

# MATES REUNITED

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## **DARKNESS & LIGHT CHAPTER 24: SEAN'S POV**

Following is an excerpt from Chapter 24 of *Darkness & Light*. I LOVE switching up scenes to study the other POV(s). This one was just as much fun as *Fated Encounter*.

Beginning right after Nathan shares his 'bedtime story' with Jem ... I hope you enjoy.

Please be advised, the following scene contains acts of a sexual nature and is suitable ONLY for an audience of 18 or over.

O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O

Panic and fear flashed in Jem's eyes as she stood beside my spot on the sofa.

I couldn't blame her.

Not after Dad had smacked her upside the head with her history.

In one sitting.

In front of the entire pack.

After she'd just woken up.

*Talk about not pulling any punches.*

"I'm going for a shower." She darted for the living room door.

I pushed to my feet, reaching out a hand. If she noticed, she chose to ignore it.

"You can't hide from it, Jem," Dad said to her retreating back.

I swallowed my groan at his blasted persistence.

Jem paused at the doorway, her gaze swinging to me. Although I wanted to interpret her expression otherwise, I'd have been an idiot not to catch the plea.

A plea for what, though? For it all to be a lie? For me to pipe up with a bloody

chuckle and tell her not to worry, Dad's just yanking your chain?

"You still show signs of being a wolf," Dad said. "It's still in you. It may be buried deep within, but it's there. Every time you come near, I know there's still a hint of the werewolf gene inside you because I can smell it. We all can."

*Jesus Christ.* Could he have made it sound any more ominous?

I zipped my lips, though. Just as I'd been ordered.

"You're crazy, Nathan," Jem said before fleeing the room.

As Dad and I trailed her out into the hallway, she leaped up the stairs double time like she had a bushfire up her butt.

"I'm telling you to alert you, Jem," Dad said.

Jem spun on the top step and glowered down in Dad's direction.

"You need to know," he said. "Years ago, Jem was in danger for being the first female werewolf."

By that point, I wanted to stick a damn muzzle on him ...

"Every pack knows of your history," he said. "You need to be aware that if they find out about this, they may come here, looking for you."

... even if he *was* telling the truth.

Jem's left eyebrow shot up as her jaw tightened. "Is this your very unsubtle way of telling me my life is now in danger, Nathan?"

"You've been in danger since the day you walked into that restaurant."

As a groan tried to squeeze out, I closed my eyes.

"I need a shower," Jem said, drawing me back to her.

"You can shower all you like, Jem. The scent will still be there," Dad said.

Jem spun away and ran down the landing.

"Nicely done, Dad." I rounded him to go after her. Before I'd even hit the first stair,

the bathroom door slammed shut.

“She needed to be told,” he said. “Better to have gotten it out the way instead of stringing her along like everything is more innocent than it is.”

I paused, half twisting to bring him back into view. “Yeah, but did you have to make it sound like a courtroom interrogation with a death sentence as the only outcome?”

Without waiting for his response, I climbed the rest of the stairs, halting on the landing. For seconds, I stared at the door separating me from her, listening to the sound of the running shower. I really wanted to go to her, check she was okay, check just how badly Dad had scared her off.

I had no right to go barging into the bathroom, though.

Not without invitation.

Instead, I ducked left into my bedroom, sat on the end of my bed. Propping my elbows on my knees, I stuck my head in my hands, each side to side twist messing my hair.

I quit and peered toward the bathroom like I had periscope eyes topped with x-ray vision.

The shower still ran. Jem'd probably stay in there all night. I would have in her shoes.

My knees began a jig, wobbling my arms, vibrating through my head. I stood it for about ninety seconds before I bolted off the bed for the door.

Back on the landing, I spun at the creak of the third stair.

Josh stared up at me.

I sent him a growl and shoved open the door to the lilac bedroom instead.

The entire space, which had stood empty for so long before her arrival, smelled of Jem. She'd only spent a singular night in there. Yet, somehow, she'd managed to permeate every corner, every scrap of fabric.

It should have been my room that reeked of her.

*Our* room, I corrected.

Three more stairs groaned beyond the door. More on edge than I wanted to admit, I stuck my head back out into the landing and sent Josh a stronger snarl with a jerk of my head that in no uncertain terms told him to go away.

Last thing Jem needed if she ever left the bathroom would be a welcoming committee.

Josh opened his mouth before he seemed to think better of it and slunk the way he'd come without so much as a backward glance.

Two strides took me back into my own room. In there, I could detect only me.

I pivoted, re-entered the lilac room and drew a dose of female deep into my olfactory.

Before I knew what I was doing, I'd backtracked to my room again. Me.

