



Series

The Millennium Wolves



Book 7 - Chapter 17

SIENNA

It had been a while since my natural dominance rushed to the fore.



I felt it like a flood, filling me with power.

My eyes snapped with anger and I bared my teeth, which sharpened as they shifted just slightly.

“Back down!” I ordered them.

It worked. The werewolves responded to my dominance by instinct. The humans and others followed their lead.

Taking my time, I made a point of meeting each of their eyes in turn.

Blue eyes. Green. Brown. But all filled with fear and anger.



Chapters



Display



Unmute



Comment



React



“Your distress is valid,” I said at last, and I saw a few of them release tension in their shoulders. Not all, though.

Gloria and Ivan glowered at me.

My heart hammering, I stared them down as I continued, “The changes made by this new administration are nothing short of persecution. Anyone would be upset after what you’ve endured.”

The short, brown-skinned man gave a nod.

“You *should* be furious,” I pressed on, “but not at Aiden and I. We’re suffering right alongside you.”

Gloria looked away.

I cast my gaze over the rest of them.

“The usurper, Josh Daniels, and his mate, Michelle, are the real enemy. Never lose sight of that.”

The crowd settled. My heart was still beating hard, but it felt good seeing my words take effect.



But were they truly convinced?

JOSH

The next day, I was walking through the gallery—now free of scaffolding as the renovations had been finished—when I saw it on the large flat screen I'd had installed high in the northeast corner.



My ass.

What the...?

Michelle's ass.

A rolling motion.

Hands fumbling with the camera—or phone, more likely.

What the hell?

Goddammit, that was my cock!

The view pulled farther out. It was the goddamn phone video Michelle had made of us fucking.



The picture zoomed out and I watched myself slap Michelle's bouncing ass with the palm of one hand.

"Fuck me, Alpha Daniels," she cried. "Fuck me until you come!"

Goddamn motherfucking shit!



"Farley!" I shouted. "Farley!" Every shout was louder than the last. I started for the stairs, bellowing the press secretary's name over and over as I went.

Farley met me at the top of the stairs, looking perplexed.

"Yes, my Alpha?" the middle-aged, balding man said.

He had a paunch. How on earth this guy won the right to be Head of PR I didn't know—the competition could not have been very fierce.

"What the fuck did I just see on the news, Farley?" I demanded.

"My Alpha?" he asked.



“My Alpha?” he hedged.

I grabbed his soft bicep and dragged him with me to my office, where another huge TV playing *InfoWolves* was mounted across from the cowhide couch.

Sure enough, the same video was playing again, this time in a recessed square as a newscaster commented.

“In what appears to be a home video...”
the handsome brown-haired man at the news desk said, “of the Alpha and his mate enjoying the effects of the haze...”



The brown-haired newscaster turned, and the camera panned to his colleague, a brassy blond.

“Makes you wish for fall, eh, Tiffany?”

Tiffany grimaced. “Not so much, Chad.”

I turned to Farley, whose jaw was slack as he stared at the screen.

I jerked a hand at the TV.



“What.

“The fuck.

“Farley.”



He blinked and met my gaze, then dropped his eyes. “I’m sorry, Alpha. I was entirely unaware—”

“You mean to tell me this is the *first* you’ve heard about this?” I demanded. “Beatrice would *never* have let something like this get by her!”

“I’m so sorry, my Alpha—”

“You’re fired, Farley! You’re fucking fired! You understand me! Get the fuck out of here before I have you arrested like Garcia!”

Spittle flew from my lips and sprinkled Farley’s face and shirt front.

Farley fled just as Michelle came into my office.

I braced myself for her meltdown.

“*Josh!*” she wailed.

“I know, I know—” I started, but she kept right on going.



“Can you believe this bullshit?” she whined, tears shining in her eyes.

She held up her phone.

“The things they’re saying! ‘Did not need those images in my mind,’ ‘I’d rather walk in on my parents fucking,’ ‘Look at that cellulite!’” Michelle burst into tears.

“Cellulite!” she howled.

“Babe,” I said, attempting to get through to her. I reached out but she yanked away, peering down at the phone in one hand as the other hand smeared her eye makeup.

“Cellulite!” she said. “I look hot in this video! This video is so hot!”

Wait a minute.

“Michelle,” I said, cocking my head to the

side and smiling as I tried to make my tone calm. “Michelle. Tell me you didn’t know about this video getting leaked.”

