

## Chapter 30

A/N

You guys have way too many feels it's amusing!

This chapter contains really dark, intense scenes. Proceed at your own risk.

WARNING: TRAGEDY AND LANGUAGE

Serena Lancaster

I sat still on the thick branch, my back leaning securely against the Oak tree's broad trunk. I hugged my knees close to my chest as I listened to the sound of the birds chirping.

I winced as my stomach clenched. I had been feeling out of the weather recently. Dizziness, stomachaches—maybe this was my body foreshadowing this tragedy. I laughed at the thought. I've been taking painkillers for the past few days and I wish I could just take some medication to make me forget this ever happened.

Some scientist needed to invent a forgetting pill, and fast.

I mused at the absurd thought as stared at the greenery. I looked at the ground below. There was a rabbit joyfully hopping, oblivious to the distraught she-wolf right above. I wish I could forget all the heartache currently gnawing at my chest.

As if I wasn't tormented enough by my unrequited love.

I knew Jon was telling the truth. Hell, his awkwardness with me during the initial days of our mating was proof enough that he didn't know shit about wooing girls. But I couldn't get the image of that woman rubbing Jon's shoulders as if they were inmates! Only I had the right to touch him like that.

Of all women, it had to be her! It had to be the most gorgeous woman to have ever walked the Earth.

"WHY, BABBIT, WHY?" I shouted. The rabbit stopped its pawing and looked up at me. Its scurried away. "Sorry, rabbit."

Maybe he could lead me to Wonderland and then I could get some of the Queen of Hearts' soldiers and o with her head to Nandi Zulu!

I can dream, can't I?

The walks to the forest had done wonders to clear my head. I knew I was being slightly irrational and overdramatic. Make no mistake, I believed Jon. Jon would never lie about something like this.

Plus, I had already marked him. My wolf would know if he was being unfaithful, the bond ensured that. So far, my wolf had only been whining in sorrow.

I sighed. Jon was probably going through agony right now. Thanks to our growing bond and our marks, I could get a sense of what he was feeling and it was creeping into my heart. I knew he would be wallowing in misery until I was back in his arms, so I decided to be the bigger person.

Wow, look at me being all mature.

But I needed girl talk. I needed to vent to another girl about that bitch Seeing as Jane and Melanie were miles away, I texted Caroline to meet me by the back entrance. She immediately agreed.

Feeling slightly dizzy from all the crying, I hopped out of the branch and landed unceremoniously on my feet. My stomach fluttered at the force of my landing, causing it to clench and sting. I put my hand over it, massaging it slightly until the pain was dulled. Again, a bout of dizziness came over me due to the dehydration my tears had caused.

I needed to get some water in me, so I texted Caroline to please bring some.

I quickly made my way back to the palace, smiling as Caroline waved at me cheerfully. She handed me a bottle of water and I eagerly drank. The liquid seemed to wash some of the negativity away.

"Are you gonna tell me what happened?" Caroline asked, handing me a baby wipe. I hastily wiped the tearstains away from my cheeks.

"Jon..." I sighed. Caroline chuckled as we made our way towards one of the private dining areas. Thankfully, no one else was there.

"Yeah, I heard."

"Yeah. Apparently you two were shouting in the halls, and that Captain woman came out of his office looking quite embarrassed."

"Captain Zulu!" hissed. "She was being touchy-feely with Jon. I caught her trying to massage him."

"And the prince allowed it?" Caroline asked, horrified.

"No! Goddess no. He told me he tried to push her away." I shrugged.

"I bet," Caroline sighed.

"I don't know. I'm just pissed. I want to forget I ever saw what I saw but it's...hard." I said.

"I understand." Caroline comfortingly said.

"Just when things are going great with Jon, I mean, for Goddess sakes I just realized I loved him and..."

"GODDESS!"

"What?"

"You love him?" She cried, sighing, closing my eyes and putting my head in my hands.

"I know. Goddess I'm in deep shit." I sighed.

"Does he know?" Caroline demanded.

"No. I was waiting for the right time." I said.

"When will that be?" Caroline excitedly asked.

"When it's the right time."

Caroline sighed and smiled at me knowingly. Suddenly, her eyes brightened and she straightened up.

"You know, in times like these, I like to spoil myself with ice cream and chips. Do you want to?" Caroline asked, clapping her hands in joy.

