “Your situation involves a very complicated set of circumstances, your Grace. We’ll deal with you later. To prevent any further interruptions, I need you to follow Deputy Chief Laurent back to the station for further questioning.”

“As you wish, my Queen.” Greg uttered in obedience, and got up to follow the Deputy Chief ready to escort him out.

Xandar’s murderous eyes followed Greg until he was out of sight. His animal then reminded him about the creature they were thrashing before they were interrupted. Xandar returned to Kelissa. He breathed heavily as he growled, “You. Also. Hurt. MY MATE.” Another growl, and he began thrashing Kelissa again as he declared, “NO ONE CAN HURT MY MATE! NO ONE!”

Lady Kylton pleaded, “Your Highness, please. In the name of our friendship with your late parents, we beg you to let our daughter go! Please!”

It was as if Xandar didn’t hear her, and he lifted Kelissa up only to throw her across the room. Her body slammed against the wall and fell onto the floor right in front of her parents. Not accustomed to being tossed around like she was nothing, Kelissa was finding it difficult to push herself off the floor.

Lord Kylton then yelled at Lucianne, “ARE YOU BLIND?! CONTROL YOUR MATE! HE CAN BE CHARGED FOR GRIEVOUS BODILY HARM FOR THIS!!”

Lucianne’s eyes bumed into the Lord’s, and she asked, “Finallyadmittingthathe’s MY matenow?” The possessiveness in her voice pulled Xandar’s heartstrings, cooling his anger. The Lycan King turned his attention away from Kelissa as he gravitated towards his Queen.

Lucianne continued, “And grievous bodily harm? Really? What about what you did to my people?! My species?! You’ve been slaughtering my kind and my friends for more than a decade! You want to talk about grievous bodily harm when you have murder on your hands?!” The wolves growled in support.

In the midst of that showdown, Kelissa’s soft voice came from the side, “Please, my King, for old time’s sake, let me go. I’ve never meant to hurt you, I just...”

Xandar and Lucianne scowled at the heiress as the King growled and the Queen declared, “Stop trying to get my mate to help you, Kelissa! If he wanted to do that, he would’ve done it by now! Maybe you haven’t heard but we’re engaged.” Lucianne lifted her hand and showed-off the ring on her finger before she growled, “He’s MINE.”

The corners of Xandar's lips curled upwards at her sexy ferocity, and he took her hand before pecking a deep kiss on Lucianne's fingers, placing her palm on his cheek to get rid of any stench that Kelissa left there earlier.

Lucianne continued to speak to Kelissa in her venomous voice, "You sent a rogue to mark me by force while asking his men to harm MY mate." Her voice choked a little when she continued, "Xandar almost died because of what you did, because of the Oleander you had them use! You're a complete BUFFOON TO THINK WE'LL LET YOU GET AWAY WITH THIS!"

Kelissa's eyes widened. She was dumbfounded. What did the wolf mean? She only told Jake to mark Lucianne and make a light scratch on Xandar while he shielded Lucianne. How did the scratch turn into something so serious?

"You're lying." Kelissa spat meekly.

Lucianne's black and onyx eyes turned sapphire, and Xandar released her hand that was on his cheek. He stepped back as he watched her in pride. Her energy was daunting but also energizing. Despite Kelissa's broken bones which were still in the midst of healing, she was compelled to endure the anguish as she stood with submissiveness to the Queen's Authority. Her screams and cries did not make Lucianne any more merciful.

Lady Kylton pleaded in tears, "STOP IT! PLEASE, STOP! USE ME! USE ME! LEAVE MY DAUGHTER ALONE!"

When Lucianne didn't even bat an eyelash, Lord Kylton yelled, "STOP IT, YOU SCUM OF A WOLF! YOU—"

Xandar growled, emitted his own Authority to mute the Lord and Lady before he said, "Unless my fiancée requires a response, you are expected to keep your mouths SHUT." His vicious eyes bore into their frightened

ones as he declared, “And when she requires a response, you WILL address her as your Queen.” Lucianne’s low voice captured everyone’s attention when she asked Kelissa, “Did you send Jake to mark me?”

Despite her efforts to remain silent, she was compelled to answer.
“Yes.”

“Did you send rogues to kill my mate?”

“No.”

“How do you explain the Oleander blades?!”

“I don’t know what happened there. My instruction to them was to make the slightest scratch on the King’s arm while he protected you, my Q-Qu-Queen.”

“And what was the point of that if it wasn’t to kill the King?”

“T-To cause a s-scandal, to make it a point that you were a]-liability to the King so that p-public uproar and detest would p-persuade the King to... reject you.”

