

Chapter 5

A/N

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Hi guys! I really wanna know what you think! Drop me a comment, vote, or whatever!

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Serena Basco

I saw him standing at the edges of the fighting pit, staring at the sunset. I grimaced, in a few hours there would be bloodshed inside that pit.

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He looked much more intimidating from the back. His broad shoulders looked so threatening, and the way he stood was so disciplined with perfect posture. I almost mistook him for a statue.

"Do you get fall foliage like this where you're from?" I asked, sidling up next to him. I was thankful I was wearing heels that made me a few inches taller. That way I wouldn't have to hurt my neck to talk to him.

He turned and nodded at me.

"Not as beautiful as this, Lightwing is not as high up in the mountains." He replied, referring to Lightwing Palace, residence of the royals.

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Silence followed. I just stared peacefully as the sun began to set, casting a pink orange glow over the sky.

"You're lucky, you know. You get to opt out of The Claiming." I said, taking a deep breath.

"The time's not right for a mate." He said, not looking at me. I nodded.

"I bet, I hear there's a war coming." I replied, smiling lightly at him. He shrugged.

"You don't want a mate?" He asked. I cocked an eyebrow at him.

"It's much more...complicated than that." I began. "Most of the wolves only want to claim me because of this." I said, waving my bracelet at him.

"I can understand why." He said. I frowned.

"And you think it's okay that girls have no choice in the matter?" I challenged. He gave a light chuckle but it did not reach his eyes.

"You have a choice. More than the other girls in there." He said, motioning to the fighting pit. It was floored with sand, and bordered with a red rope.

"I can understand why you'd think that." I said.

Silence.

"So how does it feel being here, seeing all these wolves choose a mate, and not being able to choose one yourself?" I asked, curious for his answer.

"I am always able to choose a mate." He said almost cryptically. I shrugged at this. If he wanted to be mysterious, that's his issue.

Besides, he wasn't going to choose a mate tonight. His parents would flip if he did. Choosing a new member of the royal family took precision, it needed to be thought out carefully. He couldn't just choose some random girl.

"Why are you out here? I thought you were singing." He said. I bit my lip and looked back at the pack hall.

"I needed some air. Too many wolves mingling and falling in love." I joked, rolling my eyes.

"Oh? You think some of them have already picked their mates?" He asked.

"Oh yeah. In fact, my friends and I have this betting pool. It's mostly with the Alphas and Betas. Wanna see?" I fished my phone out and opened the sheet that Paolo created. I gave it to him, and I smiled as he scrolled down the list.

"Beta Hansen with Calista Mayers?" Prince Jonathon asked.

"Uh-huh, that's my bet. I saw them making out in the park yesterday." I said, smiling triumphantly.

"Alpha Aiden with Priya Patel, daughter of Alpha Raj Patel." Prince Jonathon read.

"The boys bet on that. They think Alpha Aiden has a thing for Asians." I shrugged.

"Looks like you have everything covered. Where's my name, though?" Prince Jonathon asked. I frowned at him. Was he joking?

He looked serious; then again, that was his everyday look,

"Your name's not on the roster, you're not choosing a mate." I said, rolling my eyes.

"I'm a prince, my name doesn't need to be on the roster." Prince Jonathon calmly said.

Wait, did that mean what I think it meant?

Hold up.

"Besides, I had the pleasure of meeting some lovely females here." He said, looking directly at the mountain range behind the woods.

I gasped at that. His voice was serious. Wait, was he joking? Did he joke? He didn't seem the joking type judging from everything I've heard about him.

That could mean...

There was only one woman he had spent enough time with to be able to decide if she could be his mate.

Erica.

I let out a squeal.

One thousand dollars, here I come!

I gave a quick curtsy and took two steps back. "I'm sorry your highness, it was lovely chatting with you, but I have to go now. I'm singing next. Bye!"

As fast as my high heels could take me, I ran back to the pack hall.

I didn't care that Erica was going to be a royal and that she was going to lord it over me any chance she got. By the time she would be queen, I'd have edged myself out of pack life entirely anyway. I was more excited by the fact that I'd be rid of Erica, and I'd have an extra thousand dollars to boot.

When I got inside, the guys were singing some One Direction song and Melanie and Jane were sitting at the table. I immediately sat beside them and lowered my head conspiratorially.

"Prince Jonathon is claiming Erica tonight. We have to bet on it. All or nothing, we're getting that money." I hissed. They looked at in each other in confusion.

"What? The prince isn't claiming anyone! He's not on the roster." Jane whispered. I shook my head.

"He doesn't need to be, he's a prince. Besides, he told me himself, it's a sure thing!" I retorted.

"Betting pool's closed, anyway. Paolo won't allow it." Melanie hissed.

"Not if we take away all our other bets, add five hundred bucks, and just bet on this one big thing." I said. They looked horrified.

"Serena, we're not doing that. All our bets were carefully chosen. We're sure to win this!" Jane exclaimed. I immediately shushed her.

"Guys, think of how sweet the victory will be if we win! Five hundred bucks come on!" I pleaded.

"Serena it's too much of a long shot, and it's a lot of money to lose. Are you sure that the prince will pick her?" Jane asked, looking at the Alpha's table. Erica's eyes met Jane's and Erica sneered.

"I am all for Erica getting picked and getting the hell out of here, but I'm not betting on it like this." Melanie insisted. I took a deep breath.

"Guys, please, do this for me and I promise you it's going to pay off. Please, best friend favor. Just please trust me." I said, giving them my best puppy dog eyes.

Silence followed as they looked at each other.

"Fine. But if this goes up in smoke, you owe us big time." Jane said, sighing. She took out her phone and erased our previous bets, replacing the names with just one bet.

The song ended and the guys went down from the stage. Paolo plugged in his laptop and played some easy rock music from his Spotify.

"We're changing our bets." Melanie declared, winking at me. I sighed in relief, glad my girls had my back.

"Not allowed." Christopher curtly said.

"Check it out first." Jane said, giving Christopher her phone. He and Paolo peered at it before gasping.

"You're kidding, right?" Christopher asked. I smiled.

"That's our bet." I smugly said.

"B...but...he's not...but..." Paolo stuttered.

"Five hundred bucks it is, Paolo. We can get that new 3D TV." Christopher smirked, clapping his hand over Paolo's back. I rolled my eyes at them.

"What if it's a trap?" Paolo gasped. Christopher shrugged.

"Come on, bro. The prince isn't going to choose Erica. She's a nightmare." Christopher snorted.

"We'll see." I confidently said.

Continue to next part