

Excerpt

Chapter 1

Simon stared out the large, arched windows of his beautifully furnished office. The unobstructed view of Charleston Harbor along the picturesque coast of South Carolina did little to soothe the beast inside him. He could feel the creature he had become centuries before moving under his skin, straining to break free.

On the outside, he had been called many things over the years. Bastard was just one of the words used to describe him. While correct, it was not the only one that could be associated with him.

He had been born in 1709 to an unmarried servant of a Lord in Worcester, England. By the age of eight, he had learned well at his father's hand what it truly meant to be called the bastard son of a Lord. But, that was nothing compared to the other word that could describe what he would later become.... Werewolf.

His lips curved upward as he stared out at a passing yacht. Only a handful of trusted people knew what he truly looked like under the sleek, sophisticated exterior he showed the world. He often wondered what the men and women he had associated with over the centuries would have thought if they had known the truth about his identity.

Simon didn't bother turning when the door to his office opened after a soft knock sounded. He could see Youssef briefly bowed in the reflection of the

tinted glass before he stepped into the room. While Youssef and he had many similar characteristics, they were also vastly different.

Both men were tall, muscular, and deadly, but in different ways. Youssef was still human where Simon was not. Simon bore the light coloring of his English ancestry. He was tall, elegant, wealthy and handsome with his shoulder-length blonde hair tied at the nape of his neck, dark blue eyes, and aristocratic features. Youssef, on the other hand, had the dark features of his native homeland of Morocco. His family had served Simon for the past three hundred years, passing down his secret from parent to child.

He turned as another knock echoed through the room. This time it was the new clerk his personal assistant had hired. She smiled seductively as she stepped into the room and handed him the papers he had requested an hour before. A brief glance showed him that she would not last long, the calculating look proved she would be a liability.

He would have to speak with Colin, his personal assistant, again. The last thing he needed was complications. It wasn't like he had difficulty finding female company if he wanted it. Unfortunately, Colin thought a little eye-candy, as he called it, made the office more interesting. He preferred his distractions in the bedroom, not the office.

Simon had grown used to women swooning when he cast his attention upon them, while men cringed and fought for obscurity. Both could sense what he wanted from them, the women to slake his lust and

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the men to quench his need to hunt. He made sure he kept both desires away from his business life.

“Do you need anything else, Mr. Drayton?” Amy Ashton asked as she stopped in front of him and looked up. “Anything at all?” She whispered, taking a step closer.

Simon took the folder from her hands. “No, you are dismissed.” He replied bluntly with a glance at Youssef.

A slight pout formed her perfectly outlined red lips, but she didn’t say anything else. Simon watched as she turned on her high heels and slowly walked toward the door. He knew she paused before she opened it to see if he was watching her. He waited until she quietly shut the door behind her before he looked up from the contract he was reading.

“Get rid of her,” Simon ordered.

Youssef’s lips quirked in amusement. “Colin is going to be disappointed. This one didn’t even last a full day,” he said, folding his arms across his chest.

“I’ll have a talk with Colin,” Simon replied, turning back around to stare out the window again.

It was growing late and the early evening shadows were beginning to dance along the sidewalk. The beast inside him moved restlessly, needing to run. Once again, Simon cursed the Werewolf that changed him.

At eighteen, he had finally escaped the cruel control of his father only to have it replace by his

Master. For the first twenty years, Sir Winston Boatwright had been his alpha. Simon was barely a man the year he was changed and discovered while Werewolves aged, they did so at a much slower rate than a human.

What Boatwright had not expected, though, was for his pupil to learn as fast as he had, or to be so deadly. Simon had no regrets for killing his former master. Boatwright had enjoyed the years of torment and torture too much for him to have feelings for the old Werewolf.

Boatwright lived to create more monsters in the image of himself. He pitted his creations against each other in a hellhole where he invited unsuspecting human aristocrats to come place their bets. It made Boatwright a very wealthy and powerful man, while at the same time giving him more victims for his sadistic games.

Simon rubbed at the faint scars around his left wrist. He had been kept chained until the fateful night he escaped. Boatwright had made a lethal mistake that had given Simon the chance for freedom.

He had invited a few wealthy human females to partake of the savage beast's lust. Boatwright enjoyed watching as the women took advantage of the raging desire that drove him almost to insanity. A Werewolf's sexual craving was a powerful and dangerous thing.

Lady Mary Quincy didn't listen to the careful instructions given to her before entering his chamber. The stout pin holding up her thick hair was the tool

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he needed to pick the locks binding him. As she rode his body, he used his teeth to capture the loose pin. He slipped it into his mouth and held it tightly against his cheek until she and Boatwright were through with using his body for their pleasure.

Three nights later, he had escaped after killing his handlers. Boatwright had chased him through the streets of London, but the fighting had hardened his body until he was the ultimate killing machine. He had quickly defeated his former master and left his body in the burning remains of a hut on the outskirts of town.

After killing Boatwright, he had gone after the second man responsible for his captivity. It had taken him three weeks to work his way north to the country estate of the man who had sold him to his Master in exchange for wealth and power. He had taken his time killing his half-brother, Henry Manning. That was another death that he had no regrets over.

At almost three hundred years old, he had seen the best and worst of humanity. At first, it had been difficult for him to control the beast that moved inside him. It had taken him almost a quarter of a century to harness it. Youssef's great-great-great grandfather had been instrumental in helping him.

"You should let the past go, my friend," Youssef said in a quiet voice, watching the figure standing in silent readiness. "You need to hunt."

Simon pulled away from his reverie and nodded. "Tonight," he replied. "My quarters are ready?"

"Yes," Youssef responded.

"Good...," Simon's voice faded as a figure on the street below his office suddenly caught his attention.

A low rumble escaped him in surprise. The figure was of a female. She wasn't very tall and had curves that made him want to run his hands over them. Her dark brown hair was pulled back into a high ponytail that swung as she twirled on the sidewalk to laugh up at the tall male next to her.

Even from this distance he could see the excitement on her face as she replied to the man. Her arms flung outward, pushing the heavy mounds of her breasts upward. He could feel the beast inside him respond to the unintended invitation.

The female was the exact opposite of what he was normally attracted to, yet he couldn't pull his eyes away from her. His hand tightened on the papers in his hand, crumpling them, when the male suddenly pulled the female into his arms and hugged her close before releasing her.

"What is it?" Youssef asked, walking over to stand next to Simon so he could look out of the window. "Do you sense a threat?"

"Yes," Simon muttered under his breath. "But, this one is from the beast inside me. He wants that female."

Youssef stared down at the two figures. The male was still talking to the female. Whatever he was saying, she was enthusiastically nodding her head up

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and down as she intently listened to him. She was a short, slightly plump, curvy woman who might have been mistaken as rather ordinary if not for the glow in her face.

“Do you want me to find out who she is?” Youssef asked, turning to look at Simon. A slight curse escaped his lips when he realized that his friend had disappeared. “Damn it, I hate it when you do that!” He muttered, turning and heading for the door that was still in motion.