

## Chapter 14

A/N

NEW BOOK COVER!! What do you think?

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For all you lovely readers out there, here's a Jonathon chapter that's gonna give you all feels. The flu is real with this one as our two leads finally begin to have inkling of what it means to be mates with each other.

Tell me your thoughts!

Jonathon Lancaster

Finally.

Tearing myself away from my mate for a week right after I had just claimed her was torture. The mating pull punished me all week as I buried myself in my work. There was just so much to do. The generals and I finally had a better map of the Eastern borders, and that in turn entailed a lot more work. Strategies needed to be made, backup plans and routes needed to be written down.

Not to mention all the calls I've received from the late Alpha Theodore's pack.

But as Friday evening rolled around, I was finally done with work. I did a lot more than was required since I insisted that I take the weekend off to spend with my mate. Next week, my workload would be considerably lighter and I could finally show her the real duties meant for the crown princess.

She must hate me right now, even more than she already probably does.

It was around 10 in the evening; she's probably already asleep. I didn't get to eat dinner because I was so excited to see Serena. I could not wait to curl up next to her and sleep in—just spend the weekend with her. I felt guilty for neglecting her, but I was confident that my mother, Patrick, and her new maid and guard were able to keep her in good company.

I went inside our room and went straight to the bathroom, not caring to turn on the lights in case she was already asleep. I forced myself to get used to washing my hands every time I entered the room—I wanted to be conscientious of my mate's preferences. I smiled as I looked around the bathroom. The shelf by the bathtub that used to house just one black bottle was now filled with loofas; green and blue shampoo bottles, and other female necessities that belonged to my mate.

Remembering her annoyance at me wearing my outside clothes to bed, I quickly changed into a shirt and sweatpants. Usually, I slept shirtless but I needed to be thoughtful for my mate—she wouldn't be comfortable if I did that. Her scent alone told me she had not yet been intimate with a man. I blinked when I saw her side of the closet—I was still unused to having female clothes in my room. Her things around our room would take a lot of getting used to.

I made my way towards the bed and my fists immediately clenched when I saw that it was empty. I resisted the urge to growl as I frantically looked around the room. I breathed a sigh of relief when I saw her resting against the window with her knees hugged close to her chest.

I swallowed thickly. She looked like she was having a good rest, but I knew I had to transfer her to the bed or her whole body would be aching.

I walked over to her, careful not to startle her sleeping form. Slowly, I put my arms around her. The moment I made contact, however, her eyes snapped open and she instinctively pushed me away. I raised my hands up and backed away, showing her I was not a threat.

She looked me in the eyes and I swear my heart dropped when I saw her expression.

She looked furious.

I decided to apologize.

"Sorry. I didn't mean to wake you, I was just going to carry you to the bed." I said. She scooted and turned away. I was baffled. Did I do something wrong?

"What...what is it?" I carefully asked.

"I'm okay sleeping here." She said, clearly mislead. My eyebrows furrowed.

"What? But our bed is over there. Your body will hurt if you sleep here." I said, confused.

"I'm sure you'll be okay with a few more hours without me." Serena said, turning her eyes to look at the moon above.

Oh.

I realized my mistake. There was no excuse for my abandoning her on her first week here. I had failed in my duty as a mate. Failure is a feeling I am not used to.

I had to fix this.

I gently walked over and knelt in front of her. She snapped her head and looked at me. Her eyes were filled with fury. Her red hair shone around her like a halo. I reached up and stroked her cheek with my thumb. She flinched at my touch.

"I apologize." I finally ground out. She blinked, surprised. "This is about me neglecting you, correct?"

She sighed and turned away. I lifted her legs and sat down on the chaise, putting her legs on top of my lap. I leaned my back against the window.

"Serena..." I started. She sighed and looked at me expectantly. "I don't know how to be a mate." I fessed up.

She tilted her head, confused.

"Me too. This is my first time mating, if you haven't noticed." She said, ferociously lacing her voice. I resisted the urge to chuckle.

"No. I mean...I don't...I'm not like Patrick...I don't know how to court a lady." I managed to stutter out.

I was surprised at how comfortable I was just telling her this. As it should be, after all, mates should tell each other everything. It was my duty to be honest to her.

I swear I could see a sliver of a smile when her lips twitched. She sighed and bit her lip.

"Jon, you brought me here...you're the only person here I know. When you didn't spend time with me all week, I felt lost. Your family and staff made me feel comfortable, yes, but you...I needed you." She finally said. I nodded understandingly.

"I'm sorry." I said. "I did not want to do that. There was just more work than usual to be done...but that's all done now. I'm taking the weekend off, and next week we'll spend more time together because you'll begin working with me." I said, trying to pacify her. She nodded.

"I'm also sorry about...everything else..." I whispered. She looked up and nodded.

"It's okay. I overreacted earlier." She relented.

"You're allowed to overreact." I said. I hesitated with my next words, but I knew they needed to be said. "I'm...scared, Serena. I don't get scared."

"What are you scared of?" She asked, leaning towards me.

"That I'd mess this up." I said, motioning to us. "I don't want to. I've never messed anything up in my life...at least, anything important."

"Patrick told me as much." She chuckled. I blinked.

"He's been telling you about me?" I asked, nervous about what Patrick could have said. I knew Patrick was mischievous, but he wouldn't do anything to mess up my mating, wouldn't he?

"Some things." She candidly said. "You're scared of messing our relationship up?"

"Yes. With war...I know war. I was born for war. I know strategy, fighting, and battle. I'm not going to be afraid when I charge that battlefield. But mating? I don't know anything. I'm going to make mistakes. You're going to have to keep forgiving me." I murmured.