Michelle’s eyebrows knit and she gave me a pouty look, her mascara running.

I marshalled my patience. “Michelle. Babe. Tell me *you* didn’t release this video.”

Michelle frowned and hunched her shoulders, glaring at me and then down at the phone.



“So what if I did? It was my video,” she said petulantly.

My face twisted into a grimace of agony and my hands spasmed into claws as though I would strangle her.

I turned away from her, the roar that wanted to break free coming out as a garbled groan.

“It was supposed to remind everyone that I’m a queen,” she said in a small voice.

A wave of dizziness swept over me as my blood pressure reached a new high.



blood pressure reached a new high.

I could think of no words to respond to that.

THANDA

Father greeted me at the archway into the dining room.

“Another emergency council meeting,” I said to him softly. “We certainly seem to need a lot of these.”



A light of amusement danced in Father’s eyes, but he was far too cautious to respond out loud.

I took my seat as Gamma and turned my attention to a brief I was drafting as the rest of the council members entered.

Josh started before everyone had arrived, launching immediately into a rant about the sex video that had surfaced on Yapper last night.

By now, it was common knowledge that the video had been leaked by Michelle herself.



“...and I will *not* tolerate being a laughingstock!” Josh was yelling, his forehead red and veiny.

Very sexy. I can't imagine why the video was received so negatively.

“I hate to have to be the one to bring it up,” Vasquez said. I felt a shot of tension through my spine.



I hated when Vasquez spoke up. It never ended well.

Josh was flushed and almost foaming at the mouth. He rounded on Vasquez, who flinched.

“What?” Josh demanded.

“Well, my Alpha, this problem has arisen because of our lady Michelle, has it not?”

Vasquez's accent thickened when he was stressed.

Josh just glared at him.

“And la señora Michelle is also a source of a

“And la señora Michelle is also a source of a great deal of the debt, my Alpha. Her parties alone account for over forty percent...”

The vein in Josh’s forehead throbbed, but he remained silent, his jaw tense, locked.

Is he going to have an aneurism?

Would it be such a bad thing if he did?



Vasquez checked the tablet he held.

“Forty-one point seven percent, to be exact. Her behavior is detrimental to the well-being of the ECP...”

“And not just for financial and PR reasons,” Father said. He cast his placid gaze over us.

“Michelle’s behavior is entirely incongruent with the honorable,” he went on, “values-based leadership we aim to portray to the pack.”

Arthur Havel, the Theta, cleared his throat.

“I’m glad you pointed that out, Beta Singh,” he said in his breathy, upper crust Virginian



tones.

A founding member of Father's Values Watch, Havel's area was arts and culture.

With the new emphasis on restoring old traditions, the importance of his role had expanded rapidly—along with the size of his ego, by all accounts.



Havel pontificated, “It’s a source of great frustration to me, the way our society has strayed from the values of our forefathers. We’ve lost sight of what it means to be werewolves.”

This was an old refrain now; one we’d been hearing for the last four months.

You’d think winning the Pack House would mean these men could relax and enjoy their victory.

But no, they’re still whining about their anxieties over losing werewolf identity.

“Moral deficiencies are undermining our pack’s well-being,” Havel continued, his mouth too red against his pasty skin. “Lurid

videos, reckless spending...

“But that isn’t all. How many of us have seen the modern phenomenon of ‘same-sex’ mating?”

That got my attention.

I thought of Nina—what would she say about this?



“It’s ridiculous. An oxymoron!” Havel said. “Two people of the same sex are incapable, *biologically*, of mating.

“These people with their ‘identity politics.’ They live in a world of fairytales. Literally!”

I glanced around the room to assess what reception this rant was getting.

The new one, Carrick, had a small smile on his face.

Vasquez wasn’t listening, too engrossed in his tablet, his brow knit with concern over what he was reading.

The Eto, specializing in managing land



The Eta, specializing in managing land resources, Tim Klossner, was leaning back in his seat, nodding, his mouth pursed thoughtfully.

Farley's seat was empty, of course. That left Josh and Father.

Josh's face had returned to a more normal shade. His eyes drooped. The topic bored him.

Father, on the other hand, held his eyes wider than normal—a sign that he was stimulated and intrigued.



He can't possibly agree with this tripe?