Lucianne’s rage rivalled Xandar’s own as his hands went protectively around her shoulders while Lucianne removed her Authority to let Kelissa fall. Xandar then spat, “You’re an idiotic imbecile to think that I would ever let my mate go. Even if I gave up the throne and everything else in my life, I would NEVER reject her. I’d BEG her to stay if that’s what it took to keep her in my life.”

After pecking a kiss on Lucianne’s temple, he whispered ‘Let me’ into her ear. Lucianne had no idea what he intended to do but those words were enough to stop her from stopping him. Xandar approached Kelissa and emitted his own Authority. She stood in agony once more. Xandar then said, “Hiring a bast*rd to take away someone I was making mine was a mistake, Kylton. Thankfully, my mate had the Queen’s Authority to stop that sh*t of a rogue you sent before he did anything. And do you

know what I did to the rogue after that? Let me show you.” He forced Kelissa’s animal to show its canines, and her breathing hastened when Xandar’s hand reached for her animal’s teeth, which he pulled out with force, making Kelissa scream her lungs out but to everyone’s surprise, she was muted. Xandar threw her canines on the floor before he glared at the heiress and declared, “That’s what I did to Jake. You’d do well to remember it.”

Lord and Lady Kylton looked like they were screaming too. Their faces turned red and their eyes drenched in tears despite being voiceless but no one gave a damn. Xandar’s eyes only softened when he returned to his mate’s side like a good pup before lifting up her hands to kiss them, and he asked, “Shall we send them to prison now, my love?”

She looked at him with her doe eyes and nodded with a small smile. As Xandar kissed her temple, Lucianne warned Kelissa, “If you try to escape police custody as Sasha did, I’ll end your life the same way I ended hers, only slower. Much slower. Do I make myself clear, Kelissa?”

Kelissa trembled in fear as she nodded without hesitation.

“Good.” Lucianne smirked, and Xandar gave Dalloway the okay to take the hostages back to prison.

The 5-time Rejected Gamma & the Lycan King Chapter 224

Chapter 224 Two Hundred and Twenty-Four

The whole weekend was a busy one for the police force. They clocked in extra hours to interrogate the Kyltons, Tanners, Aphaels, the Kyltons’ guards and Greg.

When Greg surrendered the hidden camera footage he made eighteen years ago when he colluded with the ex-ministers now behind bars and

Tanner, they found that Greg never ‘coerced’ any of them to join him. From the looks of it, they were all extremely enthusiastic to go behind the monarchy’s back.

While some policemen interrogated the crooks, others played the recordings on the devices Greg implanted all over the Kyltons’ mansion, transcribing everything for their Highnesses.

The third team of policemen scoured through the database they found in the Kyltons’ home. In it, they found transactions, names, and most importantly, locations of suppliers of illegal substances and weaponry. It didn’t take very long before one of Dalloway’s subordinates requested substances and weaponry. It didn’t take very long before one of Dalloway’s subordinates requested permission to investigate these areas, which the Chief granted after reminding his people to exercise the highest level of caution.

A week after arresting the Kyltons and the others, the police delivered their report from the interrogation sessions, and the team was back in Xandar’s office once again. As the monarch, the royal family was constitutionally permitted to submit a recommendation to the Attorney-General’s Chambers and to the courts as to how they wanted certain criminals to be dealt with. Whether their recommendations would be followed through depends on the prosecutors and the judges for the case. In the past, such recommendations were given some consideration but that wasn’t always the case.

Everyone was there to discuss what the monarch should recommend. It was easy for most of those they arrested in the Kyltons’ residence, except for one: Greg.

The Duke’s story to Deputy Chief Laurent was this: A few months after Xandar ascended the throne, Greg was approached by a Lycan who called himself Han. Han claimed to represent someone anti-government, and he offered Greg a way to get back at his cousins. Greg asked for the identity of his employer but Han said that they wanted to remain

anonymous. He then showed Greg his own criminal record to prove that he wasn't sent by the government. Greg looked him up, and it turns out he was legit, being an ex-smuggler of dangerous substances. Arrested, indicted and served his sentence.

Blinded by his lust for revenge, Greg accepted the offer and rounded up the ministers and Tanner, and they put the plan into action. Greg claimed to have never seen Han again after the first transaction went through smoothly. Henever knew he was working with the Kyltons, which was believable with the conversation recorded in the Kyltons dining room. Lord Kylton made it clear during that conversation that Greg never spoke to him or Lady Kylton in any of his past transactions. And Dalloway's men got Greg to describe Han, which he did, and they found a profile match in their old archive.