To the lilac room. Jem.

Back and forth.

Me ... and Jem.

Me and Jem.

Me. Jem.

If I moved fast enough, the two separate remnants almost became one.

At silence in the bathroom, I halted between the rooms.

The shower door squeaked open. The slap of a wet foot hit the floor.

My ears twitched as my head tilted, tracking her path across the room to the other side until she stopped. A clink and what sounded like quiet muttering followed before the tap came on.

"Everything okay?" Dad asked from below.

Without turning, I waved a hand behind me, hoping he'd get the message and disappear.

A second later, his steps padded away, leaving me alone again and staring at the bathroom door like something epic was about to happen.

The tap shut off. More muttering filtered through the barrier, too low for me to catch any words. When her footsteps started up again—toward the door—I dived into the lilac bedroom and shut myself in, scuttling across to the window.

The handle twisted at the end of the landing.

Spinning, my butt almost skidded off the window sill as I planted it and tried to look like I'd done nothing but sit calmly and wait for her to emerge.

The quiet patter of tiptoeing travelled along the landing before the handle of the door squeaked down and Jem burst into the room like an act late to the stage—in nothing but a towel.

She froze. “Oh!”

In an urge to be closer to her, I pushed up from the sill. “Jem?”

Her mouth opened and closed. No sound came out.

I chanced a step forward, ordering my attention not to drop to the tops of her breasts peeking from her towel. “Jem, are you okay?”

Her mouth opened again and closed before she nodded, a whole hoard of indecipherable emotions swirling through her eyes.

Another step took me forward until only a few feet separated us. “You don't really look okay.”

“It's a ... lot to, you know ...” She shrugged, the movement tugging down on the cloth covering her.

I swallowed the pool of saliva gathered in my throat, ordered myself to focus. “He could have handled it a little better, too.”

She gave a small nod and shrugged. “So could I.”

Though I could have argued that matter further, I had more pressing concerns. “Are you staying tonight, still?”

Her frown creased her forehead, confusion entering her stare. “Where else would I go?” she asked like she had no other choice.

Her words stung, but whilst my inner wolf insisted I should have been using any reason to keep her there, I still opened my big mouth and said, “If you felt the need to leave, I could—”

“I meant, where else would I *want* to go?”

I blinked. My lips curved a little as though guided by strings. “You want to stay?”

“Why would I shower if I planned to hightail it out of here?”

“I thought, maybe—”

“Besides, what would I do? If I head out to the road, you’d only follow. Even at my fastest, I can’t outrun a car, especially not a bright yellow Porsche because everyone knows the yellow ones are fastest. Or ...” She gave a small smile, and her arms began penguin-ing at her sides; she didn’t even seem to notice her flails as her gaze rolled up to the ceiling like she was searching for cracks. “Or, maybe I could make a break through the forest. Goodness knows, that’s a brilliant idea as far as escape plans go, don’t you think? It’s not like you lot could catch me in there.”

When her hands started smacking off her thighs, I reached out and grabbed them. Her gaze dropped to my restraint, but I hooked a finger under her chin and brought her face back up. As those sapphire eyes of hers locked onto mine, my heart boomed. I could have kissed her right then. The surge of heat through my body more than told me I wanted to. Needing to be certain, though, I held myself in check. “So, you don’t want to leave?”

“No.”

As my sigh eked out, my lips spread into a full out grin.

Her gaze flittered to the side and her chin slid from my finger.

Unwilling to lose the connection we just had, I brought her back, the skin of her cheek soft beneath my palm. "I love you, Jem."

"I know you do, Sean. Why else do you think I'm still here?"

The blue of her eyes seemed to shine. Before I could stop myself, I pressed my lips to hers. *Beautiful*. It took pretty much every ounce of control I possessed not to strip her bare and test out the bounce of the mattress. The beginnings of a growl brewed somewhere deep in my gut.

To be in on the safe side, I withdrew, but not before inhaling as much of her feminine scent as my lungs could hold. Almost dizzy with lust, I stepped away.

She followed.

I held my breath as her face pressed against my chest.

My fingers found her shoulders.

I had every intention of urging her away but her hands sweeping around and over my back altered that idea.

I closed my eyes as she tucked her hands beneath my T-shirt, the flesh on flesh contact from her almost too much to bear.

*Christ*. I wanted her. "I should leave now," I whispered.

"Stay."

I opened my eyes at her request. "Jem?"

"I don't ... want you to go, Sean."

She shifted a hand to my chest, pushing against me toward the bed, her reach for the light switch at the same time plunging us into darkness.

*What the ...* I braced against her and stretched across to flick it back on.

