

Chapter 3

A/N

Hey! Hope you guys like this story so far!

Serena Basco

The Pack Matron, Mrs. Haggis, is such a bitch.

No, she's a miserable old hag.

She actually told on us like we were a bunch of kindergarteners who had stolen some extra packets of juice. She told my father that my friends and I had not contributed any help in the preparations for The Claiming.

Well, she was right, but she didn't have to tell on us. Goddess knew we would have just messed shit up if we helped make paper maché cranes or whatever the hell she asked the other wolves to do.

My father, not wanting anything to do with me at all, let it up to Mrs. Haggis to punish us.

The punishment? We were now in charge of music for the celebratory dinner, which usually took place before The Claiming Ceremony. Since The Claiming could only start once the moon was up, dinner usually started at like four in the afternoon.

Most importantly, the dinner was where most eligible wolves mingled to see if they could meet suitable mates. A lot of wolves could claim that their love stories began during the dinner.

When Mrs. Haggis doled out the punishment, I could hear the other wolves sniggering—if we were in charge of music, that meant we couldn't do so much mingling.

I just bet the other she-wolves were happy. I could swear a lot of them saw me as a threat since I was probably the most eligible she-wolf for this year. Eligible my ass.

My friends and I tried not to look so happy.

If they wanted music, we'd give them music. I mean, my friends and I had pretty great voices—didn't I mention that we joined the human town's community theater productions? We also did a lot of karaoke.

Paolo knew how to play the piano, Melanie could play the guitar, and I could rock the stage with my tambourine—we could become a band if we wanted to.

Mrs. Haggis had just given us our first gig.

We all agreed to meet in the basement of the pack house to rehearse. That place had great acoustics, and no one would bother us since most of them were in the pack hall anyway helping to decorate.

They were already there waiting for me. I had gone into town to pick up some sheet music and some cupcakes for all of us.

I felt the grass crunching under my feet as I walked towards the pack house carrying a big box of cupcakes with a folder stuffed with sheet music on top of it. Already I could see and smell new faces—wolves from other packs who had come to join The Claiming. A lot of them were walking around, admiring the lovely fall foliage. Once in a while I'd encounter a few who'd gawk at my bracelet, even some males who openly leered at me.

I resisted the urge to run for the hills.

Taking the shortcut to the pack house, I walked through a small orchard of trees whose orange leaves were so lightly falling. That was when I heard a sweet, gentle laugh.

I stopped and turned to see Erica walking the path. Her arm was looped around a male wolf's.

Curiously, I took a few steps toward them and gasped. The gold bracelet in the male wolf's arm could only mean that he was Prince Jonathon.

My breath hitched as I registered the presence of the royal. I heard that he was quite a looker, but I was not prepared for how strikingly handsome he was. He was tall, very tall at around 6'4. He had a broad, angular face, a sharp jaw with stubble, and thick brows that framed his cold gray eyes. His hair was black, thick and curly—bunched tightly at the base of his neck. His frame was muscular, accentuated by his black leather jacket and his trunks of legs were encased in black jeans.

I swear my mouth watered.

He looked so serious, though. I could see him nod occasionally to something Erica said. I could see she was beginning to feel frustrated—it appeared he wasn't much of a talker even though Erica must've tried to charm him. She just kept on yapping about how the woods behind the pack house were very protected, and the trails were slightly dangerous.

If it weren't for the occasional slight nod, I would think Erica was talking to a statue.

Curiosity getting the better of me, and of course coupled with the desire to piss Erica off, I took a deep breath and confidently strolled over to them.

"Hey, cuz!" I chirruped in my brightest, happiest voice. I made sure to adjust my cardigan sleeve so that my golden bracelet would show. The prince tilted his head to look at me.

Erica's big brown eyes narrowed and her nostrils flared.

It took all of my self-control not to double down in laughter, but I didn't because I was holding cupcakes.

"Aren't you supposed to be making sure we have music for tomorrow?" Erica hissed.

"Yeah. I was just in town picking up some stuff we needed. So what's up?" I asked, smiling at her. Erica sighed.

"Prince Jonathon, this is Serena. Serena, the Prince is here for a meeting with the Alpha." Erica said. I flashed the prince a bright smile and gave a playful curtsy.

"Nice to meet you, your highness. How do you like Eastern Claw so far?" I asked. The Prince looked me in the eye and I swear I froze.

"Your terrain is very well-kept." He said, his husky voice betraying no emotion.

"Oh, it is. The trails over there are a bit uneven, though, so be careful." I said, placing the box of cupcakes in one arm so I could point with my other hand to the west.

