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Chapter 143

The King commanded the attention of the room as he spoke, "To be honest, I was going to push for a permanent appointment of ministers today. Seeing that it is unwise to do so when the verdicts of the arrested ministers have not been reached yet, I must withdraw my prior intention. It is also an indisputable fact that a more democratic nomination and appointment would require a notable period of time. As many of you have pointed out, time is something we don't have. We need creatures to stand in now."

"But clearly, not all of us agree with who we shall appoint for the vacant positions, so, as always, this matter shall be put to a vote. Yes, Alivia?" Xandar noticed Alivia's raised hand so he granted her permission to speak.

Alivia smiled pretentiously and said, "Your Highness, don't you think it is unjust to put such matters to a vote when a significant number of our colleagues are absent as they fight off corruption charges?"

The King responded without needing to think, "It is their absence that made today's meeting necessary, and a vote necessary as well. These are temporary measures. If they can be proven innocent, their positions will be restored."

Xandar could say this so calmly because he knew it was unlikely that those four ministers would get a get out-of-jail gift card from the court. The evidence piled against them would undoubtedly destroy them.

Harold then said, "With much respect, my King. Perhaps we should keep the right to vote among members who have been serving for the past five years." That meant Lucianne and Annie would not be allowed to vote.

Xandar tried to focus on his mate's small thumb as she stroked his hand when he asked, "What reason do you have for preventing the Queen and Duchess from voting, Harold?"

The atmosphere in the room became tense. Harold didn't seem bothered by that fact when he explained," Well, for one, the Duchess has not been with us in almost two decades. Forgive me for suggesting this but her sudden presence seems to be for tactical purposes. It is as if she is merely here because her vote is needed. As for..."

Christian cut him off, "If that is so, minister, why do you think my Duchess didn't tum up to vote every other time before today?" He glared down at Harold before he said in a low voice, "If I wanted to use her to win a vote on any issue, I would've done it from the very beginning. Most of you in this room know why m y wife has refused to join us for a long time. I'd suggest you rethink the past before you accuse me of harbouring tactical intentions."

Before Harold could come up with a response, Xandar said, "You may also want to rethink what you were going to say about our Queen while you're at it."

Harold snorted before he said, "That's the thing, your Highness. She is not our Queen. Well, not as of yet, that is. I don't recall attending a coronation ceremony. And this is clearly her first time in,"

Xandar's low growl, followed by those of Christian's, Annie's, Weaver's and Yarrington's, halted Harold in his speech. Xandar challenged, "Under which particular provision of law can the King's mate not exercise her right as Queen?" 1

Harold answered without hesitation, "It's not a written law, your Highness. More like a convention. A tradition, an unspoken rule, if you will."

"Where is this unspoken rule found?" Xandar continued to press.

"It's there as common knowledge."

"Perhaps it's because I'm the most senior member here. It's a very old rule that's not normally mentioned since no Queen has ever entered through those doors before being crowned."

It was Lucianne's turn to speak, "I'm sorry, minister, but I'm confused. If it's not normally mentioned, how could it be common knowledge? If it's a tradition, why is it that the

generation after yours is unaware of it? And if it's not discussed, don't you think it has already become obsolete?"

Harold tried to look at Lucianne with as little spite as possible when he said, "Lycans started the tradition, your Highness. I believe it is best for Lycans to say whether it is obsolete."

Weaver didn't have to think twice before he said, "Fine. Lycans, let's put it to a vote and settle this here and now. Those in favour of rejecting the convention that no one has ever heard about?"

Harold exclaimed, "No! You can't just vote as such!" The hands that shot up clearly showed that Harold had lost. Even Riven voted against him.

Xandar spoke again, "Since that's been settled, both the Queen and the Duchess can exercise their right to vote. Let's nominate the candidates we have in mind and decide who's the best we have for the job, starting with the Defence Ministry."

Christian snorted and playfully suggested, "Can the Queen be our Queen and our Defence Minister?" This garnered much laughter from those in favour but only got forced smiles from those who didn't like the proposition. They didn't even like her being their Queen, let alone both a minister and a Queen!

