

## Lupinia

### Chapter 2: History

Felix J. Lockhart

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The rest of the weekend seemed to pass instantaneously for Thaddeus. His brief adventure in Lupinia consumed his concentration, and Monday couldn't arrive fast enough. He made arrangements to skip class that day, claiming he'd caught the flu while camping, and loaded up the truck almost a full day early. While packing, something made the hairs on the back of his neck stand up, like someone was watching him. He glanced around, trying to look as casual as possible, and out of the corner of his eye he spotted his observer: A small white wolf, almost entirely hidden by the bushes. Thad knelt down behind the truck and faced the wolf, wondering if it was one of the Lupinians. The wolf stared right back, standing on all fours, nearly passing for a feral canine, though its almost-human eyes gave it away. Thad started to slowly approach it, but it ran away as soon as he moved, disappearing into the woods.

On Monday morning, Thad headed up the mountain, this time with a GPS receiver to plot his course, and after some wrong turns down dead-end trails, he finally made it back to the clearing where the Lupinian capitol was hidden. He made his way down the steep foot trail, and waved his hand over the discarded beer bottle that opened the door before. However, unlike last time, no door appeared in the rocks. He tried it again, still nothing. Was he in the right place? He looked around, and out of the corner of his eye, he saw the same white wolf run through the bushes. It disappeared into the brush, and before Thad could go after it, the door appeared and rumbled open.

Once inside, Thad was greeted by the Lupinian Prime Minister, Sir Felix Lockhart. He smiled and bowed respectfully to the human. "Welcome back, Mr. Lovejoy. I hope your weekend went well."

Thad bowed and nodded "It was quite productive, though I think I was being followed by one of your residents."

The wolf laughed, "Ahh, you must mean Schnee, your new assistant. We wanted him to keep an eye on you and make sure you were safe. Schnee, come over here." He motioned to someone behind Thad, and the white wolf ran through the entrance on all fours. The nude white wolf then stood on its hind legs with the rest of the group and bowed. Felix gestured toward the snow-white canine, "Thad, this is Schneelocke, your administrative aide. He'll be available to lend a paw whenever you need something."

Thad bowed to Schnee and turned back to Felix. "So, you said I was supposed to be learning something today?"

Felix chuckled "Eager, are we? Alright, let's go talk to your instructor." He motioned for Thad and Schnee to follow him, then led the group to the central elevator shaft. Once inside the car, Felix hit the button for the second floor, and they rapidly descended nearly to the bottom of the underground facility. They left the car, and Felix led the other two to a door marked *Lupinia Royal University*. Thad looked around, noticing how similar this place was to his own campus.

The door led to what looked like a whole other building. It had a very modern design, with a large amount of open space, suspended walkways, and windows everywhere. Wait, windows? Underground? He looked closer, and the windows appeared to be some sort of hologram, projecting an illusion of the forest above, making the area appear to be out in the open and naturally lit. Felix noticed his confusion and smiled, "Just because we have fur doesn't mean we're behind the technology curve." Thad nodded and followed Felix through one of the side doors and into a hallway with offices. All the rooms were marked with names written in English and Russian, just like the rest of the doors he'd seen.

At the end of the hallway, Felix paused at a door on the left and knocked with the flat of his paw. Thad read the sign on the door:

Кјатар Тавишен  
History/Sorcery

Кжатар Тавишен  
История/Волшебство

After waiting a few seconds, Felix knocked again, and the door opened. A tall figure appeared on the other side wearing a dark cloak. The creature's muzzle was the only part visible in the shadow, a muzzle that strangely seemed to be covered in bright blue fur. The figure spoke, its deep voice rumbling through the hall. "Who dares disturb my work?"

Thad glanced nervously over at Felix, who was staring up at the tall figure, seeming more annoyed than uneasy. Felix replied, "I'm here with your student for the day, remember? And must you use the creepy mage routine every time I bring someone new into the building?"

