Chapter 13

A/N

To celebrate this book getting 1K reads, here's an update for all of you to enjoy. Don't worry, the slow burn ends with this chapter. Next chapter we're gonna actually see some action and flu between our two leads. But right now, I need to tear them away from each other for them to realize how much the mating pull has changed and e ected them.

Please don't forget to leave comments and votes!

Serena Basco

Queen Robin spent the whole week giving me a crash course on being a royal.

It was only kind of sort of a nightmare.

She was nice enough to do it subtly. When it came to my posture and social graces, she told me she didn't need to do much work. Much of what she had me do was learn about packs, greet visiting wolves, and familiarize myself with royal law and protocol.

She introduced me to the courtiers, who were all too eager to befriend me. I was wary of them though; a lot of them seemed fake. I saw the glint in their eyes when they saw my Gold bracelet. I wanted to hide it all the time, but whenever I found myself not wanting to be bothered I'd put it on full display. Most of them would stay away, too intimidated.

Caroline, the maid assigned to me, was a big help. She was friendly enough, always chatting me up—I welcomed it, I missed the noise of my friends a ar all. She was a complete chatterbox she had dirt on possibly every courtier in the palace. It was useful when I'd encounter a person whose name I had forgotten and she'd remind me. She was around three years older than me and mated to someone who owned a bakery in town.

We became fast friends.

Especially when we'd try to get rid of Darien, the guard Jon had assigned to me. He wasn't the type of guard I'd expected—he was very laid back. I still didn't like having a guard, I mean, Darien had a Bronze bracelet for crying out loud, no o ense to him. But he had proven to be fun company. He was young, around 20 and unmated.

Darien said that the other guards were very curious about me. Jon was such a serious commander; they could never imagine him as a mate. They were all wondering what he was like.

"They think you're like Wonder Woman." Darien said, chuckling as he, Caroline and I played poker. "I told them you're nothing like they imagine."

"What is that supposed to mean?" I asked, trying not to frown at my cards.

"Half of them think you're a sultry temptress who managed to seduce our prince at The Claiming ceremony, the other half think you're a magical Gold Rank warrior meant to save us all." He dramatically said, presenting his cards. I laughed at that.

It's like being on Gossip Girl.

I also spent a lot of time with Patrick. My new younger brother was 17 and would be eligible for mating next year. He sported a silver bracelet.

He was kind enough to show me the ropes on my new duties. Even though he claimed to be lazy and skip work all the time, I began to see how that was all talk. He was a good at what he did. He had a natural charm and charisma that drew people to him. He'd be the first person anyone would approach if they had an issue that needed the intervention of the royal family.

Most of his work involved receiving and reading correspondence to the royal family. He'd answer letters, and if he didn't have the authority to make a decision, he'd forward it to Jon's o ice.

I had an easy time organizing the files he had given me. There was still a lot of information that needed to be computerized so I also started doing that. The werewolf world needed to enter the digital age and damn if I wasn't going to help pioneer that. Patrick asked me if he should ask Jon to get me new laptop, but I was happy to work with my old one. It might be good to have something familiar with me.

Patrick and I worked inside his study/a ice. He told me that when things got more sorted out, I'd be working inside Jon's o ice since our duties would be more aligned in the future.

I haven't seen Jon's o ice yet.

While we worked, Patrick would o en tell me stories about Jon. I think he felt sorry for me because Jon wasn't spending too much time with me, and in a sweet way he was remedying that by helping me get to know his brother.

I wasn't surprised when I learned Jon had always been serious and duty-bound—ever the perfect son. I'd laugh at his silly anecdotes and tell him about my own life back in Eastern Claw. I began to feel sad when I realized that Patrick probably knew more about me now than Jon.

Jon.

I barely saw him at all this week. I'd already be asleep when he'd come to bed. The only indication I'd have that he'd slept at all was when he'd pull me close to him when he lay down.

He'd wake before I do. Sometimes I saw glimpses of him in the halls but his generals frequently hovered over him. He never ate with me, and I began to wonder if he was eating at all. Worry gnawed at my stomach—my mate was not taking care of himself. The thought made me sick.

Even though I had Caroline, Darien, and Patrick, I still felt neglected by the person I needed the most.

But I didn't want to be selfish. I was a princess now. A princess serves her people to the best of her ability.

Or some shit like that.

I knew it wasn't his fault. This was his life before he met me—plus the added problem of Alpha Theodore. I couldn't just expect him to upturn his whole life because he had me.

So he takes me back to his home and just leaves me to my own devices? Was I destined for a life of loneliness? Was this how it was going to be?