"Sure, why not." I said.

Caroline chatted with me as we walked through the halls. We were about to enter the kitchen when I felt a sharp, stabbing pain in my stomach and abdomen.

"ARGH!" I shouted, clutching myself. The people around us turned to look, concerned as I bent down and held on to Caroline's arm.

"Serena, what's wrong?"

"I DON'T...ARGH!" I cried as I stumbled. Caroline held on to me and she called for Darien.

Suddenly, I felt something sticky oozing down between my legs. I clutched my abdomen, the pain intensifying like I was being slashed at. Was I having my period? Sometimes I was irregular, and of course I experienced menstrual cramps but nothing like this.

What was happening?

"I think...I'm hemorrhaging! I need! OH GODDESS!" I groaned, as the pain seemed to double. Darien swiftly put his arms around me and carried me.

"SOMEONE GET THE PRINCE! Caroline, come with me!" Darien shouted. I felt dizzy and tortured as Darien raced through the halls with me in his arms. Caroline followed, trying to keep up.

"THE PRINCESS IS BLEEDING!" Darien shouted as he bounded into the infirmary. Immediately, healers surrounded me and Darien gently placed me in a wheeled hospital bed.

"Jonathon...where's Jon?" I cried.

"He's on his way, princess!" Darien called as female healers wheeled me inside a private room.

I was flitting in an out of consciousness as the female healer tore my dress o leaving me naked. I heard her swear as she barked some orders. I couldn't hear her properly. Suddenly, I felt her warm, gloved hands gently touching and wiping my genital area. I winced in pain.

"Doctor...what's happening to me?" I asked, my head feeling heavy.

"Where is Jonathon?"

"Stay still, Princess." The healer ordered. She whispered something to a nurse who hastily exited. Then, she helped me sit up and forced me to drink a cup of orange liquid. "Drink this."

I eagerly drank it, resisting the urge to spit it out due to its bitter flavor. The doctor continued to examine me, touching me down below and gently prodding my stomach. The pain eventually subsided, leaving only a stinging feeling and another bout of dizziness. The doctor wrote some things down on a piece of paper and made me drink another liquid, this time a green colored one that tasted earthy.

"She's stopped bleeding." The healer said to another nurse, relieved. A nurse then entered carrying a clean wet rag and a basin of water. The healer gently lifted me up and transferred me to a clean bed.

She whispered something to the nurse and she stripped the bed, taking the bloody sheets away. The healer then began to wipe me clean down there before carefully placing me in a hospital gown.

"Where does it hurt, Princess?" She asked.

"My stomach, and down there it still stings but not as much anymore." I replied, my breath ragged due to the pain.

She took a piece of white cloth and soaked it in this blue liquid. Then, she placed it on my stomach. I felt a little bit of relief, but the stinging would just not disappear.

"Princess, I'm going to need you to lean back..." The healer said, but she was interrupted by a banging outside.

"WHERE IS SHE?"

I recognized Jon's voice. I heard him create a commotion as he made his way to me. The door was slammed open and I saw Jon, looking furious and something else—scared. When he saw me, his eyes softened but they hardened again when he saw the state I was in. Jon immediately rushed to my side. He gently stroked my face.

"Serena...what...?" Jon tried to tell me so that he could gather me in an embrace, causing the rag on my stomach to slip and the pain to return.

"Arggh! Jon...don't..." I said. Jon hastily and gently released me, looking confused.

"She needs to stay still, Prince Jonathon." The healer said.

"WHAT HAPPENED TO HER?" The rage was back. He snarled at the healer. I touched his arm.

"Jon...calm down..."

"CALM DOWN! How the hell can I calm down when I was called out of a meeting saying my mate was BLEEDING and in the INFIRMARY? He roared, causing the healer to flinch, but she did not falter. "TELL ME WHAT HAPPENED TO HER!"

"THE PRINCESS IS FINE NOW, Prince Jonathon, but I need to ask her some questions before I can tell you exactly what happened..." The healer said, unfazed by Jon's reaction.

"FINE? SHE DOESN'T LOOK FINE!" Jon roared.

"Jon!" I implored.

"Her body is healing—just bed rest for two days tops. Now I need to ask the princess some questions. Let me do my job to help the her, your highness." The healer pointedly said.

Jon glared at her, and then looked at me. He gave me a kiss on the forehead before sitting on a chair beside my bed and holding my hand gently.

