

Lykos Redemption

\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\ACT II\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\

Ch. 1: Serena Wird Voller Licht Sein

The next week had gone by quickly. With Nyctimus being taken in as a physician's assistant he was busy nearly all day long and only was able to feel Apollo's presence in the sun overhead. He was quite worried about his brothers. The full moon was coming soon. He remembered what Artemis had told him about the full moon. That his brothers would change back into the monsters that Zeus had turned them into as punishment. His mind often worked itself into overdrive as to what the ramifications of this change could be.

He came back up to the house the day before the full moon. Still, worry permeated his thoughts. He was unsure what would happen to his brothers and that more than anything was what caused him angst. When he entered the wooden building he looked for his brothers. There was no sign of his brothers in the house so he sighed. "This is not helping me."

"Oh, but I know what will, my love," Apollo said sensually. He walked up behind Nyctimus before wrapping the shorter human in a sort of hug. His arms wrapped around Nyctimus under his armpits and came to rest just above his hipline. Apollo kissed Nyctimus on the top of the human's head before the god turned him around.

Nyctimus leaned back away from the god's chest and looked upon his unblemished face. He looked there for a short while before breaking down into tears in Apollo's chest, "I am so worried, Apollo. What if they cannot turn back? What if they hurt someone?" Nyctimus sobbed while Apollo rubbed his back and cradled the human's head soothingly.

"Shh...shh. Oh, my dear, you should not worry about things over which you have no control. Can I tell you something?" Apollo soothed. When he received a slow nod in response, he slowly lifted Nyctimus' head in return. He kissed him lovingly before continuing, "Tomorrow night, you will not worry about your brothers. Artemis' wolves will look after them, if you wish. Make sure they do not try and harm the Athenians."

"That would make me feel more comfortable. I guess." Nyctimus replied with a cautious air.

"Apollo, what in Hades do you think you are doing offering up *my* wolves?" Lysaea appeared beside Artemis.

"Sister, do you not see how distraught my love is? I was hoping that you could ease his worries by guiding his brothers tomorrow during their change. It would allow me to have a proper night with him."

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\* Drómo=Street used here as the main street in the city

\*\*\*Himas=thong or strap, usually associated with sandals. They were also the first form of boxing gloves.

^ 1 talent=6000 drachmae

^\*\*agora=marketplace

^\*\*\*\*symposion=all male banquet

#\*Chi=Greek letter for the hard ch sound it looks like the latin letter X.

\*\*Apothíke Athenás=Apothecary of Athena

\*\*\*\*1 drachma=4.31g=.152oz./used also to denote a currency. Which was 1 drachma of silver

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Lysaea huffed annoyed, “The young shepherd was given that staff of his for more than just a walking stick. It has been blessed by Hecate. Whoever wields this staff has control over the four elements and can twist the Mist in order to allow the wielder to accomplish feats that previously were thought impossible. Nyctimus must actively involve himself in tomorrow’s activities if he wishes to continue to call himself the ‘Shepherd of Wolves.’”

“So you will not guide my brothers, Lysaea? They are still new to their lives between the world of wolves and humans.” Nyctimus sneaked in a comment still with his head buried in Apollo’s chest.

“No, I shall not. They have you to protect them. With little help you will become a competent and frightful magician. Your knowledge of rudimentary alchemy will also be a valued resource.”

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Melaeneus and Demeas walked along the *drómo*\* gathering supplies that they were told by Hecate earlier in the day that Nyctimus would need. They walked to the market district to a small shop with tiny windows, fading, crumbling masonry, and vines growing up its façade. They needed one more supply for Nyctimus to be prepared and this was the only shop that contained the item they needed. The sign above them said “*Apothíke Athenás*\*\*\*”. They walked into the building and started searching for what they needed. Mel and Demi were wearing modified *himantes*\*\*\* because many of the items Hecate had told them would be dangerous to them. They greeted the store-owner.

She eyed them suspiciously, “What are a couple of boxers doing in my store?”

“Pardon, madam?” Demeas asked, forcing politeness.

“The *himantes*, why are you wearing these?”

“We have been handling particularly dangerous items and have been trying to keep them off of our skin as much as is possible,” Melaeneus replied in a placating tone.

“Alright...what do you need? I do not have all day.” The shopkeeper asked.

“30 *drachmae*\*\*\*\* of powdered Aconite root.” Demeas replied gruffly. He was slowly losing his patience for the rude, woman.

