

Lykos Redemption

Prologue: Le Roy est Morte, vive...les Loups?

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In the land of Greece, there lies a city named Arcadia. Its ruler, Lycaon, was a cruel man. He was known to take many wives and partners at a time, not caring what happened to any of them. It was little surprise that he ended up with fifty sons. Melaineus had been the eldest and Nyctimus the youngest. They had lived rich, boisterous lives without restriction. Many thought the king had gone mad when he had invited the god Zeus to dinner with them. Some thought it was for a status symbol, that such a cruel king didn't deserve the attentions of the King of Olympus. They didn't know of Lycaon's plan.

It was the night before Lycaon planned to dine with Zeus that he sealed his family's fate. As the nearly full moon climbed into the sky, the king entered the bed chamber of his youngest son. **Of all my great sons, I'd hoped the highest for you, Nyctimus** He thought to himself darkly, **But here I find you to be content with nothing, compassionate to the weak, and worst of all... zealous in your religion...** Lycaon pondered. As the king slowly entered the young boy's room, he stirred.

Lycaon thought to himself of all the ways he could trick the god. Surely a god so wise, so observant would know what he was eating. The best test, the ultimate test, would be to feed the god something that any divine being would be disgusted by - the taste of human flesh. His feelings about Nyctimus were in harmony with his idea. He'd kill his *son* for the god.

With this grim plan ahead of him, Lycaon slowly approached his youngest son. As he got closer he raised a large dagger above his head. The knife glinted in the waxing moonlight.

Nyctimus awoke to find his father looming over him and asked, "Father, what are you doing?"

"My son, you are weak-willed and ill-suited to *live* within this family. I cannot bear to watch your brothers harm you as they do. It is with this thought that I send you to Elysium." The king explained. Nyctimus' eyes went wide as the knife came down.

"Father, why?" and it was those words that were Nyctimus' last. All that was left were the pleading, sad honey brown eyes gazing upwards as the pain blossomed throughout his chest.

"Zeus will not know of this, young one. Despite your faith, I know what he truly is." The clouds outside rumbled ominously as Lycaon picked up the body of his son. The king walked with the body down to the kitchen, asked one of his sons to cut up the body to be used in the supper for Zeus the next evening. He then said, "Don't throw out the entrails, use those in Zeus' dish." Lycaon walked out of the kitchen and into the rest of the house.

Zeus arrived to eat with the large family the next day. The greetings were cordial enough, almost as if the family was accustomed to spending time with the gods. Zeus eyed the family expectantly. The king's Sons, all of them, were in their finest linen *chlamydes** with extremely overly-glamorous brooches and

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**himation=Ancient Greek cloak worn by elders similar to a toga, though where the toga was round, the himation was rectangular

silver rings on every finger. Zeus by contrast was dressed in a humble sky blue *himation*** with a very simple bronze brooch in the shape of a lightning bolt.

“Come, come, my lord. We have dinner prepared for you.” Lycaon said whilst gesturing for the god to follow. Zeus moved with an easy grace, taking everything in, although he had seen them before. He had traveled the streets in the guise of a peasant, seeing the way the sons moved through the city.

“If I may, your highness, why did you ask me to come here?” Zeus questioned.

“Do you not already know, my lord?” Lycaon asked with barely shielded glee.

“If you are up to something, Lycaon...” He paused and let the threat hang in the air.

“No, my lord I have no plans, nor schemes.” Lycaon replied, feigning innocence in the eyes of the god.

The dinner party of fifty-two sat down amongst many tables and chairs. Lycaon, Zeus, Melaineus, and Demeas sat at the first table. Demeas looked at the god with curiosity, his black hair pulled back into a tight pony tail. There were five more tables capable of holding ten men each, almost all of them filled. Of course the table holding the youngest of Lycaon’s sons was emptier than usual. Zeus had never set foot in their home before, but he knew that there was a boy missing from the family’s tables. “Lycaon, where is your son, Nyctimus? I do not see him at the table. Where is the boy, Lycaon?”