The cloaked figure chuckled and removed its hood, revealing himself to be a 7' tall feline with bright blue fur. "Very well, come on in Thad, we've got a long day ahead of us." He motioned for Thad to come into his office, then looked back at Felix, "I'll call you when we're done."

Thad slowly walked into the office and looked around. The room was dimly lit, and filled with candles, old books, and other mysterious artifacts. He stood nervously near the wall, watching the door.

Schnee looked in and waved at Thad, "I'll be in the café if you need anything, Mr. Lovejoy". He wandered down the hall, happily wagging his tail. That professor always gave him the creeps. Maybe it was the blue fur. Or the fact that he was a cat. Schnee decided it was the latter. After all, the felines had destroyed their own nation, they obviously weren't to be trusted.

Felix followed Schnee back down the hall, then headed back out to the main facility to pick up his adopted son Skippy from preschool for lunch.

Kjatar closed the door and flipped on the lights. "Sorry if I scared ya, I like having fun with new students, and humans. You happened to be both." He smiled and bowed, "I'm professor Tavishen, or you can call me Kjatar."

Thad returned the bow and introduced himself, "I'm Thaddeus Lovejoy, the new Lupinian ambassador."

Kjatar led Thad to the back of the office and offered him a seat at a small circular table. "It's a pleasure to meet you, and I hope I give you what you need to know to do your job."

"Let's start at the beginning, shall we?" The blue feline opened a tattered notebook covered with hastily-written text and yellow highlighter. "In the early part of the first century AD, North America and northeastern Asia were populated by many races of sentient creatures. In addition to humans, there were also the Lupines, Felines, Vulpines, Ursines, and Rodents. Not quite human, not quite animal, these hybrid creatures kept to themselves for the most part. For a few centuries, they lived together as one nation, located in what humans call the Rocky Mountains. Collectively, they referred to themselves as Furres, and their nation flourished, with no interference from humans."

“After four hundred years of peace, there were constant disputes between species. No one could agree on anything, except that they felt the Lupines held too much of the power. So, there was a rebellion, and one by one, the tribes split into several nations spread throughout the continent.”

“This arrangement seemed to work for awhile, and gradually the native humans came to live in harmony with the fures. Some even believed that the fures were spirits to be worshiped. Unfortunately, the separation bred even more unrest, and war erupted between the nations.”

“The Felines soon experienced a food shortage due to overhunting by the Vulpines. The Felines attacked the Vulpines, and after a bloody battle, the Vulpines surrendered and begged the peaceful Lupines to take them in. The Lupines allowed the Vulpines to live with them, and the Felines took over the Vulpines’ land and food supplies. However, it wasn’t long before the rapidly-multiplying Felines outgrew their new territory and food supplies and decided to go after a new food source, the Rodents.”

“The Rodents had just won a battle against the Ursines for control over the fields of central North America, and were far too confident in their ability to fight. When the Felines came, they weren’t looking for fields, they were after meat. The Rodents didn’t stand a chance.”

“When the Lupines heard what happened to the Rodents, they were horrified, and began planning an attack on the Felines. Their opponents were ruthless, but the Lupines were calm and calculating, executing precise attacks on critical parts of the Feline society. Eventually, the Felines gave in, and they scattered, along with the Rodents, living alone or with small packs of their species.”

“Over the centuries, more humans started flooding into North America, and settling in the area claimed centuries ago by the Lupines, on the eastern coast of the continent. The inhabitants of the Lupine colony panicked, and elected to move to a new territory on the northwestern tip of the continent, in what is now Alaska. Their thick coats allowed them to live in the bitter cold region, and their brothers in northeastern Asia came across to form a large Lupine territory, and to protect the Slavic wolves from annihilation by the early Russians.”

“Three hundred years passed, and all was well. The humans didn’t even notice the bipedal wolves and foxes, and the Lupines flourished once again. Their new nation, Volkvladenie, was strong, and they could see no end to their empire. Then, the humans overstepped their bounds.”