The shopkeeper eyed them suspiciously again, maybe with even more suspicion pouring from her eyes than before, “I have that item. It will cost you a *talent*^.”

Melaeneus looked at his brother, then to the shopkeeper, “It will cost us no such thing. 40 *drachmae* is all we will pay. No more.”

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"30 *minae*^*."

"40 *drachmae*."

"10 *minae*"

"40 *drachmae*. As I have said, no more."

The shopkeeper let out an exasperated sigh. "I can only come down to a single *mina*."

"You can do more than that, woman. You are the only person in town that sells Aconite powder." Demeas practically shouted the first sentence before reining himself in.

"Why do you need so much?"

"It is not your business to know." Again, Demeas struggled to contain his anger.

"Well then I cannot drop below a single *mina*. You understand, do you not?"

Melaeneus' hand settled on Demeas' shoulder. Demeas looked back to his brother. Their eyes both flashed gold. Demeas lowered his eyes quickly. He left the small shop to wait outside.

Melaeneus apologized for his brother and then continued bargaining. After several minutes Melaeneus walked out of the store, bag in hand. "Let us go home, brother."

"Yes alpha."

Nyctimus lay in bed with Apollo, cuddling. The god was saying sweet nothings into his ear as he helped him de-stress. The god kissed Nyk's neck every couple of seconds. "You are my whole world, Apollo," Nyctimus whispered truthfully.

Nyk maneuvered so that Apollo could kiss him and then initiated a deep, passionate one just as his brothers, Demeas and Melaeneus, walked into the room. As he came up for air, Apollo smiled and chuckled, "Enjoy the show, boys?"

They all chuckled as Nyk flushed a bright red. Timidly Nyctimus greeted his brothers before rolling over in Apollo's grasp. He buried his head in Apollo's chest trying to hide his embarrassment. "Care to explain why you smell like you have stressed out all day? Is it tomorrow? Nyk, we will change back." Demeas stated plainly.

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“Know that your brother speaks the truth, my love.” Apollo assured. The god lifted up Nyk’s head to kiss him on the lips once more. “You have nothing to be embarrassed about; they’ve known for a while. They care not.”

“It is not that, Apollo. I just feel sometimes that you like to joke with them too much. I worry where you draw the line. By the Twelve, I am worrying about everything it seems like.”

Melaeneus looked at Demeas, who smirked in response. Melaeneus’ smile grew. His eyes sparkled with mischief as he and Demeas transformed into their half-wolf, half-man form. Mel started a howl from deep within himself. It was low, ethereal, and as always lonesome. Rather unfitting of what they had planned, but it was required for summoning the rest of the brothers from their errands. Within seconds Demeas joined his alpha in the same howl. For around five minutes the howls lasted before the two wolf-men ended them. Their ears were perked, waiting for a response.

“What are you doing, you two?” Nyctimus asked them.

“You need not know brother,” Melaeneus replied showing for the first time in this long journey of reunion a smile. The toothy expression lent an added layer of discomfort for the youngest brother.

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Phineus and Harpalykos were in the *agora*<sup>^</sup>\*\*\* looking for something to gift their youngest brother, Nyctimus. After all it is through his relationship with the god, Apollo that they were united and given the gift that was their current form. He deserved something special in response to his gift to them and they were going to show him. At least that was what Melaeneus, their newly-appointed alpha, told them. The Athenian *agora* was marvelous to behold. It was a large paved plaza where all manner of merchants sold their wares. The smells of cooking, exotic foods met the noses of the two *proto-lykánthropous*<sup>^</sup>\*\*\*. Those aromas were not alone however, the odorous, musky smells of the hundreds of Athenians that inhabited the packed mercantile plaza as well as the fruity, smell of wine, and the distinct smell of woolen fabrics assaulted them.

The two proto-werewolves were haggling a price with one of the merchants on some trinket or other that Melaeneus had suggested for their brother when they heard a very distant howl. Harpalykos looked at Phineus. Then they looked at the merchant. They dropped their *drachmae* and left.

As soon as they were beyond city lines they let up howls of their own. Instantly they changed and started running towards the house.

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Nyctimus heard twenty-four howls let up in the distance. Again he looked nervously at Melaeneus and Demeas. They both sported lupine, knowing grins. "Tell me what is happening, brothers. I would like to know."

"It is something that you will learn very soon." Melaeneus replied with a flicker of mischief underlying his tone.

"You are rolling into your old routines, brothers. I do not like it. Please will you tell me what you are planning?" Nyctimus now pleaded with his brothers truly fearing for his wellbeing.

