

Chapter 20

A/N

Thank you all for the votes, comments, and for adding this story to your lists. My heart is positively singing with joy from all the positive feedback and support I've been getting. You're all angels!

I'm so happy this book has reached 10k reads! To celebrate, I'm updating earlier than I originally planned to.

WARNING: LANGUAGE AND VIOLENCE

Jonathon Lancaster

The last time my wolf took over that easily without my consent was during my first shi . I was ten then, and it had hurt like hell. Never before had I felt so helpless—an animal had literally possessed me and my body was no longer my own. I did not like the feeling, so I spent all these years learning how to control him, and I became good at reining him in.

Until now.

When I saw the bruises on mySerena's arm, my body was no longer my own. I fought to control my wolf, but he could not be stopped—someone he considered close and loyal had hurt his mate. He rose to the surface, and my own consciousness was letting him take over. Control became a thing of the past.

Serena had seen it. She saw that my wolf had taken over and had taken steps to rectify it.

But my wolf was cunning.

He knew his mate very well. Serena would not have let us leave if she knew of our true intentions, so he deceived her. She didn't even realize that it was not me talking.

It was a game to him—he let her believe that I had taken back control of my body and once I had her blessing to leave, he showed his true nature.

No, I will not lie to myself. It was mytrue nature.

I was a bloodthirsty wolf destined for war, and Clayton Cra had made a big mistake. If I was in control, I would have needed Serena's request to just give him a strict reprimand, but I was not in control.

My mind and his began to merge, and I held on to Serena's scent to help keep me calm but the memory of her only served to make me angrier.

As soon as the door slammed behind me, I locked it from the outside. It would make Serena angry but I could not risk letting her see my true nature. She would be repulsed and I fear she would reject me.

I stalked through the halls, my steps quick and sure as I followed Clayton's scent. My vision became tainted with red as the anger coursed through my veins. Clayton had not only betrayed my friendship, he disobeyed the ancient rules of rank and hierarchy and it was something I could never forgive.

My steps began to quicken as I practically tore through the palace. Sta and courtiers jumped out of my way, fear evident in their eyes. I did not care who I pushed out of my way or how they shook when they saw my frightening stature heading to their way. It would be good for them to get out of their prince's way. Darkness filled my mind again.

Finally, I pushed open the door to one of my parents' dining rooms. My mother and father were having dinner with Patrick, and General Hassan.

Seated next to Patrick, laughing heartily as he ate his dinner was Clayton Cra .

"Son! Take a seat, where's Serena..." My mother's twinkling voice could not quell the rage in my heart as anger took over.

It all happened quickly that I did not even have time to comprehend my own actions.

I grabbed Clayton by the collar and slammed him against the wall. The wall shook with the impact, causing the chandelier to shake as well. My wolf growled in anger—I was stronger than Clayton and everyone knew it. The whole room went into uproar as Patrick and Hassan tried to get me to let go but their e ort were fruitless.

"JONATHON!" My father shouted, his Alpha command demanding submission, but with newfound resolve, I found the strength to bypass it.

"Jon what..." Clayton sputtered as his face turned red. I seethed in anger, my right hand holding his neck hostage against the wall.

"YOU DARE LAY YOUR HAND ON MY MATE, GENERAL?" I demanded, slamming him against the wall once more, causing again the lights to shake.

The whole room descended into silence.

Clayton spluttered. I was about to loosen my hold on him when I saw a small, barely noticeable imprint on his cheek, presumably where Serena slapped him.

I caught the smallest whi of her scent from this, and that was enough to enrage me even more.

"I...Jon...it was.... misunderstanding..." Clayton tried to say as I tightened my grip.

"I saw the bruises, Clayton, and YOUR SCENT WAS ALL OVER THEM!" I shouted. Clayton tried to get my hand o his neck but I silenced him with another growl.

"THIS IS TREASON, CLAYTON! You betrayed me, and you disrespected her rank WHICH IS ABOVE YOURS! I told my mate I came here to talk to you, so you're going to talk. What do you have to say for yourself?" I roared, slamming him again against the wall and throwing his body carelessly on the ground.