I said nothing, waiting until the meeting adjourned. I followed Father out, all the way to his office.

“What was all that garbage Havel was spouting?” I asked without preamble as I closed the door behind us.

Father went to his desk and tucked the legal pad he had taken notes on at the meeting



into the top drawer. He raised his eyebrows and looked at me.

“Thanda,” Father said after another pause. “Surely you aren’t surprised? We’re spearheading a return to traditional values. Same-sex mating has no place in that.”

I blinked.



Father gazed at me expectantly.

“But that’s... it’s so willfully blind,” I said at last. “It’s so incredibly... arrogant. What are you going to do, tell same-sex mates that they don’t exist?”

Father shook his head with a little smile. “They *don’t* exist, Thanda. Anyone who says otherwise—as Havel pointed out—is living in a fairytale.”

My teeth clenched together as I recognized his tone: this was Father at his most dogmatic.

He went on, “People choose an alternative lifestyle and then want to force the world to pretend that they are the same as everyone



pretend that they are the same as everyone else. That's what's incredibly arrogant."

There was no arguing with him when he was like this.

"As for telling so-called same-sex mates that they don't exist—well. We're making great progress in our efforts to provide direction for our citizens. Soon enough, we'll put an end to it all."



"An *end*?" I breathed.

"A ban, if you will," Father said. "I have already drawn up several new items of legislation, which I'll ask you to look at in the next few days."

This is unbelievable.

"Really, Thanda, at least *try* to see the bigger picture."

I sucked in a deep breath and saw myself out without another look in his direction.

SIENNA



A day after the confrontation in the canteen, Yuki called a meeting in the lodge for all residents of Makadewa Forest.

As was their custom, they each took turns talking, with no particular hierarchy.

They stopped short of using a “talking stick,” but it had the informal feel of a summer campfire gathering.



Aiden seemed to find the format amusing, smiling and nodding as each person took their turn.

I was not so entertained.

Plenty of people still advocated turning us over to “the authorities.”

Yuki let everyone talk, without commenting on anything.

I waited until most of the members had spoken—although it wasn’t easy to just sit quietly when Gloria and Ivan had their say.

They accused us of disrupting the commune,

acting entitled, and mooching off their stores, putting them all in danger...

At last, I stood.

“You of the collective all know me by now. You who come from Mahiganote know me too, at least by reputation. I am Sienna Mercer-Norwood.”

I met their eyes, willing them to see the sincerity in my heart.



“I stand here today to urge you: do not turn us in. You would only be helping the enemy.

“*We* aren’t the enemy—*we* never curtailed your rights, ruined your homes and businesses, or required you to register and carry bloodline identification.”

A mutter rippled through the crowd.

Good, the IDs alarm them. As they should.

“All of us should be panicked by these new laws. They are trying to define us as separate and different! That can only mean one thing: persecution.”

persecution.”

There were nods; people whispered to each other.

I could feel it: they were coming around to my side.

“So, what do we do?” Gloria asked, her face hard. “What do you expect us to do about Alpha Daniels and all the things he’s setting up?”

“They have the Alpha seat,” Ivan added. “They have Hunter Squads, and some of their members have more money than all of us combined!”

I arched my eyebrows, peering at my strongest detractors.



“What do you want to do?” I challenged them. “Do you want to lay down and show your belly?”

“No!” Gloria scoffed, and I heard a couple of echoes among the crowd.

I called out, “Shall we give up, and just let

I called out, “Shall we give up, and just let Josh Daniels turn the ECP into a corrupt nightmare of persecution?”

“No!” several people said, including Gloria and Ivan together.

“Should we give in, and keep giving them what they want? Keep giving them what they want over and over until they take everything that ever mattered to us?”

“NO!”

“Then I’ll tell you what we’re going to do! RESIST!”

A cheer went up.



“Yeah!”

“RESIST!” I called again. Saying it aloud stoked the fires of outrage that had been smoldering within me for four months.

The others echoed me:

“Resist!”

The others echoed me:

“Resist!”

“We fight!”

“Yeah! Resist!”

One more time, to drive it home, I shouted,
“RESIST!!!”

The people called it back to me.

My heart swelled with feverish pride and a
kind of savage joy.

We were going to fight. We were going to
win.



I looked over at Aiden, expecting to see his
face reflecting my fervor.

Instead, I saw something very different.

Next Chapter