"Nyctimus, we want you to see the full moon as a time for celebration and elation not worry and fear. That is what we see it as, and it is what you should see it as, as well." Demeas consoled his youngest brother.

"That doesn't answer my...wait a *symposion*^****? Really? Tonight?"

"Yes. Of course. That is perfect. We have all been working hard over the last week in order to get what money we could to celebrate for you."

"That sounds wonderful, love. They really are just hoping to show how much they appreciate what you have done for them." Apollo interjected.

"Alright, Alright." Nyctimus relented. He reached up and kissed Apollo. "Let us move to the bedroom, Apollo."

The brothers came in fairly soon after Nyctimus and Apollo retreated to the bedroom. Each of them had picked up supplies for their youngest brother. Supplies that were dictated to them by Lysaea. Supplies that were necessary for the following night. Tomorrow night came with a lot of unknowns and they wanted to be prepared for any possibility. A few of the items that they had purchased were also gifts; little trinkets to show Nyctimus their appreciation for what he'd already done for the pack.

Melaeneus appraised the collection of herbs, unnoticeable spices and small trinkets which they acquired for their brother. "Is everything here, brother?" He asked Demeas.

Demeas looked from the pile to his brother with an expression of finality upon his half wolfish visage. "Yes, Alpha. Tomorrow we will show Zeus the glory of Lycaon's *reformed* children!"

Melaeneus nodded and made an affirmative noise in his throat before turning to his brother and gripped his shoulder to show how proud he was, "Well done, brother. Well done, *all* of you. Tomorrow will go much more smoothly because of the work that you have done today. Right now our brother is
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being given a quick tutorial on the Staff of the Wolven Shepherd. Hephaestus' gift to our family and our kind. Let us have tonight to celebrate our brother and his connection with Olympus. That which has saved us all may be given glory tonight."

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"So now, Nyk, all there is to do is practice concentrating upon what you want to do and the staff will do it if it is within its capabilities." Apollo Instructed Nyctimus, "With this staff, you practically have the power of a lesser god. Now take the stance I showed you. We are going to practice your defensive magicks."

Nyctimus took his stance as his lover brought forth in his hands his Bow. As Apollo drew his first arrow Nyctimus concentrated hard to erect a barrier that could withstand Apollo's Arrows. As he did so he saw the air in front of him shimmer and before he knew it in front of him was a solid stone wall that wasn't there before.

A muffled sound of approval reached Nyk from the other side of the wall. However, the wall flickered a moment later and disappeared just as an arrow shot into the other side of the room. Nyctimus ducked just in time for the arrow to whiz over his head and singe his hair. Soon the wall was on fire and Nyctimus was about to scream. In an instant the fire disappeared and in its place stood a perfect wall of wooden panels.

Apollo approached the dumbstruck Nyctimus from behind and grasped his shoulder. Nyk jumped slightly in response. "You need to keep your concentration up as long as you want the object which you are creating to stay in existence." Apollo chuckled.

"That arrow could have killed me, Apollo." *\*And the entire family, too\** Nyk berated Apollo. His only response was another chuckle.

"It would have passed right through you, my love." Apollo assured his young lover.

"Exactly! And I would have been consumed by flame."

"No, that's not what I meant. I mean that it would have done you no harm."

"How can you be so sure, Apollo?"

"Because, they are my arrows. I would have extinguished it before it caused you any real harm."

Nyctimus sighed, "I hope that is the truth."

"No more of this, Nyk. We still have much to do before tomorrow evening."

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“Is this right, Alpha?” One of Melaeneus’ brothers presented him a small novelty item that he had been assigned to buy as a gift for Nyctimus.

“It is, my brother. Now go put it with the other treasures for our brother.” Melaeneus replied. The pavilion in which the family had celebrated their reunion still existed and as such Mel and his charges were preparing a *symposion* for their brother inside of it. It was the perfect size the family needed to celebrate in such a way.

With the moon the next day being full, Melaeneus allowed his brothers to allow themselves to show their wolf as much as they currently could. It was only natural that they should want to portray that side of themselves this close to the full moon. There was much chatter as the wolf-men were preparing the feast for their brother.

As Lysaea had instructed Melaeneus when she spoke to them earlier that morning, Demeas was going around to everyone and pricking their fingers with the tip of his old spearhead. A relic from their father’s past. Everyone’s wounds healed inhumanly quickly. So it wasn’t that painful of an experience. As the cup with which Demeas gathered their blood came to Melaeneus, Demeas looked at his brother’s chin and asked, “Alpha, may I?”