"Princess Serena, when was the last time you menstruated?" The healer asked. I bit my lip.

"I don't know...I'm irregular...I'd say a month ago?" I said. The healer took down some notes.

"And the frequency of sexual intercourse?" The healer asked. I blushed to my roots and Jon growled.

"WHAT THE FUCK DOES THAT HAVE TO DO WITH ANYTHING?" Jon shouted, his stance defensive as he put an arm around me. I hissed in pain, causing him to recoil.

"Jon, please!" I pleaded, looking at the doctor apologetically but again, she was unafraid. "I'd say four times a week! I don't know."

"It's more than that." Jon grumbled under his breath.

Oh grow up.

"Protection?" She asked.

Jon and I looked at each other, and a flash of guilt stormed his face. To be honest, we never really thought about that.

"No." I whispered. The doctor nodded.

"And have you been experiencing dizziness, shortness of breath, and nausea lately?" She asked.

"Dizziness and stomachaches only, sometimes headaches." I said.

"Why didn't you tell me this?" Jon demanded.

"I thought it was nothing..."

"Well apparently it isn't..."

"Jon can we not do this now!" I demanded. I looked at the doctor, silently telling her to continue.

"Medication?" She asked.

"Painkillers. For the past few days." I said.

The doctor nodded and took down more notes. Finally, I couldn't take it anymore. I cleared my throat and looked at the doctor.

"What...what...what happened to me?" I stammered. I was afraid of the answer.

She looked at me, and then Jon. Her eyes flitted and she looked down, her face contorted in anguish. She gulped and took a deep breath.

"Tell us..." Jon ordered.

"The princess..." She began. "The princess had a miscarriage."

Don't break.

At that moment, my world stood still. It felt like a freeze was taking over my heart. Blood slowly left my face as I paled. My hand fell from Jon's and my mouth hung open.

"What?" Jon asked, his voice cold and unforgiving.

"She was around two to three weeks pregnant." The doctor said, looking at us sorrowfully.

"I was pregnant?" I brokenly asked.

"How is that possible? Her scent hasn't changed!" Jon indignantly asked.

"A she-wolf's scent only changes a few times a month." She said.

I knew as I had cried enough already today.

Don't break.

"I can assure you, Princess, that this is not an uncommon occurrence. You should be healthy enough to carry a child to term in the future."

Well truth be told, Jon and I never broached the subject of kids. I knew we would eventually have to have a Lancaster heir, but with the war coming—it just wasn't the right time and we both knew it so we never talked about it. We didn't even think about protection—we were two young hormonal adults and we were irresponsible. Why didn't we think of it? Were we so preoccupied with other matters that it just magically slipped our minds?

Would I even be a good mother? I knew, however, that Jon had good father written all over him. Were we ready to be parents? Was this the Goddess's way of punishing us for our unconventional mating?

Why, Goddess?

"What caused this?" Jon asked, his eyes betraying no emotion.

"There is no cause...none. The pregnancy was still in its early stages, so it would be difficult to determine an exact cause and in cases like this...there's mostly none." The healer said. I could tell she was having a hard time saying all of this.

I thought about her words and suddenly, I remembered the painkillers, and me jumping carelessly o the tree. I remembered my distress seeing Jon and that woman! Did all of that contribute to the miscarriage? I had already been experiencing it for the past few days—I should have known something was wrong. I should have monitored myself more carefully.

I killed Jon's baby.

"It's my fault..." I whispered. It wasn't a question.

Jon's hackles rose and he roared, causing the healer to flinch. I ignored it; I was too numb from the realization of my wrongdoing. Jon immediately crouched down to press his forehead against mine.

"Serena...sweetheart...listen to me...this is not your fault. No. If it's anyone's fault it's mine. I should have noticed something was different. I should have been more attentive. I should have...Serena...please...no...this is not your fault...I need you to get that thought out of your head." He murmured frustatedly.

I felt drops of water on my cheeks. I realized it was his tears falling onto my face. I looked up at him.

"But it is. I jumped from a tree, and took painkillers. I disregarded the stomachaches..." I trailed o. Jon growled, pressing his nose into my cheek. I put my hand on his chest, silently asking him to pull away.

Jon exhaled harshly and stood up.

"Please...give us some privacy." He said through gritted teeth. "Tell my family outside what happened, but don't let them in. I need to be alone with my mate."