Laurent then got him to explain how he ended up in the Kyltons' residence, so he gave his account of events on the night Livia came to his casino. As expected, Laurent asked for the location and ordered an immediate infiltration of the casino, only to find it empty and deserted. Upon being questioned, the Duke said he had no clue where the people there had gone. When Lucianne asked Dalloway about Greg's demeanor, the Chief said that the Duke exemplified a creature who was telling the truth.

Despite Greg's ignorance of working with the Kyltons and of the empty casino, there was no denying that he had committed numerous crimes. So, the question remains: how should he be punished?

Tate argued, "If it's true that he sent the rogues to the Jewel Pack, I don't see why he shouldn't be given the highest form of punishment."

Toby lifted up his copy of the report and said, "Maybe it's because he was just the middleman who made the call? I mean, according to this, Sasha Cummings was the one who came up with the idea. The Duke merely h--"

“Does it matter?!” Zelena shouted from across the table.

“It does, actually.” Lucianne’s cool voice caught everyone’s attention. She was on Xandar’s lap with his arms secured around her abdomen, pressing her back to his chest because the King was finding it very difficult to remain calm while they discussed the contents of the report. He read it the previous night, and lost his temper twice before Lucianne decided that it was better for her to be in his embrace as she stroked his hand while they read the document together.

Lucianne explained, “If Greg didn’t come up with the idea and merely did what Sasha got him to do, then he was only an accomplice. Sasha was the perpetrator.”

Tate argued again, “If he hadn’t made the call, she wouldn’t have been able to send those bast*rds to the Jewel Pack, Lucy!”

“Are you sure about that, Tate?” Lucianne asked, which got everyone thinking before the Queen added, “I’m definitely not. Sasha was mad. She was infuriated and...insane. If Greg hadn’t helped her, I doubt she’d just abort her plan and leave me unharmed. She would find someone else to get the job done. And from whatever the bartender eavesdropped through the door on the night Greg and Sasha had a drink together, it seems he was trying to get her to pull the brakes. But...” Lucianne sighed as she continued, “There’s also the fact that he made it possible for Wu Bi Corp to exist and flourish; for former ministers and the head of the National Audit Department to siphon government funds; and he confessed to...sterilizing the Duchess.”

That last item did not sit well with any of them. On the previous night, Christian growled so loudly that the kids had to be hidden while Annie tried to calm her husband. He was ready to storm to the police station and tear Greg apart but Annie pulled him back, begging him to not do anything rash. His eyes had been onyx since then, and he was anything but cheerful during the meeting. With Annie on his lap, Christian then said in a low voice, “Sterilized with the same poison that

was then used on you, my Queen, because of what he shared with the now dead Cummings.”

“I didn’t know that was Sasha’s pitch, Christian. I assumed it was Kelissa who came up with the idea to render me...infertile. I didn’t kill Sasha because of that. And I kept Kelissa alive despite thinking she’d done it.” Lucianne clarified.

Christian then said in despair, “I know that. It’s just...how can you even think of forgiving Greg after everything he did? He put the idea into her head, and she used it against you. My Queen, you wanted children.”

Xandar’s breathing got heavy, too. His grip around his mate tightened as he buried his nose in her hair. Lucianne tried her best to not be swayed by his bubbling inferno or her own loss, and said, “It’s not a question of forgiveness right now, at least not yet. Forgiveness is personal. In our professional capacity in the service of the Kingdom, we have to...find a balanced solution.”

Everyone’s hard looks showed discontent and dissatisfaction by the fact that they would not be able to go all out on the other Duke. Xandar then said, “Baby, listen. I get that you want to go a little easier on Greg but let’s face it, we have every reason to commit him to the highest degree of punishment.”

She locked eyes with her mate and said sternly, “Only if you ignored what he had been doing for us in recent weeks, Xandar. Have you forgotten that he was the very reason the justice system had ample evidence to put those ministers behind bars?” 1

“He STARTED the corruption, sweetheart.” Xandar noted ferociously, his voice getting louder.

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Lucianne challenged her mate with equally fierce eyes and tone, “And he ENDED it, my King. Are you saying that doesn’t matter? At all?” Silence ensued and she continued, “You very well know we were hitting a dead end with the corrupt ministers. The audits Ellia gave us were flimsy because they were in hard copies, hidden for almost two decades. It wasn’t possible to authenticate those. The court was ready to throw it out as suspicious evidence. Even if we got Ellia and the others to testify, there was a chance that the sentencing wouldn’t be as heavy as it now is. Greg’s evidence came in a chip, and it was authenticated with ease. The strength of the evidence he handed over put those people he colluded with behind bars. Now, he’s even given himself up.”