The Prince's eyes flashed amber when he saw my bracelet, but it was gone as quickly as it had come. I let out a smirk of triumph.

"So you're the Alpha's daughter, the famous Gold Ranked female from Eastern Claw." Prince Jonathon calmly said. I could find no underlying tone in his voice—he was merely stating a fact.

"Ah, so you have heard of me." I demurely said, looking down. I glanced at Erica, who looked like she had swallowed a lemon.

"There hasn't been a Gold Ranked female in a while." Prince Jonathon said, his eyes boring into mine. "We could use you in the fight against the rogues."

Excusez-moi?

"Oh I don't know...I'm such a rare species as it is...don't wanna be endangered..." I joked, chuckling nervously. Prince Jonathon tilted his head at this, looking at me curiously.

"Serena tends to stay out of pack business." Erica said, causing Prince Jonathon's brows to furrow. I rolled my eyes.

"There's already too many people here as it is, I hate the attention." I explained. "I'm sure you understand, being a prince and all."

Prince Jonathon only nodded.

"So shall we carry on with the tour, your highness? I'm afraid my cousin has a lot more to do, we shouldn't keep her." Erica said. Prince Jonathon nodded.

"I will see you tomorrow at the ceremony, Serena. I've heard having Gold Ranked wolves in the roster always makes for an exciting Claiming." Prince Jonathon said before letting Erica lead him away.

That sounded like a threat.

I shook my head and walked over to the pack house. The whole place was silent—everyone was outside mingling with the visiting wolves, preparing for the ceremony, or just enjoying the perfect fall weather.

"Hey, what took you so long?" Jane asked, taking the box of cupcakes from me. I handed Paolo the sheet music and he began setting up by the piano.

"I saw Erica, and the Prince." I smirked. They all stopped and looked at me. They began to bombard me with questions.

"Calm down, calm down." I chuckled, sitting down on the couch.

"Is he hot?" Melanie asked, wagging her eyebrows. I closed my eyes, sighed, and nodded.

"Oh yeah. Smoking hot. Perfect, even." I said, licking my lips.

"Hotter than me?" Christopher asked. I threw a pillow at him.

"Aww Chris you know you're the prettiest wolf around." Melanie said, giving him a kiss on the cheek.

"What else did he say to you?" Paolo asked as he slid through the sheet music. Jane placed a cupcake beside him, causing him to blush.

"He saw my bracelet, told me I'd be useful in the war with the rogues." I said. They all looked at each other and suddenly started laughing.

"Wait, what are you gonna do? Dance to entertain the soldiers?" Christopher teased. I growled playfully at him.

"Come on, Christopher. She's going to be the official cheerleader of the army. Give me a W-O-L-F!" Melanie cried out. They all laughed.

"What if he really draws you to the army, Serena?" Paolo curiously asked, looking up from the sheet music.

"Wait, that could happen?" Jane asked, looking at me with concern.

I knew what they were all thinking. I wouldn't last two seconds. I was the kind of person who puked when they saw blood.

"Well, yeah, if war really comes. Serena's a Gold Rank, they're gonna require you to be there." Paolo said.

"Are you serious? So what happens when they find out Serena's a fairy princess who's into the make peace not war movement?" Christopher asked.

"I'm a what?" I asked. Since when was I a fairy princess? I mean, yeah, I abhorred the idea of war. Diplomacy and non-violent solutions should be prioritized, but werewolves were feral and animalistic—our species would not accept any solution that did not come from a violent fight.

Hello, need I remind anyone of how males claimed mates?

This even reflected in my fighting style. I was more of a defensive fighter than an offensive one. Whenever I trained and sparred, I always made sure to subdue and end the fights quickly. That's why none of the other wolves wanted to train with me—they liked the dance, the psychological satisfaction that came from a long fight.

I just didn't like fighting. I hated getting physical, I hated violence.

"I don't know. They could still force you to fight—a royal command." Paolo shrugged.

"Maybe I could cross the borders to Switzerland like Captain Von Trapp." I dryly said. "Besides, this is all the King's fault anyway!"

"I agree. I mean, we all read Lord of the Flies. Nothing would be ever going to come out of placing feral wolves in an unsupervised, harsh environment." Melanie shrugged.

"And now his son is going to fight his war." I sighed.

"Is there even going to be a war? Maybe everyone's just being dramatic." Jane rolled her eyes.

"The prince visiting isn't a good sign." Paolo said.

Silence followed.

"Guys, come on, thinking about this isn't going to get us anywhere. Let's just rehearse and get ready to blow everyone's socks off." Christopher said as he and Jane set up the drums.

A/N

Please let me know what you think! I'd love to hear your comments. Votes would be appreciated too!

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