I was surprised when she crawled over to me. I put my arm around her and she climbed onto my lap.

"I'm going to make mistakes too, Jon. I'm not...I didn't want a mate, at least not yet." She sighed.

Of course she didn't.

I felt guilt once more creep across me like a bad taste in my mouth.

"So why didn't you fight me?" I asked, genuinely curious about the answer.

"You just killed an alpha. There was no way I was getting into a fighting pit with you." She said, her voice light and teasing but I could sense the underlying truth in her statement.

She had been scared of me. I've never felt more disgusted at myself.

Silence followed. How could I make this better?

Maybe I could flatter her? It was what Patrick did when he flirted with ladies. No. I wasn't Patrick. The only thing to do was be honest with her.

"This whole week was torture without you. Before, I was always content being buried with work. But now...it's not enough." I said, breaking the silence.

"Well, everything's changing now." She sighed. I nodded in agreement.

"Will you forgive me?" I asked, nuzzling my nose in her hair. She giggled.

I was surprised at myself—I was never a physically affectionate person. But with her, it just felt so natural and instinctive.

"Only if you'll forgive me as well." She said, looking up at me. Her green eyes sparkled in the moonlight.

I couldn't resist. I cradled the back of her neck and leaned in to press my lips against hers. I could feel her breath hitch, she was shocked. I closed my eyes in ecstasy.

Kissing my mate felt right. I felt the bond between us glow and grow. Her lips were soft and pliant, tasted sweet like honey. I wanted more.

It took all of my control not to take more.

But she deserved better.

I pulled away reluctantly as she caught her breath. She detached herself from me and I let her.

"Sorry." I finally said. "I should have asked."

I kept myself for always doing a good job of not asking her. I just kept taking and taking from her.

"Don't apologize for that, please." She murmured. She looked flustered as she looked around the room, looking for something to distract her. I inwardly smirked at the effect our kiss had on her. It filled my animal instincts with pride to see my mate react favorably to my touch.

She struggled to speak. I stayed silent, I wanted her to feel comfortable.

"Umm...did you eat dinner?" She asked. I frowned.

"No. Did you?" I asked.

"I fell asleep by sunset." She sheepishly shrugged.

That wouldn't do. I needed to feed my mate.

"Come. We'll grab some leftovers and watch a movie in the study?" I asked, referring to the study adjacent to our room. I stood and offered her my hand. She took it.

Hand in hand, we walked towards the kitchen. She told me stories about what had transpired during her first week here. She told me about my mother's princess lessons, Patrick's antics, and how Darien and Caroline helped her find her way around the castle. I even smiled once or twice during our conversation, I was just pleased and content that my mate and I had made amends and that we had now passed what I knew to be a milestone in a relationship: a first kiss.

The spark had been ignited. Now that I knew what it was like to taste my mate, I wanted more.

The kitchens were empty when we got there, but thankfully there were some leftover pizza slices inside the fridge. I warmed them up in the microwave while Serena grabbed two bottles of juice and a tub of ice cream and put them inside a basket. I had the pizza slices in a hot plate on my hand and soon, we made our way back to the study.

I lit the electric fireplace and turned on the TV as Serena made herself comfortable under a blanket in the couch. I sat down beside her. The movie was some sort of action spy movie that had us both laughing at the beginning as we ate the food. But the feeling of my mate curled up in my lap was too amazing that by the middle of the movie, I just couldn't resist kissing her again.

So I did.

We spent the rest of the movie just kissing and cuddling, with her giggling occasionally and me releasing a few of my rare smiles. I kissed her freckled cheeks, her button nose, and her soft lips, and I just relished the feeling of holding her. I didn't dare try anything more sexual or intimate in nature—I was not a brute.

She rubbed her nose against my beard and giggled when it tickled.

"Do you want me to get rid of it?" I asked as I feathered my lips over the marks I had given her.

"No, it's okay. Just groom it well, please." She giggled, placing her hands on either side of my cheeks. I nodded, making a mental note to do as she said.

"I've tried to be less messy since you got here." I confessed. Again, she laughed. The sound was music to my ears.

"Yes. I've noticed. Thank you for thinking of me." She said, kissing me on the cheek.

"Of course. You're my mate." She didn't need to thank me for something I was duty-bound to do.

"Still, it's very thoughtful." She said. I couldn't resist the urge to smile. "There's that smile. Please don't keep it from me too much."

"I don't smile a lot." I confessed, pecking her on the brow. She chuckled.

"I figured. You have a lovely smile, Jon." She sighed, trailing her thumb over my lips.

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I blinked. I had never before thought of myself as an attractive person, but it pleased me to no end that my mate found me appealing.

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We fell asleep on the couch as the credits rolled. By then, we were too tired to transfer to the bed so I just adjusted our position. I turned so that she was perched on top of me, lying on my chest. I put my arms around her and she in turn wrapped the blanket around us.

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No other feeling could compare to this. In this moment, I did not think of the war, or the danger I put her in by making her my mate. I only thought of her, the scent of coconuts in her hair, and the softness of her skin.

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The sound of my beating heart lulled her to sleep.

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A/N

Our boy finally got a kiss!

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Hopefully this chapter provided you all with more insight to Jon as a person. Let me tell you, Jon and Serena have A LOT of work to do as a couple before they can call their a truly healthy relationship. Serena's a brat who doesn't realize the gravity of the situation she's in, and Jon has some serious control issues and a hero complex.

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The storyline with the war will be picking up shortly. I just need these two to start opening up to each other and then the real conflict can begin. Next chapter's pretty fluffy as well.

Please leave your comments and votes! I'd love to know what you all think so far!