Chapter 34

A/N
I won't be posting a note at the end of this chapter to keep the momentum up so please remember to comment and vote!

As for the sequel, some of you have already guessed correctly what it's about. I'll be posting the title next update.

Get ready to have your minds blown.

Serena Lancaster

Patrick had already been in the North for a month before we got the message that he successfully had the defector with him, and that he was making his way back to Lightwing. We rejoiced when we heard the news—I couldn't keep a smile off my face for days! But I knew the battle was half over: Patrick still needed to bring the defector safely to the palace without being detected. He was expected to be home in two weeks. That meant he would miss my 19th birthday.

Jon had no choice but to recall all his men from River Lycan. He eventually ran out of excuses and the guardianship had officially been turned over to Alpha Jason and Desert Fang. Jon did the smart thing and requested for their detailed security arrangements so that Patrick could study them as well.

We wouldn't be able to correspond with Patrick until he set foot in Lightwing. He was on his own.

Meanwhile, Jon and I stuck with each other like glue during the next few weeks after Captain Desay and Alpha Apollo left. We both suddenly felt isolated, like we could trust no one but each other. Paranoia began to eat him up and I worried so much. What would happen once this war would take us to two different places? Who would be there to take care of him?

What if something bad happened to him? Would I have the courage to do as I promised and force him to leave if ever things became too toxic? Would he really abandon his title just to make sure I was safe? And what would happen if we had kids? I mean, ever since my miscarriage we had been taking this potion weekly for birth control but it's never a guarantee.

Oh my Goddess. I suddenly imagined myself giving birth in the middle of the battlefield.

Badass Alpha Female.

With all the stress, I didn't even realize that tomorrow, it would be ten months since I officially became a princess. When I brought this up with Jon, he insisted we go out on a date to celebrate.

I put on a lovely pale blue dress with stockings underneath in case it got cold. I layered my dress with a fluffy scarf and I stepped in some chunky heeled boots. Jon looked handsome as usual in a dark cashmere sweater over a white collared dress shirt and dark jeans. When we first mated, I'd literally take a moment to stare at him in awe. I had been so intimidated by him but now I felt so at ease in his company.

No longer was he Jonathon Lancaster, the big scary perfect prince—he was just Jon, this wonderful man who took care of me and whom I loved.

We walked hand in hand towards the town, the tall streetlamps casting a warm glow over the red brick road. I noticed his hands were occasionally shaking, so I gave them a squeeze. It was a cold evening.

"Hey, you seem fidgety. Are you alright?" I asked. Jon shook himself before looking down at me, giving me a reassuring smile.

"Yes...I'm fine...just, hungry that's all." Jon cleared his throat. He blinked a few times before taking a deep breath. He grabbed and clutched at his jeans—his movements fast and nervous.

I knew what this was about.

"You're nervous about Patrick, aren't you?" I asked. Jon looked at me, surprised. "I can tell. I don't think anything can take your mind off him."

"Will you at least try? I don't want to be thinking of my brother during our ten month anniversary." Jon chuckled.

"Jon, Patrick's going to be fine. He's not going to encounter any trouble. Just have a little faith." I chided. Jon exhaled a ragged breath.

"I know. I know." Jon resolutely said. "Come on, let's just eat. Tonight, there's no war, no defector...just us..."

Jon pulled me into a lovely Italian restaurant right beside the town's courtyard where there was a big fountain in the middle. I ordered some pasta and he ordered steak. We also ordered a bottle of red wine. A lot of diners greeted us, nodding their hellos but I was thankful that we were left alone. The candle in the middle of the table flickered beautifully, highlighting Jon's sharp features.

"So, ten months in, what have we learned?" I asked, twirling some spaghetti with pesto on my fork.

"Number one, sometimes getting drunk together can fix your problems." Jon pointedly said. I giggled. He sliced a big chunk of steak and reached across the table. "Wanna taste?"

"Sure." I said, leaning in to bite the steak off his fork. The meat tasted so delicious that I closed my eyes, moaning in delight. "That's so good."

I looked at Jon, and he was staring at me, mesmerized. I blushed and went back to my pasta.

"I learned not to leave my mate alone with attractive captains from the tribunal because he's one dense, oblivious motherfucker." I winked at him. He groaned, laughing as he put his hand on his face. I twirled some spaghetti onto my fork and offered it to him. He tasted it.

"Tastes great." He nodded.

"We should try that Lady and the Tramp thing where they nudge meatballs with their noses and kiss with the spaghetti." I said, suggestively raising my eyebrows.

"We can recreate it in wolf form if you want." He winked. I laughed.

"Can we even digest spaghetti as wolves?" I asked, holding back another laugh.

"Only one way to find out." Jon said, motioning to remove his clothes. I snorted in laughter and held my hands up.

"No! No, no!" I laughed, almost choking on some wine. Jon winked at me before leaning back in his seat.

"I learned how to share. I have to admit, it was hard getting used to sharing my bathroom with a girl." He shrugged.