“The humans seemed to multiply uncontrollably, and they pushed deeper into the territory of the Lupines. The bipedal wolves had traditionally lived in harmony with the feral wolves of ancient descent, but when the Lupines concentrated their numbers in Alaska, the feral wolves were left on their own in the human nation of America. When the wolves hunted for food in human settlements, the humans became protective of their excess food supplies and violently attacked and tortured the wolves, making the tactics of the Felines seem compassionate. Wolves were tied to posts, their muzzles wired shut, and left for dead.”

Thad nodded solemnly, having heard the stories of the great wolf hunts in the west.

“Volkvladenie’s governing council elected to send spies into the US in an attempt to assist the wolves. The strongest Lupines were chosen for this assignment, and they ventured into the territory of the feral wolves. Once there, the scattered Lupines taught the wolves everything they could about the humans, how to avoid their traps, how to sense their presence, and how to escape if caught. The Lupines returned to Alaska, and the wolves managed to stabilize their plummeting numbers for a time. The humans were baffled by this sudden surge of intelligence among the wolves they hunted, spawning many legends about the wolves. Unfortunately, the humans eventually got the upper hand, and the wolves were hunted nearly to extinction.”

"Thankfully, Volkvladenie had some friends in the human world, and those compassionate humans lead a strong campaign to get wolf hunting banned by the human government, and they helped protect the wolves as they repopulated their land. However, many residents of Volkvladenie felt that this wasn't enough, and wanted to re-establish their presence in their home territory. After weeks of debate, the council complied, and several dozen Lupine pioneers made their way into the US. They settled in the wilderness of the human state of West Virginia, chosen for its temperate climate and plentiful deer population, and they chartered a new nation, which they called Lupinia."

"The US government knows nothing of this nation, but they soon will. That's where you come in. The Lupinian council feels that instead of fighting the humans, we should attempt to attain peace through diplomacy."

Kjatar closed his notebook and smiled at Thad. "Well, that covers the last two thousand years of furre history, any questions?"

Thad scratched his head, glancing through a book that expanded on what he'd just been told. "Well, I guess the main question is where did you come from?"

Kjatar laughed and leaned back in his chair. "I knew you were going to ask that. Unfortunately, no one really knows. The prevailing theory is that the spirits wanted humans and animals to live more peacefully together, so They created a mixture of the two. Unfortunately, humans don't see things that way, and most of them who know about us either want to be us, or they want to see us slaughtered. There are so very few who can see us with neutral eyes." He smiled, "But, that sort of speculation is generally best left for religion, not history."

"If the Lupines destroyed the empire of the Felines, how did you end up living here, much less working as a teacher?" Thad asked.

"Well, the war was a very long time ago, and relations between tribes have healed greatly since then. When the settlers from Volkvladenie arrived, my great-grandparents were offered asylum in the new Lupine nation."

"What about the Rodents and Ursines? What happened to them?"

"The Ursine empire was completely obliterated by the Rodents early on in furre history. The few remaining Ursines have survived as nomads in the Rocky Mountains. The Rodents didn't fare quite so badly, and they mostly live in tribal communities in the Midwest, surviving as scavengers. The Felines were emancipated a few decades after being taken over by the Lupines, and they live with the Vulpines and Lupines in a symbiotic community. Volkvladenie is still thriving, and a few years after Lupinia's establishment, they declared it to be a sovereign nation. The two now represent an alliance of fures that spans the entire continent."

"I see. So, what sort of government structure does Lupinia have?"

"Lupinia is ruled by a council of nobles, with the Prime Minister as its leader. Each province has a representative to the Royal Council to represent the will of the citizens."

Thad smelled someone cooking dinner in the nearby cafeteria, and remembered the raw deer on Felix's table when he first arrived. "Do you all always eat raw meat?"

Kjatar licked his lips, smelling the meal too. "Well, we all have the ability to eat fresh prey without the health problems that humans get from it, and meat loses a lot of nutritional value when cooked, but some of us still prefer our meat dead and well-cooked. You'll be able to get a safe meal here, if that's what you're worried about."

“Well, I think that covers everything I wanted to know,” Thad’s stomach rumbled quietly, “how about some lunch now?”

