

The Rogues Who Went Rogue

Chapter 10

Stella answered her mother in obedience, “They asked for my name, age, your name, your age, where our pack was, and they asked about my birth father.”

“And what did you tell them about your birth father?”

Stella took a moment, and swallowed a lump in her throat before she muttered, “What you told me to say, that he died before I was born and you’ve never told me anything about him.”

“Good girl. And did they believe you?”

“I don’t think so,” Stella murmured, her eyes choosing to look anywhere else but her mother.

Despite Margaret’s poker face, her eyes channeled only angered disappointment. “You could lie with a straight face before you went running through foreign pack territories but you can’t lie to protect your own mother?”

“Mom, these people aren’t like whatever you say they are. They’re different. The Alpha didn’t lock me in the dungeon with Milo and Chase. And that woman...”

“Don’t tell me. The queen?”

“Yes! She’s different, mom. If you spoke to her...”

“I have spoken to her, sweetheart.”

Stella’s eyes widened in enthusiasm. “And? She’s different, isn’t she? She doesn’t want to hurt

us.”

Margaret simpered just slightly when she responded, “Hmph. She used her Authority on me to force me to answer questions like how your father used his Alpha Authority to cast me out. There’s nothing different about her.” Stella was taken aback, so were the others eavesdropping outside, albeit for different reasons.

Stella’s surprised eyes went blank for a moment before her thought process started kicking in, and she finally asked in a whisper, “What did you do?”

“Excuse me?” Margaret asked defensively.

Stella didn't back down. Her eyebrows furrowed as she pressed her mother in suspicion, “What did you do to make her use her Authority on you?”

“I was exercising my right to remain silent,” her mother countered.

The daughter's reply was instant. “You told me rogues didn't have the right to remain silent. Has our status changed already? Have you accepted the Alpha as your mate?” Stella knew her mother wouldn't have accepted the mate-bond, at least not yet.

Seeing that her teenager was winning the argument, Margaret used her mother-privilege and

retorted, “I'm your mother, Stella. Watch how you're talking to me.”

“It's just a question, mom. I only want answers. And you're not giving me anything. How else do you expect me to ask?”

“I would prefer it if you didn't ask at all.”

Lucianne was finding it harder to watch. Her eyes glistened at the incredibly-strained mother and-daughter relationship. Lucianne didn't remember much about her birth mother, but her adoptive mother was never this cold to her. Strict and firm, yes, definitely. But never this...cold and dismissive. Her husband felt her sadness, and his arm went around her waist to pull her close, and he guided her head to lean against the side of his body as they continued to watch.

Stella asked rebelliously, “Then what am I even doing here? Answer all your questions until you dismiss me?”

“Since you and your friends are the reason that we're all here, yes. Only I get to ask the questions.”

Stella was seething with anger. That was when Margaret warned, “Control your emotions, Stella. Don't give yourself away. Never show what you're feeling. It's the first thing they'll use against you.”

Stella's teeth gritted as she uttered in defiance, “They...are NOT like that.”

“And how do you know?” Her mother challenged in return. “You have been shielded from hypocrites your whole life. You won't even know one when you see one. You're too young and immature to tell the difference. For all we know, that queen you're so smitten about is only earning your trust to turn you against us! All of us! Do you want to be personally responsible for the decimation of our pack, of everyone you know? You'd best pray the others we left behind are okay right now.”

Mental Note 1: The eight wolves they brought back weren't all that there were in Margaret and Stella's rogue pack.

Stella took another moment before her answer came out in a fierce whisper, "The queen is not like that. I trust her. My wolf trusts her. You and many others have told me that our wolf instinct is hardly ever wrong."

A gentle warmth crept into Lucianne's heart when she heard that. Stella's wolf trusted her. Xandar pecked a kiss on her hair, and Tate gave Lucianne's shoulder a grateful squeeze.

Margaret continued to argue, "Well, my wolf doesn't. And mine is clearly older than yours."

"Older wolves are not always right. At least that's what you told our elders before you took the helm. Are you saying that's wrong now?" This was a very different side of Stella that neither Tate nor Lucianne had seen back in White Blood. Teenagers of any species are known to be rebellious but this one is gutsy on an exponential level.

Margaret's neck stiffened for a brief second as she tried to cope with her daughter's stubbornness. "Fine. If you think that your wolf is right, then ask the queen to release us without charge."