I couldn't live like this. I was going to die of neglect. Back in Eastern Claw, the only reason I was sane was because my friends irrevocably loved me and kept me busy with their chatter and arts and cra s and playtime. I didn't want anyone's attention but theirs.

But here, if I didn't attention from the one I wanted, I'd go insane.

I know. I'm selfish.

But he brought this on himself. I mean, now that I think about it, claiming me as a mate without getting to know me was kind of an asshole move.

He wanted Serena Basco as a mate? I'll give him Serena Basco as a mate.

Maybe it was the mating bond doing this, but I needed him with me. Did the pull not a ect him as much as it did me? Maybe he was an expert at burying the animal instinct. Well, I wasn't. I was a newly mated wolf. I needed my mate.

But my mate was busy.

I suddenly wished for more work, so that I wouldn't have time to think about how miserable I was becoming. I looked around for Patrick too see if he had any extra work, but he was out somewhere talking with the mayor of the town nearby.

It was almost sunset, so really all work should be done by now. I went back to mine and Jonathon's room and sat down on the chaise by the window.

I picked up my phone and called Paolo.

He answered a er two rings.

"Serena!" He asked, as if unsure if it was me. I giggled.

"Hi Paolo." I said. There was a sca le.

"You're on speaker, we're all in Melanie's house baking cookies." Paolo called. I heard a chorus of keys from everyone. I felt tears sting my eyes—I missed them so much.

"You guys are baking cookies? But I bake you guys cookies." I started to sob.

"Well, we have to learn how to fend for ourselves now." Jane said. I laughed.

"How are you doing, S? How's Lightwing?" Christopher asked. I let out a shaky breath.

"It's pretty. It's really nice, everyone's been friendly." I said.

"Oh? How's princess work?" Melanie asked, and everyone laughed, as if the thought of me doing some actual work was funny.

"Shut up, you guys. I'm actually doing some work here. Organizing, some computer stu . Patrick's been helpful." I said.

"Patrick? Prince Patrick?" Paolo asked.

"Yep. And guess what? I have a maid, and a guard." I said. They all laughed.

"No way!" Jane said. "That's the life!"

"Yeah, everything's pretty di erent here." I said. Silence followed. "How's everything there?"

"Well, none of us are mated if that's what you're asking." Christopher said. I laughed.

"What happened a er...we le ?" I asked. I could hear them taking deep breaths.

"Things were...messed up. No one was sure if The Claiming should still continue, but it did. The Wolves from Alpha Theodore's pack refused to participate. Things are...tense with Alpha right now." Paolo said.

"Oh. I see." Was all I could say to them.

"S? How are you?" Melanie quietly asked. I took a deep breath.

"I'm...fine..." I trailed of.

"Serena?" Jane asked. I sighed.

"Fine. I'm miserable." I said, lying on the chaise. I could hear them muttering to themselves.

"What's wrong?" Christopher asked.

"I haven't seen my mate all week. He's busy." I mumbled.

"He's a prince, Serena," Paolo said. I could hear Jane admonishing him in the background. "Ow. Sorry."

"Look, maybe the Alpha Theodore issue added some more workload. I'm sure his schedule will lighten up. If not, well, give him a piece of your mind, Red." Melanie teased. I chuckled.

I heard something ding from their side.

"Ooh! Cookies are done, we have to go!" Jane gleefully said.

"Send pictures!" I cried.

"Bye Serena!" They all chorused. I put down the phone and smiled, looking at a photo of all of us in my lock screen. It was in the carnival we had gone to just before The Claiming. The a ernoon had been bright and cheerful, and we asked a clown to take our picture in front of the Ferris wheel.

Fearing that I was going to cry, I leaned my head against the big window and sighed. I adjusted my forest green maxi dress so that it flowed prettily down the chaise. I had taken to wearing clothes for warmer climes since it was hotter in Lightwing.

I made a mental note to ask Jonathon if I could go shopping. Most of my clothes were for the cold mountains. I'm pretty sure I still had some money le from when I did some part time weekend work at the library in the human town.

The loneliness from my current predicament coupled with the feeling of missing my friends made me sleepy. With my head still leaning against the window, I hugged my knees to my chest and fell asleep with the sunset glowing prettily outside.

A/N

I hope you all enjoyed that!

Who here thinks she's just being a drama queen?

All the work they're doing is going to come to importance later on in the story. I wanted Serena to start realizing how out of touch she is with the werewolf world and how serious this war business really is. She needds get her head in the game.

Next chapter, the tension between Jon and Serena will finally break. Get ready for flu and rainbows.

Please leave comments or votes! I want to hear from all of you lovely people!

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