After everyone has thrown in names, which were, surprisingly to Lucianne, many members of the alliance, save for a few Lycans. They voted and their choice of temporary replacement was Gamma Tobias Tristan as Defence Minister, and the Lycan warrior Phelton as his deputy. 4

Next up was the Finance Ministry. This one took a little more time because Lucianne got more questions from everyone around the table about the wolves she nominated. She spoke in a neutral manner, giving them scenarios about how her nominees handled financial crises within their own packs and even those of their allies

Lucianne talked about their respective strengths and weaknesses as objectively as possible. For some reason, Marie Martin's other son, Henry Martin, was nominated as well. His credentials? He has a degree in Finance and has shadowed his mother with his brother for years.

It wasn't much of a surprise when the vote ultimately made Luna Lovelace the temporary Finance Minister, with Alpha Tate as her deputy. 1

As for Health and Welfare, Luna Hale was deemed to be the most suitable candidate for the position, and Pamela nominated her fifteen-year personal assistant, Kenneth, who spends any leisure time in hospitals and blood drives as a volunteer,

Gamma Benedict was made Deputy Minister of Education,

After the decisions had been made, Xandar dismissed everyone and thanked them again for making the time to attend the meeting. Of course, Alivia, Harold and Cora were not happy with how things played out but everyone else didn't stop them from storming out of the room as soon as Xandar gave the greenlight for everyone to leave.

When Alivia was out of sight, Weaver couldn't help but start laughing as he replayed the King and Queen's sarcasm from earlier. Yarrington smiled as he rolled his eyes at his mate's uncontrollable chuckles and dragged Weaver by his arm as he said, "Come now, dear. You can continue laughing in the car."

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After saying their goodbyes, Xandar and Lucianne got into the car, and Lucianne kicked away her heels as she let out a relieved sigh. Xandar waited for her to take another breath before smashing his lips on hers and squeezing her thigh. Only when he released her did he whisper, "We have the rest of the day off, sweetheart. What do you want to do?"

Lucianne's cheeky switch was flipped on when she said, "Isn't it a little unprofessional to offer such an invitation to someone who's not crowned Queen, your Highness?"

Xandar emitted the dangerous and alluring growl as he pressed his forehead on hers and warned, "Don't challenge me on this, my love. The moment I give out the order, you can bet you'll be crowned tomorrow."

"Without the consent and agreement from the one who is to be crowned? A little uncivilized, don't you think?"

A light peck on her lips and he uttered, "Perhaps. But it'll definitely shut those idiots up."

Lucianne's cheeky eyes turned soft with tenderness before she pecked a kiss on his cheek. "Thank you for what you did for me back there."

Xandar's eyes softened as well when he kissed her nose, "Well, I had help. And you really don't have to thank any of us for defending what you can and cannot do, sweetheart. It's your right. We were just fighting for what was already there."

Her voice turned into a shy whisper now as she said, "I love you."

Xandar smiled and responded with ease, "I love you, too, my little freesia. And since you love me, you have to say yes to my unprofessional invitation to bring you somewhere."

Lucianne rolled her eyes and pushed him back to his seat as she said, "You very well know I was going to say yes when you first asked, Xandar."

"Well, then. Pick a place, babe. Was there anywhere you wanted to visit but never got the chance to?"

"Hm." Lucianne pondered for a moment before her eyes met her mate's when she said, "I want to go to your favorite place."

Xandar's eyebrows raised in surprise before his smile broadened when he said, "My favorite place is with you, Lucy."

Lucianne narrowed her eyes and said, "Fine. Then, your second favorite place."

"Where are you going with this, sweetheart?"

"I want to go where you love. I want to see what you love, and feel why you love it. You've already brought me to the freesia field. Is there anywhere else you'd go to just be...happy?"

Xandar was moved. His mate really wanted to know him, even the little things about him. He contemplated with a smile before he said, "Well, I've always been into history. So, maybe we could go to one of my favorite museums... In fact, it just occurred to me that there's a piece there that you should see."

Lucianne sparkled in awe before she asked excitedly, "You're a history geek? Why didn't you tell me?!"