Before my eyes even had chance to adjust, she slapped it off again.

I frowned down at her darkened features. “Jem, what’s wrong?”

“You can’t see me ... naked.” Her voice came out hushed.

*But ... “Jem?”*

“No man has ever seen me naked before.”

“I have.” I knocked the light back on. “Every time I close my eyes, all I see is you.”

She hit the switch again. “I can’t.”

“Jem, please.” *God, please.* “Do you have any idea how long I’ve been waiting for this?” *And I’m damned if I’ll cross this milestone in shadow.* “Eight years of dreams have turned into a lifetime of frustration.” Not that she’d ever understand. How could she when she’d only endured five weeks of the brain invasion? Eight years, though? *Damn.* It had been a long time to spend alone with one person, night after night. “I’ve been totally in love with a woman I didn’t even know for sure would walk into my life. Now you’re here—am I not allowed to revel in that a little?”

A second of quiet passed.

“How much have you had to endure in your dreams, Sean?”

“*Everything.*” I stared down at her upturned face, my raised hands a hairsbreadth from grasping her. Like that would make her ‘see’. Make her understand. “I’ve known for years what you would look like, how you’d smell and taste. I’ve already seen every inch of your body.” My eyes closed, the vivid images I’d lived with so long playing out on the back of my lids. “I’ve seen you laugh, cry, smile.” My own lips curved. “I know where you like to be touched and how. I know about being able to touch, see, and taste you makes *me* feel. I know everything, Jem, have for years. I have waited for you, for years.”

“It must have driven you crazy,” she murmured.

I lifted my lids. “You have no idea.”

She turned the light back on; her eyes dilated in the sudden brightness. “I didn’t know.”

“How could you?”

Quietness descended outside of our bodies; within, our hearts galloped, mine beneath the press of Jem’s palm. As though locked in a secret world, where we could communicate in a glance every built up emotion we’d been unable to share over the years apart, neither one of us looked away.

Her fingers twitched, tickling even through my clothing. “I-I, um ...” Rouge flushed across her cheeks. Before I could ask why, she grabbed handfuls of my t-shirt and dragged it over my head.

Again, she’d shocked the hell out of me. No way would I argue, though. Instead, I lifted my arms and hauled my shirt off completely, tossing it aside. Almost afraid to hope, I gave my attention back to her. I only had to arch an eyebrow, and she nodded.

I didn’t need an invite reminder. With a single tug, I’d unleashed her towel.

It dropped to the floor.

Leaving Jem naked.

Completely naked.

Just like in my dreams.

I released a slow breath as my gaze skimmed across her, from the tips of her toes, along her calves, her—I swallowed down more saliva—thighs, that slightly rounded stomach of hers which only seemed to add shape to her hips. By the time I’d taken in my fill of her breasts, her shy upward gaze through her lowered lashes almost undid me.

When she reached out and hooked a finger over my waistband, twanging at it, I couldn’t get my shorts off fast enough.

Minutes passed.

No words seemed necessary, but the flickering of her gaze and the darkening of her eyes told me she studied my nudity just as thoroughly as I had hers.

I considered flexing my biceps. Just for a second.

Of course, not all my muscles needed flexing. Some of them seemed to be doing just fine on their own. When Jem's lips finally curved up, and her eyes glistened, I wasted not a second more in pulling her close.

Her body curved against mine when I kissed her. My arms slid around to scoop her up. As she always had in my dreams, she kept her eyes open, her gaze seeming to penetrate my soul when I crossed the room and laid her on the bed.

Propped above her, I stared back, awaiting permission before I would go further.

Her hand weaved into my hair. "Show me." She brushed my lips with hers. "Show me how it feels."

After one final meeting of lips, I skimmed across her jaw. Her head tilted, a soft sigh teased my ear, and her fingers tightened around the strands of my hair she held.

The pulse below her ear drummed against my cheek. A twist of my face brought it closer, and I lapped there with my tongue before grazing my teeth the length of her neck and along her shoulder.

Not biting, though. Never biting. No matter how much the urge shook through me.

Changing direction, I worked my way along her collarbone. As I suckled at the dip of her throat, her low moan drew me back up.

Her gaze met mine again. Each of her tremulous breaths raised her chest, her breasts brushing against me. Unable to stop myself, I dipped in search of them, each fleshy mound soft and *oh so freaking* moan-worthy beneath my tongue.

An inhalation absorbed the scent of her arousal mingled with a sweet, sweet, natural aroma, pumping from her even more powerfully than the soap she'd used to wash.

I shuddered. My lids began a slow droop. I ordered them back up. No way would I risk missing anything.