Zeus had to give some credit to the King for holding his ground. However, it appeared that his children also looked confused. Finally forty-nine pairs of eyes looked at the empty space, then to their father. Any that did not know the family of Lycaon might have been surprised when their mouths turned into malevolent, knowing grins. To them it seemed that their father knew more than a god. For Zeus, however, it only confirmed what he already knew. Still, he needed more confirmation before punishing the savagery he saw from the family.

It was then that the servants brought forth the meal. The meal consisted of several courses, including a blood pudding, a soup, and sausage. Zeus felt a deep sickness wash through his body as the angry shock settled in from what had happened.

He looked down at the meal presented him. He took one whiff of it and growled in outrage. The sky outside rumbled fiercely. The god’s eyes crackled with energy as he stood, and in his rage flipped the table. The food was dislodged, raining down across a very surprised Demeas.

“LYCAON, SON OF PELASGUS! YOU HAVE COMMITTED A MOST HEINOUS ACT!” Zeus shouted in fury, his voice reverberating like the thunder itself. The room smelled of ozone as the air boiled around the god. He approached the king of Arcadia, lifting him by the throat into the air, “By killing your youngest son and cannibalizing him to further your power, you have condemned yourself to the Fields of Punishment. Your reign of terror ends here.” The god said and summoned his master bolt. He stabbed it through the heart of Lycaon and dropped the limp body onto the ground.

It was a mere moment before Hades was there to pick up Lycaon’s soul.

“No need for judgement, take him straight to the Fields of Punishment. Bring me his son, Nyctimus. The child did not deserve to die.” The God of Death bowed. Then, he left without saying a word. As he waited for Hades to return, Zeus began to move his hands. The food disappeared from the tables and a

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body began to reform on the floor, a teenager with curly brown hair. He was still and lifeless before Hades returned. With the second god's return, Nyctimus' chest began to rise and fall and then his eyes slowly opened..

"L...Lo...Lord Zeus?" The boy's eyes widened and he immediately averted his gaze, sitting up and moving to kneel before the god.

"Yes, child." Zeus replied before looking at the stunned faces of Lycaon's children. "Your father was the one that wielded the blade. However, your conduct shall not escape my judgment. You understood your father's plan and did nothing to stop it. You compose yourselves in a manner that suggests to me that you lack common morality. For that I shall sentence you to something worse than death." He grabbed Nyctimus' hand before sweeping his other arm across the room.

As the hand passed by each of the sons of Lycaon, their human form was replaced by that of what Nyctimus could only think of as wolf - though that did the creature a disservice in describing the new monstrosity. The fur of the creatures was matted and mangy, its proportions weren't that of a wolf or any animal known to man for that matter. In shape it was like a terrible mockery of the beauty of canids. The eyes were dark and ruddy. The teeth yellowed and the gums pure black. There was no doubting that the creature existed for only pure evil.

"The final judgment lies with you, child. You are now king of Arcadia. It is with my blessing that I will allow you to decide. Though I must warn you that the goddess Nemesis will try and influence your opinion."

"She has no need. They allowed Father to kill me, to blaspheme in the presence of a god. There is no choice but to banish the children of Lycaon from the lands of Arcadia, to spare the people suffering cruel rulers any longer." Nyctimus said. Zeus seemed pleased by this, however what the human said next did surprise him. Nyctimus took a breath, "And that includes myself. The line of Lycaon ruling has ended, and I too will leave these lands. Give the throne to a family more deserving, my lord." the young man said, turning to move for the door.

Zeus said nothing, feeling the burden on the young man's shoulders, "Very well, Nyctimus," Then he turned to the wolves, "Leave at once! You shall not return to this place." The god waved his hand and the wolves were no longer there.

As Zeus turned around, Nyctimus was gone. Zeus took a stoic breath and disappeared from the messy dining room, the place where an entire family had been destroyed. Only the Fates could control what came next for the family of once-human wolves.

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