I looked around, my mother was clutching my father's arm, silently imploring him to do something but he stood still, his features cold and calculating. Patrick was pale with fear and General Hassan stood tall and imposing, as if assessing the situation. Some guards, soldiers, sta and courtiers had come in to see what all the noise was about, but they were all frozen in fear. They made no move to stop me.

"I'm sorry...lost...my temper..." Clayton wheezed. My wolf sensed the movement, so I hauled him up with one arm. In a quick motion, he raised his arms to hit me and push me away, but I was quicker than him. I gave his stomach a good punch and propped him up against the wall.

"You are a general, you are supposed to set an example." I said heavily as beads of sweat trickled down my forehead. "You were supposed to be my friend, Clayton, you were supposed to care for what was mine."

"There's no...excuse...let me apologize...to her..." Clayton coughed. The thought of them being in the same room again made my wolf see red. The animal demanded blood as retribution for his mate. I roared and slammed him against the wall. The walls cracked slightly under the force.

"YOU WILL NOT SPEAK TO SERENA AGAIN! If I ever see you even breathing the same air as her I will killyou. I've killed for her before, don't test me." I growled. I let him go, throwing him to the ground.

"From now on, you are my general but you are no longer my friend. Once, I considered you a brother..."

"I AM YOUR FRIEND AND BROTHER! WE FOUGHT TOGETHER, JON, AND—"

I hauled his body up and kicked him. He landed a few feet in front of me and the people around him immediately stepped back. I raised my head and looked at the crowd.

"And that goes for anyone who dares harm my mate." I hissed.

"YOU WOULD CHOOSE HER OVER ME? HER? SHE IS NOT WORTHY TO BE A PRINCESS! I FOUGHT ROGUES BY YOUR SIDE AND—"

Anger finally overcame reason as I lunged over to him. My eyes were red as we fought. I could hear my fists pounding against his body as I released my anger. Blood spat out of his mouth as my punches landed on his face. He fought back, and that earned me a cut on the cheek. My wolf roared at the disrespect.

I could feel hands on me, strong hands pulling me away from him but I was too blinded. I was out for blood. I pushed those arms away and they struggled to hold me back.

Finally, I managed to grab his head and was about to slam it against the floor, ending this ordeal once and for all, but I felt myself being grabbed harshly from the back by a force that must've been just as strong as I was.

"CONTROL YOURSELF, JON! DO NOT KILL HIM!"

It was Patrick. My brother was strong as he wrenched his arms around me, and I tried to push him away. I reached for Clayton, eager to see more of his blood spilt. Clayton stumbled back, and he was being helped up by some guards.

I took deep, heavy breaths. My wolf still had my eyes zeroed in on him. He looked badly beaten and bruised like I've never seen.

"What will Serena think?" Patrick whispered at me as he blocked my way to Clayton. From the corner of my eye, I saw him being hauled out by General Hassan and a few guards. My father shouted at everyone to leave the room, and they did so without hesitation.

I made to follow Clayton, but Patrick shoved me with all his might and growled.

"Do you think Serena would be happy with what you did?" Patrick asked, hauling me to face him. I was surprised at Patrick's show of strength that I relented. I looked into my brother's bright, fierce eyes and immediately, I tried to push my wolf back under control.

"Serena..." I murmured, the mention of her name sending me into a relaxing haze. The thought of her so red hair seemed to placate my wolf.

Patrick rolled his eyes and smirked. He looked to my mother and nodded.

"Get something that belongs to the princess, anything! Quick!" My mother barked at a servant, who hurriedly scurried out of the room.

My father wordlessly looked over to me before sighing and exiting the room. His presence seemed to be a dark, looming cloud of power, and when he le , we all released a breath of relief.

Patrick led me to sit on the couch. None too gracefully, I sat down on the couch and put my head in my hands.

My mother sat down beside me and started wiping at my face with a damp washcloth. As gently as I could, I pushed my mother's hands away. She obliged.

There wasn't much blood on me, just a few bruises and a cut.

The same could not be said for Clayton. My wolf triumphantly singed with pride at that thought.

Patrick handed me a glass of water and I drank.

"Got that out of your system, huh? I never liked the fucker. What exactly did he do?" Patrick chortled. I growled at him and pushed the glass back into his hands.

"Patrick." My mother admonished. The servant came back holding a green scarf.