Kjatar nodded and stood, “Sounds good to me, I’ll tell Felix to meet us in the cafeteria.” He picked up his phone and motioned for Thad to go on. “I’ll be there in a moment, it’s on the first floor and to the right.”

Thad followed the scent of food downstairs and halfway down the main hallway. The dining room was nearly empty, with only a few wolves scattered at various tables. He went up to the buffet and glanced around the deserted kitchen, figuring that it must be self-service. Grabbing a tray and a large plate, he looked over the steaming trays, looking for something familiar. He saw mouse, deer, pheasant, squirrel, and gopher, but no beef or chicken like he was used to, and almost no vegetables. He decided on a well-done deer steak and some mini pheasant drumsticks that looked and smelled remarkably like buffalo wings, and took a seat near the door and waited for Kjatar. The blue cat entered the room as he was sitting down, followed by Felix, Schnee, and a small fox riding on Felix’s shoulders. The group got their meals and gathered around Thad at the table.

Felix set little Skippy down on a booster seat and started cutting up some squirrel ribs for him. “So, any questions left unanswered?” Felix asked while tying a bib around Skippy’s neck.

“Well, I think Kjatar covered them all, though there is one more thing I’ve been wondering. How come so many of you go without clothes?” Thad asked while slicing through the tender steak.

“Heh, why should we have to wear clothes? We have fur, which covers up anything that’d need to be hidden. Clothing is merely a formality, and a fairly restrictive one.” Felix started on his own meal, keeping a close eye on Skippy.

The little fox giggled and gnawed on a squirrel rib. “I r’member you, you came into our house and daddy hit you on the head and I got to watch over ya and...”

Felix interrupted Skippy and patted his head, “Eat your food, little one, before it gets cold.” Skippy nodded and quickly stripped the rib bones of their meat, one after another, playfully wagging his tail and humming to himself.

Thad chuckled, watching the hyper fox kit. “He’s adorable, how old is he?”

Felix started to answer, but Skippy quickly held up a few paw digits and said “I’m four!” Thad laughed and instinctively petted the cub’s head, like a puppy. Skippy grinned and turned his attention back to his plate.

The rest of their meal was fairly quiet. Schnee took their plates to the return window, and Felix picked Skippy up and led the group out the door. Kjatar bowed to them and headed back to his office. “It was nice meeting you, Thad, if you need anything just give me a call.” Thad bowed to him and followed Felix to the main exit, with Schnee close behind.

Felix held Skippy on his shoulders and looked over at Thad, “I need to take this little guy back to his preschool class, then I’ll be in my office. If you need anything, just give me a ring. Schnee will show you to your new office.”

“Thanks for all your help today, and it was nice seeing you again Skippy.” Thad waved at the little cub and went out the door to the college, heading for the central elevator with Schnee silently following him. They rode to the top floor, and Schnee pointed to a door with the usual bilingual nameplate, stating Thad’s name, and his new job title, Royal Ambassador to the United States.

Schnee took a seat at a small desk and pointed to the door next to it, "Your office is back through there, Mr. Lovejoy. Just hit *Intercom* on your desk phone if you need anything." The white wolf bowed and started typing something on the large-key keyboard in front of him.

Thad went through the door into his private office, staring in awe at the furniture. Everything was made of finely-finished hardwood, and it all looked hand-made. The chair had a tag on the arm that read *100% Deer Skin*. He sat down, leaned back, and nearly fell asleep in what had to be the most comfortable chair he'd ever felt. On the desk, there was a government ID card with a holder that could be clipped to a pocket, a new stamp for his passport, and a beautiful leather briefcase containing letterhead notebooks, engraved fountain pens and mechanical pencils, and a brand-new laptop. Behind him was a bookcase decorated with intricate carvings, and stocked with books on Lupinian history, government, laws, customs, and a picture-filled book about wolf behavior and society. He fired up the computer on the desk and started checking out some websites, waiting for his first assignment, hoping that he wouldn't disappoint the Lupinians.