"Hey, I pick my hair out of the drain and I don't complain when you forget to put the toilet seat down."

"But your girl stuff has taken over my counter."

"It's a counter, we're supposed to put stuff on it, duh..."

"Well you know what, I don't care anymore. I've gotten used to it." Jon grinned. I sipped my wine thoughtfully

What else have I learned?

"I learned that different people...have different love languages..." I said. Jon stopped and stared at me, smiling.

"How so?"

"Well, the way you always ask me what I want to eat every time I feel sad...it shows me how much you love me and are mindful of my addiction to food." I said. Color immediately rushed to Jon's cheeks, but he shrugged and smiled.

"That's...that's nothing, Serena. I mean, you and food go together that even I'm jealous. Besides, I like how you show your love to me better." Jon said.

"Oh?" I asked. My heart fluttered, awaiting the deep declaration of affection it was owed. Jon always had a way with words, and I was giddy to hear what he had to say.

"You're great in bed." Jon said with a serious face.

What?

"OH MY GOD HAHAHA!"

I couldn't help it.

I doubled down and cackled in laughter. It was the kind of laughter that was loud—that you couldn't stop no matter how hard you tried. My stomach started to hurt but I couldn't stop laughing. It was too funny! People had started to stare and Jon was waving his hand at me trying to get me to stop but I couldn't stop. I could see how he was trying to hold back his own laughter.

"OH MY GOD JON WHAT THE...HAHAHA! HOW THE...OH MY GOD..." I kept on laughing, and Jon was now apologizing to all the other diners.

Eventually, I managed to calm myself down. I blushed to my roots, suddenly embarrassed about all the attention I had drawn to us.

"Jon...what the hell...I haven't laughed like that in ages..." I whispered, putting my hands on my face. He put his hand over his mouth, chuckling.

"You're such a douche...I said all those nice things and that's all you can come up with?" I teased, gulping down some water.

"Goddess, Serena. I love you so much." Jon exhaled. I looked at him and his sparkly eyes, resisting the urge to swoon.

"You're not getting any tonight." I sneered. He pretended to look horrified.

"But it's our ten month anniversary." He gasped. I giggled.

"I can't...I can't believe it's been ten months...it feels like I've been with you longer than that." I remarked, sipping some wine.

Jon smiled thoughtfully at me.

"You ever think that we were just meant to be with each other?" Jon asked. I sat straight up, startled.

"Whoa, when did you become Ryan Gosling?" I asked, befuddled.

"What? Who? No, I mean...I can't imagine myself being mated to anyone else...but you..." Jon chuckled. "What would have happened if I didn't claim you?"

"Do you really wanna answer that?" I asked.

"Hypothetically." Jon said.

Hmm...

"Okay. Well, let's say I win against Alpha Theodore. Give or take, the war lasts 3 years tops. Assuming I survive the next three claiming ceremonies unmated, I'd join the human world the moment I turned 21 and the claiming ceremony was no longer required. We wouldn't even have met. By the time you'd be ready to claim a mate, I would no longer be a part of this world." I said. Jon sighed dejectedly.

"And you'd probably claim your queen—some Alpha's daughter with a silver rank or one of the female war heroes..." I said. The thought of Jon claiming another woman had me feeling down.

"So when I claimed you, the timing was perfect." Jon muttered.

"Yep. Last year was the only year our paths would have crossed during a claiming ceremony." I nodded.

"I think...I think some part of me realized that. That's why I claimed you the way I did, and why I marked you twice..." Jon trailed off.

"Some part of you wanted me, and you went for it." I shrugged. "Of course, the flashiness of my bracelet did add to my allure."

Jon reached across the table and held my hand in his.

"I know I've never said this but...I'm sorry I claimed you...the way I did. I'm sorry I killed an Alpha, and that I marked you in public like that. You didn't deserve to be scared of me...scared of your own mate. I'm sorry I didn't give you a choice." Jon said, looking down at the table.

I blinked, tears threatening to fall from my eyes.

"Jon...I've already forgiven you for all of that. Besides, I think I did have a choice. If I really wanted to fight you, I think I would have. I mean, I think some part of me wanted to be with you too."

Silence followed.

"If I claimed a mate after the war, I think it wouldn't be the same as what we have right now. I would have claimed her as a duty...so that someone could be my queen and bear my pups. But when I claimed you, I wasn't a prince who wanted a princess. I was a man who wanted a mate" Jon smiled.

Tears slid down my cheeks and I cleared my throat, hastily wiping them away. I held Jon's hand.

"Don't you fucking dare claim another mate after the war."

Now it was Jon's turn to laugh, although he didn't embarrass himself like I did.

"Even if that wasn't even remotely illegal, my heart's already owned by someone."

"The chef who made this pasta? Cause that's who owns mine sorry." I shrugged. Jon chuckled and pinched my cheek playfully.

"Come, let's get out of here." Jon said.