The healer hastily nodded.

"I...uhh...the blood was on the princess's dress, and the sheets. Whatever remains there are, I'll have collected." The healer said. Jon nodded.

"Thank you." Jon stammered.

The healer made to leave, but stopped.

"There really is no one to blame here, please believe me." She began. "The...the whole palace mourns with you both, Prince Jonathon and Princess Serena. I...I know the Goddess will bless your union with pups in the future." With that, she exited.

Once the door was shut, I slumped down and closed my eyes. I felt exhausted, pained, and worst of all, ashamed. There was a baby inside of me, a baby that Jon and I had made. With every breath I took, emptiness crept up on my heart.

"I've already cried rivers of tears today, Jon. I hate that I can't seem to cry for our pup...I'm so...I feel so...so hollow." I whispered.

Hollow, empty, unworthy.

Jon was silent, grabbing onto my hand and holding it to his face. I felt his tears dampen my knuckles. He was looking deep into space, lost in thought. But I knew he was listening. Jon always listened.

"I never even knew our pup was there...and yet...I miss him...something's different...I'm sure...I took a deep breath, I must have looked dead."

Because that's exactly how I felt. If they decided to bury me right here and now I would let them. Jon cleared his throat and gave my hand a tender kiss.

"Serena..." Jon said.

"No...I'm sorry, Jon. I'm sorry." I brokenly said. "That was our... and now he's gone because...because of me...I'm so sorry..."

"Serena...this is not your fault. This is...please...don't blame yourself! The time wasn't right for a baby, Serena!" Jon growled.

"Then why did the Goddess bless us with one? The did, Jon! I just didn't care for it!" I cried out.

"We, Serena. That baby was...is ours. This is not your fault. I need you to...believe me, Serena."

"I want us to have babies, Jon. You know that, right? You know I would never...Jon...I didn't mean for this to happen."

"I know...sweetheart...you want babies? I'll give you dozens of babies...as much as you want. We're going to have children, Serena. Just not this one...but you..." Jon murmured.

"Jon..."

"No, Serena...you have to know...when they told me you were hurt...my world stopped. I was scared...I told you I never feel scared, right? I've never been more frightened in my life. I was afraid something had happened to you and I was helpless. I don't know what I would do if I lost you, Serena. Your uncle told me about your mother and I can't...I won't be able to live if anything happened. I ran here, practically destroying everything in my path just so I could get to you. You have no idea...the scenarios running through my head. All I could think of was you, and how angry you were, and I needed to be with you...Serena...I can't lose you." Jon said, his voice hoarse and tears streaming down his eyes.

I wiped Jon's tears with my hand, looking at him. I focused on my feelings for him—my love, care, and devotion, and I tried to channel it through my mark on him. He had to know that I felt exactly the same way about him.

"Jon...I have to tell you something..." I murmured, but he interrupted me by giving me a bruising kiss on the lips. He broke the kiss, hovering his lips above mine.

"Serena...there will be other pups...but there will never be another you..." Jon whispered, his voice breaking. "I love you."

Goddess...

He loved me? Jon loved me?

For the second time today, everything stopped. Suddenly, I felt warm—I didn't realize how cold I was until the color rushed away from my cheeks. Slowly, very slowly, the sorrow seemed to creep away and was slowly being replaced by an unfamiliar kind of flutter.

Jon loved me, and I loved him.

"What?"

"I'm sorry it took so long for me to say...I was just waiting for the right moment...and this...well, it wasn't what I imagined but I had to let you know. I do love you, Serena, so much...more than you could ever know..." He said, his hand stroking my cheek.

Goddess, perhaps we were more alike than we initially thought.

I realize you may not feel... He began, but I put my palm over his mouth and sighed.

"Jon, I love you too. I only wish I could have confessed it under better circumstances. Do you remember...the night of the festival, I realized then and there how much I'd fallen for you." I said. Jon looked at me for a moment, before laughing hoarsely.

"Oh Serena..." He exhaled, smiling as he rained kisses on my face. I giggled, pushing him away gently so I could speak. I still was still stinging physically and emotionally, but somehow, I felt myself healing albeit slowly and painfully.

There was silence. I began to contemplate on how this tragedy finally caused Jon and I to face up. Maybe Jon was right; the time wasn't right for a pup. War was coming—which meant, that perhaps the world needed more love.