"The princess le ...this at the kitchens...yesterday." The servant stuttered. My mother took it and thanked her before instructing her to leave. Patrick took the scarf and held it against my face.

Serena's fresh, citrusy scent immediately washed over me. I held the scarf close, clutching it as if it were my lifeline. Slowly, the darkness inside me ebbed away and my wolf was once again fully buried under control.

"Your father will deal with General Cra , but I think he's been punished enough. You lost control there, son. You could've killed him." My mother murmured, sitting beside me.

"He hurt Serena." I mumbled back.

"Yes we know that but how?" Patrick asked.

I growled menacingly at him. He sighed and pouted.

"Where is she right now?" My mother asked, brushing my curls away from my face.

"In our room." I grunted.

"You can't lose control like that again, Jon. People might begin to think you're uninged, they're scared of how strong you reallyare and where will that leave us? You're already in hot air with the tribunal as it is." My mother said.

I contemplated my mother's words. She was right. Over the years, I've slowly come to realize how stronger I was compared to the other wolves, even the royal ones. As I grew older, I also noticed how my father's Alpha commands did not a ect me the same way they did to others. I didn't think people noticed, but apparently they did.

My wolf was fiercer too, and was every inch my equal. It was all too easy for him to deceive Serena. I was only beginning to get a taste of what he was like when he was in control.

If the tribunal or anyonegot wind of what my wolf and I were actually capable of, they'd question my ability to rule fairly as a future king.

More importantly, they'd see Serena as the catalyst, even an enabler. I couldn't let that happen.

"No one hurts my mate and gets away with it." I declared, a promise to protect my mate at all costs even from myself.

Patrick put his hand on my shoulder comfortingly.

"Don't worry, mum. Clayton won't say a word to the tribunal about this because it'll implicate him. We'll write this o as a disagreement between the war council." Patrick said. I nodded in thanks at my brother.

There was silence.

"You can't go back to Serena like this. Go to your brother's room and freshen up. Now if you'll excuse me, I have to do some damage control with the court." My mother said. I looked at her longingly, silently thanking her.

She seemed to realize what I was trying to convey, because she gave me a tight embrace and a kiss on my temple before standing up to leave. I trusted my mother to do all that she could to fix this and hopefully, interceded to my father on my behalf because I knew I was in for more than a harsh reprimand.

Now all I needed to do was think about how I was going to talk to Serena about all of this. I feared her reaction. I fear she'd know what I did and she'd be lost to me forever.

The thought of her rejection stirred something heinous in me, and I knew I had to do everything to prevent that. Serena was so unlike me in many ways, and that's why I needed her. She was my redemption.

I could become darkness, but I would cling on to the last sliver of light that only she could give.

Just the thought of her sweet skin, warm smile, and so hair caused my heart to feel brighter, that somehow, I could pretend that there was no darkness, no desire for blood or hurt creeping up on me at all.

I felt Patrick tap my shoulder.

"Come. I'll let you borrow my clothes, and in exchange you can tell me what that idiot did." Patrick chuckled.

A/N

Yikes. Pretty intense, huh? I know you all are gonna have a lot of feelings from this so I wanted to give some points for reflection.

1. As you may have noticed from the previous chapters, Jon doesn't think the same way normal wolves do. He has too much power, and one part of him relishes it, and the other is afraid of it. He's been wrestling with demons inside of him for a long time. We have to remember that his father raised him purely to fight a war: he can't be Mr. Sunshine a er having a childhood spent like that.

2. He's a prince who grew up in privilege and he doesn't like his things touched. Couple that with the growing mate bond and sexual frustration, his emotions are on haywire. This is the guy who got pissed because Clayton sent him a text message on a Sunday.

3. Because most of the book is from Serena's POV, we don't see how they reallydeal with conflict in the heart of the wolf world. Notice how no one stepped in to stop the fight until almost the end. Violence is their norm and Serena might be the odd one out for expecting anything else.

Anyway. Enough of that.

Thank you all for your continued support on this book. I've been trying to get a bigger audience, so if you have any advice on how I could, I'm all ears! Also, I love engaging with you guys in the comments section! Keep it up!

I'm also trying to figure out a good update schedule. I've been doing it every 2-3 days and I think it should be more regular (twice a week). How's Tuesdays and Fridays?

Sending much love!

Continue to next part