The wolf-man held out his handpaw and Demeas gingerly cut the tip of his Index finger. Once he had removed the cup from under his brother’s finger he put the cup of blood at the head of the table. The group of males held their collective breath as Nyctimus came out of the house.

He was wearing a brand new *himation*[#] that was a sea green in color with rose gold filigree accents along the border. His hair had been shaved short and the smell of burnt hair assaulted all of their noses as Nyctimus walked into the pavilion. He walked with Hephaestus’ Shepherd’s crook in one hand and held Apollo’s hand in the other. He walked up to the head table where the chalice—one of the items the brother’s had picked up in the city—sat. He looked at its contents and then to his brothers. He cleared his throat not once, but three times before he spoke.

“Tomorrow is a new adventure for all of us. This evening I take upon myself a title which I feel I do not quite deserve. Tonight I take upon myself the title of the Shepherd of Wolves. I sit before this cup and I see that each of you has given a part of himself in order that I may truly understand the burden which I am about to bear. I will bear it to the best of my ability and will do so as long as I may live.

“Tonight we celebrate the eve before the full moon. Tonight we celebrate what we have become as a family. Tonight we celebrate the gods’ gifts to us. Tonight we share in the glory of our reformation!” Nyctimus paused here as his brothers howled in agreement.

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"I take it upon myself tonight to protect you from all harm. To do so to the best of my ability and I establish the position of Shepherd of wolves. I will not be your only shepherd and I surely will not be your last. You as a species are just starting out and I will not let you die out so quickly. As it is obvious that the people of Greece see you as a threat and therefore we must do our best to hide you. Tomorrow will make that more difficult. As Zeus reminds us of our curse and Artemis grants us her gift of strength we must remember that we do not know much of this curse and if it can be spread to others. So I implore you all be careful tomorrow night. I do not want to have to deal with explaining to the Athenian council why there is an increase in death in their city. So please try as hard as you can to stay within the mountains and their forests."

Here Nyctimus used his knowledge of alchemy and magicks and took a small drawstring bag from his satchel and opened it up. He poured the contents of it into the cup of blood. He then reached down to grab some of the gravelly dirt from the ground around him and poured that into the cup. As he did so Apollo came up to him and handed him a large glowing bronze pestle. Using the cup as his mortar Nyctimus ground the mixture until it was the consistency of clay. Then he turned to the god and said, "Will you do the honors, God of the Sun?"

"I will, my love." Apollo grabbed the cup and dipped his finger in the mixture. He drew a symbol looking much like the letter 'ch<sup>#</sup>' and half a crescent moon drawn into the top half of the crossing lines. "This symbol I draw now is the symbol one must draw when they have been assigned shepherd and they have failed their duties. This is also a promise to not do so again. Memorize it well young shepherd. For it is this mark which you must use upon every full moon. This mark I give to you, Nyctimus because you have failed more than half of your brothers. Half of your family is dead. You have failed them. And I know for a fact you will not do so again."

Nyctimus nodded. "I ask you, now Nyctimus, First Shepherd of Lycaon, to repeat the oath which you gave to Melaeneus upon taking the role of Redeemer."

"And with solemn Heart  
I swear to protect and keep  
My family no longer apart  
In human form again shall weep.  
"Love of a brother, love of family  
To those in wolf's clothing shall I give,  
With honor and truth I take this duty

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And I will die that they may live.”

Nyctimus finished his oath and Apollo looked pleased. “Now tap The Lycaonid Shepherd’s Crook three times. This will seal the oath within you.”

Nyctimus did as he was told. He tapped the butt of the shepherd’s crook on the ground three times. Upon the third strike the sound reverberated throughout the valley in which they stood and the symbol upon Nyctimus’ forehead started glowing a deep ominous sapphire blue. The floor upon which his brothers stood, also began to glow. But instead of the symbol, the words of Nyctimus’ oath seared themselves into the floor of the pavilion. “Whoa!” Was all the group could say.

“Nyctimus, son of Lycaon, lover of Apollo, I give you yet another title! Take upon you the title of Shepherd of Lycaon. May it be a mark of honor not of shame.” Apollo finished, before whispering in Nyctimus’ ear, “Do not forget these proceedings. You will not be the only Shepherd of Lycaon. Nor will your brothers be the only wolf-men.”

Nyctimus nodded his head. Then he looked to his brothers and shouted, “Let us begin the *symposion*.”

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