Xandar looked a little embarrassed when he said, "Babe, let's just...not use that term."

"Why not? I'm a geek myself if you haven't noticed." Lucianne declared.

"Yeah, but sweetheart, let's face it. You do not look like a geek. At all. You're much too attractive."

"Geeks can be attractive too, Xandar. Just look at yourself." Lucianne noted.

*I don't know, babe. I guess I'm still trying to get the stereotypical version of a geek out of my subconscious. A geek doesn't sound very... deserving or capable of being with you." 2

Lucianne retorted in confidence, "Xandar, geeks are more than capable of accomplishing anything. And they're cute!"

Xandar started getting suspicious so his hand pressed her abdomen against the seat, his predator eyes fixed on her as he asked in a low voice, "And which geeks in your past have you found cute and capable, m y little freesia?" 1

Lucianne realized she let that slip so she muttered 'oh, boy'under her breath before she said, "It was just a few study buddies, Xandar. There was never..."

He planted a deep kiss on her lips before he asked in his deep voice, "Did you ever find me cute?"

added, "You've always looked more handsome and confident than anything else. Cute doesn't suit you, darling. You're the scary Lycan King, despite your efforts of trying to be a

softy from time to time. But knowing about your geeky side now, I'd bet you are going to look cute really soon, my love."

His animal's anger evaporated, and it was dancing around in his head with its head held high. Xandar nodded with a smile and said, "Hm. Good answer. For a minute there, my animal was going to go berserk."

"Let's not blame the fiercest animal for everything, dearest. Your human part may have encouraged it as well."

Xandar couldn't believe his own animal was laughing at his human part. When was the last time that happened? He pecked a kiss on her temple before he muttered in bliss, "Absolutely amazing."

After driving for twenty minutes, they came to a large castle with shrubs trimmed to mould the strongest Lycans of the past. Xandar explained, "This was where my parents and I lived. After they passed away, Christian and I decided to turn it into the Kingdom's largest museum. Kids love coming here not for the history but for the fact that it's a castle." 2

Lucianne chuckled as she touched his arm affectionately and said, "I think it's a brilliant idea. It does give the public access to where the Kings and Queens of the past once lived."

Xandar took her hand and pecked a kiss on the back before he said, "I'm glad you think so."

"And be honest, darling. You chose to live in your villa now because it's closer to Christian's place and the freesia field, didn't you?"

Xandar was pressing back his smile when he said, "Those were...highly influential factors when I made the decision to move there."

When the valet took care of the parking, Xandar led Lucianne through the large brown wooden doors with paw engravings. Lucianne was amazed by the interior. The castle looked really old from the outside but the inside was sophisticated,

The tiled floors were pale against the light brown walls. The light colored-tinted glass ceiling was high, and the light from the sun penetrated through it to light up the space. With a hand on her abdomen, Xandar pecked a kiss on Lucianne's temple from the side and whispered in a husky voice, "What are you

thinking about, my love?"

Her head turned to meet her mate's lilac eyes filled with affection when she replied, "I honestly didn't know an old castle could look this beautiful."

Xandar pecked another kiss on her temple and said, "Anywhere can be beautiful as long as you're there, Lucy."

Lucianne smirked despite her blushing cheeks, and she said, "Well, where should we start, geek?

Xandar narrowed his eyes and protested, "Really, babe? Geek?"

Lucianne pursed her lips for a moment while she thought and finally said, "Where should we start, my handsome geek?"

The Lycan King was starting to blush as well when he admitted, "That actually sounds a lot better." He kissed the back of her hand before he suggested, "I'm going to do away with all the bullsh*t we had to learn in school and skip to the parts they left out of the syllabus, which would be down this hallway."

"The Lycan King saying that school history on Lycans is bullsh*t. This is a good start." Lucianne taunted with a suppressed smile.

"Well, Yarrington already suggested doing away with whatever the schools have now, so I'd say my views are aligned with the 21st century, my dear. The history we learned was all very one-sided, and clearly written to brainwash rather than to enlighten future generations about the past."