"This was our baby's girl, Jon. He gave us love..." I murmured, running a hand over my still stinging stomach.

"I love you so much, Serena. I love you, and I'm going to love every child we have, including this one..." Jon hoarsely said.

We both kept quiet, feeling the heaviness in the room slowly give way. Suddenly, Jon cleared his throat and looked at me. For a moment, I was stunned by the look in his eyes. There held so much intensity in them that I didn't know how to react.

I looked at him. I knew he wanted to say something so I nodded and motioned for him to speak.

"I want us to give him a name, Serena." Jon said.

"Huh?"

"A name. Our baby...this baby...let's give him a name."

"Him?"

"You were the one who said it first...so yeah, he's a boy...a Prince." He proudly said, his eyes still brimming with tears. I nodded in agreement. I think it would help us say goodbye to him.

"I like the idea." I acquiesced. "What name do you want to give your first pup?"

"A name for a prince...it has to be a name for a prince...something good and strong..."

Prince Hal. Prince Escalus. Prince Andrei Bolkonsky.

The Prince of Troy?

I looked at him, smiling. I knew just what to name our little one.

"Hector..."

I looked into Jon's sparkling eyes as I said it.

"Yes, Hector. The perfect son of Priam and Hecuba. A firstborn son turned general, like you...and he...he was gone before his time...just like the prince of Troy..."

Jon smiled, kissing me on the cheek.

"Hector." He said, wiping stray tears away from his face. "Perfect." I winced as I adjusted the cloth on my stomach. Jon helped me by putting it securely in place. He handed me a glass of water that I drank from eagerly.

"It'll take time for me to heal...physically, and emotionally. Goddess..." I whispered.

How am I going to recover from this?

"I'll be here with you every step of the way, Serena. My place is beside you, now until forever." Jon declared.

I gulped, still unaccustomed to such casual declaration of feelings. We had been bottling up our emotions from each other for so long. This would take some getting used to, but I looked forward to expressing my love for Jon every single day moving forward.

I licked my lips, suddenly remembering the wolf inside of me. My wolf had been silent throughout this whole ordeal. I knew she was awake, but she was just sitting still. I decided not to bother her—this was her pup too. She needed to mourn as well.

I love you.

"I love you, Jon. I love you, and I love Hector...I just...I want you to feel just how much I love you..." I said. I tried to focus on my emotions. I focused on Jon, his tenderness, his care, and the way he made me feel so wanted and loved. I channeled them through my marks so that it would reach him.

As I did this, my wolf stirred as if she felt the warmth of my love surrounding her as well.

Jon looked up, a calm settling over his face as tears again streak through his cheeks.

"And I love you, Serena. You're never going to be alone, ever." He said, leaning in to give me a tender kiss on the lips.

In that moment I had no doubt that in the end, we would survive.

A/N

So, I noticed a lot of you are confused over the name Serena gave their "baby", so I'm just going to explain down here the choice she made to help some of you understand:

Hector, as we all know, is the name of the eldest son of Priam and Hecuba, the King and Queen of Troy. He's a hero in Greek mythology, known by many as the exemplary prince, father, and husband who loved his country to the point that he valiantly led and fought a war that was caused by the folly of his brother. Due to the mess that was the Trojan war, he died in the hands of Achilles and tragically never became King.

So, onto why Serena named her "baby" Hector. Whether she realizes it or not, subconsciously, Serena knows that she is a princess in a patriarchal monarchy. As we all know from Henry VIII, no queen is ever really safe without an heir, and Serena instinctively knows this. She might be a modern woman in many ways, but her instincts are still wolf, and she's an educated Alpha's daughter that just never really got into pack life.

For many years in human history, monarchies and wealthy families always assume the male gender before the baby is born, simply because of our patriarchal society. Serena named the "baby" Hector plainly to make herself feel better—as a coping mechanism. She needs to believe that she's a princess capable of bearing strong heirs. She's insecure about her position mainly because of the circumstances that brought her to the palace. So, even if Hector died during the Trojan war, birthing him was still one considered one of Hecuba's victories because he turned out to be such a mighty warrior.

What is a more appropriate name for a prince gone before his time, a prince that never became King, than Hector?

Of course, this is also my own literary allusion to Jonathon fighting a war that he never caused, with Serena (and me) wanting to honour that.

Continue to next part