Xandar argued, “If I remember correctly, we arrested him, Lucy. He couldn’t run.”

Lucianne’s eyebrows raised as she questioned him, “Do you really believe that? Do you really think he couldn’t get out of anywhere if he wanted to? How do you explain his impeccable disappearance for the past couple of weeks? And if he wanted to run, why didn’t he do just that right after sending us the location of the Kyltons’ residence? Why did he wait for us to get there to bring him back with us?” Xandar averted his eyes and breathed in anger because he wasn’t able to answer her. No one could answer Lucianne, or argue against her. She turned to face everyone and said, “We only have him now because he is giving himself up. I don’t know why he’s doing it but if there isn’t a balanced indictment for Greg, then every other criminal lurking in the dark corners of the Kingdom would never see the point in leaving their ways and coming to us. We CAN’T have that. We can’t disregard the help that a criminal has given to the government and the monarchy. Omitting to take their contribution into account amounts to a form of punishment that is greater than torture, greater than any punishment that can be imposed by the law.”

“What’s that? What can be greater than torture or death?” Juan asked the question running through everyone’s minds.

Lucianne’s eyes met her brother’s, and she declared, “Betrayal.”

The room started to simmer down. Lucianne knew that word better than anyone else there. Every bond-snap before she met Xandar was excruciating. She felt the anguish from the rejections and the betrayal from two of her past mates. She also felt betrayed by the Moon Goddess, who was not supposed to hurt her if she didn’t do anything wrong, and who was not supposed to bond her to creatures who would hurt her. On many nights, she wished that she would just wake up dead. It was no secret that it took her many weeks and even months before she started being okay again.

Every creature in the room was really listening now. Lucianne went on, “Torture and death are merely a consequence of betrayal. We punish criminals because they betrayed the system and its people. We take care of creatures who display loyalty to defend the system and the people in it.”

With suppressed anger, Christian noted, “Greg doesn’t fit into the second category, my Queen.”

“Are you saying he fits perfectly well into the first, Christian?” Lucianne asked.

Like Xandar, Christian averted his eyes from her because he couldn’t deny that Greg had been helping them. After taking a deep breath, he stared at the table and asked, “So, what do we do? What should we put in the monarchy’s recommendation?”

Lucianne’s voice turned soft and doubtful when she uttered, “I don’t know. But there’s no way he should be let-off scot free.”

Toby then suggested, “Lower prison sentence? Maybe lighter punishments, too? You know, less whipping compared to the rest?”

“We could also strip him of his dukedom.” Xandar said, and when all eyes fell on him, he only locked his onyx orbs on his mate and explained, “No royal member in history has ever had their title stripped from them. The punishment is severe enough to make up for what he did.”

“And what’s the balancing factor?” Lucianne asked. Xandar responded, “Lower sentencing?”

“How low?” Lucianne’s eyes burned into his when she detected that he had no intention to balance things out.

Xandar breathed heavily in jealousy before his murderous onyx eyes fixed on Lucianne as he asked in a slow, low voice, “Why are you defending him?”

Registering his jealousy, Lucianne emitted a low, angered growl and declared, “Because it’s what’s right. He helped us. Throwing him under the bus does NOT serve the Kingdom in the long-run. If you even THINK that I’m doing this because I am in love with him, I’d suggest you check the mark on your neck AND mine, your Highness.” «

His hand immediately moved to gently push her hair to the back, and his fingers traced the mark he made on the most beautiful and amazing creature in the Kingdom. She was his. Only his. The sight calmed him, and the sensation he made on her skin calmed her.

Between his calamity, he felt something else. Hurt. But that wasn’t his emotion. When his partially lilac eyes returned to Lucianne’s teary orbs, she spoke in a whisper, “How could you not trust me to stay with you? How could you even think that I would want someone else? We’ve marked each other. Should I be worried that you would want someone else despite what I did on your neck?” s He instantly pressed her into his chest and uttered, “No. Never. There’ll only ever be you.” After planting a deep kiss on her hairline, he muttered, “I’m sorry, baby. I’m so sorry.” Her hurt cut right through him, and his animal was having a hard time

copied with their mate's pain knowing that they were the ones who caused it.

After a few quiet, awkward moments, Annie's voice rang through the room, "Stripping the dukedom may be taking it too far." Her statement even made her own mate surprised. Annie went on to say, "It's like Lucy said. He helped us. He did a lot of unforgivable things in the past but what he has been doing recently...changes things. The severity of our recommendation should...probably weigh in how sorry he feels about everything he did." «