Lucianne's eyes widened and her body stiffened in shock at the suggestion. Xandar's thumb that was stroking her waist paused as well. Inside, Stella blinked before questioning, "How did you even connect...me trusting her to...demanding that she release us from prison?"

"It's simple. If you trust her and she trusts you, she'd believe you when you tell her that we acted in self-defense on the field."

"How was it self-defense? They weren't even attacking. You and the others just appeared out of the blue and almost attacked HER!" Stella exclaimed.

"To save YOU!" Margaret reminded her.

Those words made the ears of Xandar's animal perk up. In Lucianne's head, her lycan smacked its forehead and pulled its ears forward to cover its eyes. Whatever Stella just said was not supposed to be brought up in front of their mate this soon.

The king turned his wife around to face him, and his stern eyes demanded a confirmation or contradiction from his beautiful but guilty-looking mate. Unlike her animal who had already given up, Lucianne still tried to use her doe eyes in hopes that Xandar would go easy on her when she explained, "I was going to tell you after we got home. I didn't want them to be refused requests to speak to each other today. Besides, I stopped them with the Queen's Authority, so they couldn't do anything, really."

His animal was not pleased. It took some heavy breaths while it internalized her reasoning. He tried very hard to swallow an angered and hurt snarl but a faint part of it got through their mind-link, which Lucianne and her animal easily caught. Seeing that they were in public, Xandar decided to use the mind-link to remind his queen in a tone that left no room for argument, 'Next time when I say 'keep me posted', I mean keep me posted on EVERYTHING, Lucy. Alright?'

Lucianne nodded dotingly without hesitation, and linked softly in guilt, 'I'm sorry.'

Her small voice even through the link vaporized his animal's anger, and Xandar sighed. He never intended to make her feel bad. After holding her in his arms, he pecked a kiss on her hair before linking, 'I love you, my little freesia. I just...really want to know everything. And I really need you to be safe.'

'I know. I love you, too, Xandar. It won't happen again, I promise.'

After releasing her, Xandar smiled in satisfaction and said, "Thank you, baby."

Their sights return to the mother and daughter when Margaret spoke again, "If you're not comfortable with self-defense, then use something else. Just make sure everyone gets out of here. This is your chance to prove your loyalty."

"Prove my loyalty? When did we have to prove our loyalty in our rogue pack?"

"When I say so."

Stella looked at her mother blankly before she stated the obvious, "I'm your daughter, mom."

"After that stunt you pulled with your friends, after the risks you three took without considering the repercussions, trust is not something that you're entitled to among us anymore, not until you've proven yourselves worthy of the trust."

"We didn't mean to get caught, mom. It was an accident!"

"Which is why I told you to never run anywhere you liked! We are rogues! We don't have that privilege!" It was only when Stella was backed further and further into her chair that Margaret realized her voice was raised.

She cursed under her breath for losing her composure before continuing speaking to her daughter, "Anyway, what's done is done. There's no use wishing that things were different. I don't care what you say to the queen, or to anyone she listens to. Lie as convincingly as you can to get your family out of here because we know who got us in here."

Before Stella could retort, Officer Laila knocked on the door twice to indicate that their fifteen minutes were up. Without looking at her mother or waiting for her permission, Stella got up from her chair like she couldn't wait to escape her mother's wrath and walked to the door.

When her hand was on the doorknob, she turned back to her mother and said, "You were wrong about me being shielded from hypocrites my whole life, mom. From the way I see it, I've been brought up by the best one." 1

Lucianne's hand covered her gaping mouth. Margaret was finding it harder to maintain a straight face now. She was hurt by her daughter's words but she was even more infuriated at Stella's disobedience, so she uttered defensively, "I'm nothing like them."

"You're right about that. They're real. You're not. You've been holding on to your past for so long that you've forgotten what being real feels like. You're the hypocrite, mom. That's why you haven't rejected the Alpha. You used to tell me that if you ever had a second-chance mate, you'd reject him without giving it a second thought, especially if it's an Alpha. Now, you can't even bring yourself to look at him or say the words. And do you know why? It's because your wolf is telling you NOT to reject him. It's because your wolf is telling you that he's not my birth father, that he's different! Yet, you're so stubborn to not listen to it!"

Mental Note 2: Margaret went through one rejection before meeting Tate.

Margaret's mouth opened but Stella was already out of the door. The four of them eavesdropping hastily took out the earpieces and hid it in their hands.