From her breasts, I headed south, toward the core where her erotic scent pulsed from—sucking, caressing, my lips and tongue visiting every inch of flesh surrounding her navel. *Damn*. I couldn't get enough of my female.

Beneath each touch, shivers raced through her body. Above me, her hastened breaths fluttered the hairs at my crown. Through it all, her fingers never once left my hair, each gentle nudge taken as an approval of my acts.

As my caresses reached her hip, her body pushed closer, seeming to chase each kiss as I crossed over her pubis.

More scent pumped from her.

A growl threatened to escape.

*God*. I needed her. Like nothing ever before.

My hands shook when I slid them over her hips, the urge of my fingers gently parting her thighs.

She stiffened. Her entire body. From pliable to plank in an instant. The tiniest tinge of fear muddied her scent.

I pushed back up, took her cheek, peered into eyes as dark with longing as I suspected my own to be. "Trust me, Jem," I murmured.

I don't know what changed her mind. I all but hummed above her. My breaths came in small pants. Between us, my erection throbbed.

Still, the hard lines to her body softened again, and her sigh feathered my face. "I trust you," she whispered.

I stared at her for seconds. I needed to be certain. Though I saw no echoes in her expression of the panic I'd sensed, I couldn't take the risk of any later regrets.

*Wouldn't* take the risk.

Going with my gut, I slid my arms beneath her, drew her close, and swung us both up until her legs rested over my lap. "I'm yours." I smiled, dropped my hands to my sides, giving her full control.

Her forehead bumped against mine. She gave a small laugh that warmed my face. After a few erratic beats of her heart, she reached for my hands and placed them on her hips. A nudge up with her knees elevated her a little. My face tipped back to follow and she rewarded me with a kiss that almost left me panting. As each tiny yank of her fingers within my hair seemed to be putting me exactly where she wanted, my palms swept across her back.

Captured within her shimmering gaze, I gave a low moan when her tongue darted out for a taste, and her lips trailed across my shoulder and along the curved line of my neck.

The deep rumble in my chest brewed beneath the tug of her teeth on my earlobe, my fingers flexing with the urge to take her, to touch her, to *feel* her.

"Jem." My face nuzzled into her hair, the trace of perspiration amid the strands offering her scent like a gift. "My Jem."

Nibbling along her jaw, I lay back, my arms folding around to take her with me, and our mouths reconnected. With the altered position, the tip of my erection located her.

She moaned, long and low.

Grasping her hips, I pressed them down. Urged mine up. The closest I could get to a union of bodies without penetration.

Her entire body seemed to tremble in response.

My breaths shuddered from me as I pushed up against her again.

Breaking from the kiss, she caught my lip with her teeth as though to steady my actions. We remained still for seconds, seemed to savour the contact, before she licked at

the afflicted spot. My own tongue darted out in greeting, and our mouths melded once more.

Her fingers clutched at my shoulders.

She tilted her hips again.

My control snapped.

I grabbed her. Rolled her beneath me. Nestled between her thighs. Entered her.

Her gasp burst from her.

*Oh, Jesus, yes.* I hovered there a moment—suspended in an instant of pure rapture.

Her eyes closed as her head tipped back, and I pulled out, thrust again, out and in, the shivers wracking my body almost as violent as Jem's beneath me. My gasped breaths with each drive of my hips sounded almost as loud as those Jem shared.

When her eyes reopened, the darkest, glossiest pools I'd ever seen stared back at me, and I completely lost myself in them, in *her*, until everything else failed to exist.

Our hearts thudded against one another as though straining forward in greeting with each beat. Each of our panted breaths mingled as though carrying our very essence to create a powerful infusion. Whilst around us, our scents I'd strained so hard to capture earlier combined into the perfect synergy and more, entering my synapses like a shot of the best drug on earth.

Her panting evolved into whimpers, mine into murmured growls.

The arch of her back brought her nearer to me.

I needed her closer.

My arm slipped beneath her, hugging her against me, and her legs rose higher as though she needed more of me, too.

As each of her muscles grew more taut, my own began the slow coiling of tightness that signified the nearing of the end.

My fingers grasped at her.

*Jem.*

My toes went into spasm.

*My Jem.*

An explosion of pleasure threatened to blaze through my groin until it discovered that pinnacle of ecstasy where only total recognition occurs between two souls.

*Oh, God.*

Stiffness possessed her body. She froze, her heartbeat seemed to slow, luring mine along with it, and for a moment, we could have been mere organisms floating in a void of nothingness.

“*Sean.*” My name whispered from her lips.

The instant the spell was broken, she contracted around me, leaving no choice but to follow, and my thunderous snarl announced my release.