

The Changing Times



By wwwolf

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Chapter 19: What's the Measure of a Man? I Don't Know, but my Tail is Three Feet Long

Johnathan was just turning back to the Talbot's door when it swung open. A moment later Steward stepped out, followed by Emma.

The man had quite the black eye.

For just a heartbeat Johnathan couldn't move.

Emma. *His* Emma, stood before him, looking dishevelled and worse for wear. She still wore the same dress Johnathan had seen her in last night at the party.

Without presumption Emma stepped up to Johnathan and pulled the piece of paper, now splattered through with blood, from his hand.

A quick read of the contract and she turned to her father.

"How could you?" He voice was soft but diamond hard. "You not only *sold* me to a man, but then broke your word once you had his money!"

"But... but, my darling," Steward's voice was rough, "He's a *beast*. You deserve better."

"You mean *you* want better. You've known for years who I love."

Pressing the paper into her father's hands, Emma turned to face Johnathan.

Only now did a slight smile edge onto her face.

Johnathan noticed a bruise growing on one of her hands that matched the black eye her father was sporting.

"So *this* is my knight in shining armour to carry me off?" She asked.

Johnathan snorted. "I never said I was your saviour."

"I should hope not," she stepped forward, looping her arm in his, "You're somewhat underpowered for that. But," she reached up, pulling a handkerchief from a pocket to tie around the bullet wound in Johnathan's shoulder. He winced. "I think I can do well enough with you."

Author's Note

For the first time, I'm at a bit of a loss as to what to put in my Author's Note. Wow.

I'm sure there's much to say about *The Changing Times*, it was a book I wrote over a long, lazy prairie summer that never seemed to end.

The story is my first attempt at what I'd call a *romance*. I made a lot of stylistic changes when I wrote this story. Not the least of which was switching into the third-person perspective.

It may not seem like much, but writing 'he said' and 'Johnathan did' drove me crazy for the first week or so. I kept having to go back and edit the story, cleaning up places where I'd slipped in the inadvertent 'I'.

In the original plan for this book Emma was going to be a far more active character, going toe-to-toe with Johnathan and being proactive. It didn't quite work out that way.

All of the other main characters for *The Hunters* went on – in spirit at least – to lead their own book. Jon had *Police Dog*, and English took center stage in *Little Brother to a Lion*. *The Changing Times* was supposed to be Rebeca's chance to shine. I'm not disappointed with the way everything came out, but... well, it wasn't as planned.

Now that the story's up, I'm rediscovering just how many scenes I've ripped – sometimes wholesale – from my earlier works. Drowning from *The Hunters*, the party from *The Diplomats*, the hunt sequence from *Little Brother to a Lion*... At this point I'm just going to chalk it up to inadvertently reworking them from a different point of view.

As for the ending, well... It came out well enough, but I was never really happy with it. That seems to be a running theme with many of my stories. We build towards a major climax at the end and... almost inevitably it never quite seems to pay off to the level that I was hoping.

And on that front, that's where Richard comes in. He was part of the story from the very first

outline, but he never quite felt like he was integrated enough. He was intended to be my Gaston, my big villain. I suppose it's a sign that I don't read too much romance that he just never quite took off.

Anyway, so be it. Here's *The Changing Times*. It may not have come out the way I was hoping for, but I'm not displeased with it. It might be a while before I try my hand at writing a romance again though.

Overall, I hope you enjoy *The Changing Times*. It was an enjoyable story to write, and it's always fun to set a lion loose in the English countryside.

Next up, we'll be seeing some familiar faces again. Back to the other side of the world again, a scrawny little wolf is going to find himself a nemesis in *The Pathfinders*...