He called for the check and paid for our meal. Jon wouldn't let me spend—he insisted that it was our money anyway. I honestly didn't know what to do with the few thousand I had saved up in the bank from before I was a princess. Even after giving Desert Fang the millions of dollars he owed them, Jon still had some serious money.

Just saying, if we did decide to up and leave the werewolf world, I think we'd be more than comfortable for the rest of our lives.

Jon and I walked hand in hand around the town. It was around 9 in the evening, and a lot of stores were closing down. No one paid us any mind as we strolled across the cobblestone streets, eating ice cream cones we had purchased from a dessert bar nearby. The streetlamps looked so delightful and romantic, making the night even more perfect.

We found ourselves walking back to the town's courtyard. The fountain was still on, with pretty lights casting lovely glows across the water. I peered down and saw hundreds of little silver coins littered on the fountain floor.

"Did you ever make a wish here?" I asked, looking at Jon who was looking intently at the water. He shook himself and smiled at me.

"Yes. Lots of times. I took Patrick here a lot when we were still kids and he'd run me out of coins because he'd make millions of wishes." He chuckled.

"He's not a kid anymore." I chided, bumping his side playfully.

"Nope. Now he's somewhere...somewhere hopefully safe." Jon sighed. "Would you like to make a wish? Here, I'll show you."

He took out a silver coin from his pocket and turned his back on the fountain. He put one hand over his eyes and muttered something to himself. After a few seconds, he threw the coin back over his head and it plopped in the middle of the fountain.

"What did you wish for?" I asked.

"If I tell you, it won't come true." He said, putting a silver coin on my palm. "You try."

I nodded and closed my eyes, turning my back to the fountain. The last time I made a wish was during the festival. Now, I had what I wished for—Jon loved me, and I loved him. What more could I want?

I wish Jon and I would survive this war.

I put my palm over my eyes and threw the coin back over my head. When I heard it plop in the water, I opened my eyes and grinned. I turned to Jon.

"There! I did...Goddess..."

Oh Goddess...

Jon was down on one knee, holding up a diamond ring.

Holy. Shit.

Oh Goddess is this really happening?

"Jon...what are you..."

"Just listen." He said. I shut up. "I know werewolves don't do weddings...we claim, we mark, and that's it. But I didn't do that properly with you and...and you deserve the best. I want to marry you, Serena. I want to marry you in a real wedding. I want to see you in a beautiful white dress—I don't care if it's tomorrow or after the war...I just want to marry you. Even though I've already vowed in my heart to love you for the rest of our lives, I want to say my vows to you in front of our friends and family because...I love you." Jon said, tears glistening in his eyes.

Oh Goddess.

I felt tears running down my cheeks as well. I wanted to freeze the moment because it was just so wonderful.

"Besides, it fits right in with our plans to start a new life in the human world...I want us to be husband and wife in the truest sense of the words. I chose you, Serena, and you chose me. So...Serena Coral Basco..."

"Why did I ever tell you my middle name..."? I sniffled. He chuckled.

"Will you marry me?"

That did it.

I bawled my eyes out. I don't know how long, I just couldn't take it. The tears wouldn't stop flowing.

"You kind of have to give me an answer and my legs are starting to hurt..." He muttered.

I laughed through the tears and nodded.

"As if I'd ever say no! Yes, Jonathon Lancaster, I'll marry you." I declared. With that, Jon slipped the beautiful ring onto my finger and picked me up, twirling me around. He put me down and gave me a deep kiss on the lips. The sound of the water in the fountain rushing down only added to the romantic atmosphere.

"Oh Jon...you're just so perfect..." I sighed, pressing my head against his chest and holding him close.

"You're my fiancée now." He grinned boastfully.

"Yeah, and we're gonna have a gorgeous autumn wedding with..." I was about to trill on and on about my dream wedding when his phone rang.

Jon growled. I detached myself from him.

"Answer it. Maybe it's urgent." I said, pouting. I was not in a fantasy world. My mate had a war to wage. He looked at me apologetically before looking at his phone. He frowned.

"Who is it?"

"Alpha Jason." He said through gritted teeth. "What the fuck could he possibly want at this time of night?"

Jon answered the phone and I leaned in so I could hear the conversation.

"You Lancasters just can't claim your mates the proper way, can you?"

"Excuse me?" Jon growled.

"I just sent your brother off. I didn't know he was taking a boat back to Lightwing. Don't worry, I didn't give him any trouble." Alpha Jason said.

My blood ran cold. Jon stiffened.

"You saw Patrick?" Jon demanded. I could hear Alpha Jason chuckling over the phone.

"Yes. You should have informed us, Prince Jonathon. My men were ready to attack on sight. Thankfully one of the patrols recognized him. I won't be reporting this to the tribunal, but it will cost you."

"What?"

"What is he going to report? That Patrick was on a boat? That's not illegal!" Serena hissed.

"You should see your brother's new mate. She's a pretty little thing with a funny scent. Mark's still fresh. At least you waited until the claiming ceremony, eh? Goodbye and good night, Prince Jonathon."

Continue to next part