

Chapter 293

Rayne was still stunned at the news she was pregnant as she left Rafe's library, Gard closely following behind her. She could feel his emotions through their bond and had to fight down a laugh. One moment he was ecstatic and the next he was full of trepidation. Confused didn't come close enough to describing his emotions.

She was aware of Lacey in the sitting room with her sons and couldn't stop herself from peering in to look at them. She felt her own trepidation set in as she watched the ease her Alpha handled first one child and then the other as she cooed to them. Lacey made it look so effortless and she couldn't help wondering if she'd be half as good a mother.

"You'll be perfect," Gard soothed, his arms wrapping around her from behind, his hand resting tenderly against her stomach.

"Have you taken up mind reading now?" Rayne laughed softly leaning against the thick wall of his chest.

Lacey looked up and smiled at the sound of their voices. She took in Gard's hold and her smile grew wider. "It's easier than it looks, Rayne," she called out, immediately coming to the correct conclusion as to why her pack members looked so shell-shocked.

"Right up until the moment the boys were born Lacey was convinced she'd be a terrible mother," Rafe chuckled coming up beside them. "She measured herself by Jen's standards and found herself lacking." His tone made it plain how ridiculous he'd found that idea at the time.

They headed into the sitting room together with Caleb and Annie bringing up the rear. Rafe crossed to his mate, sinking down to the floor beside her and reaching out to gather Ben in his arms for a quick cuddle before he lay him down gently and gave Aaron the same doting hug.

Rayne eased down onto one of the large sofas with Gard, with Caleb artfully guiding his mate away from the other sofa and towards one the many armchairs in the room. He picked the one closest to the babies.

"A King should have his throne," he laughed lightly at Rhianna's raised eyebrow.

"So should a Queen," she quipped back as he sat down and pulled her onto his lap.

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"You have one, sweet Annie. You're sitting on it."

"Men!" Rhianna rolled her eyes in mock exasperation even as she settled comfortably against Caleb's chest, contentment on her face as she gazed down at her nephews. She realised this was the first time she'd been in a proper family environment with her brothers and their mates. The feeling of completeness that came over her was wonderful.

wŴŴ.nov@LŴôrm.com

"I wonder if we'll have a son or daughter," Gard mused, fascinated by the little boys wriggling on the soft blankets on the rug. He didn't really mind what they would have. He just wanted their child to be healthy and happy.

"Do you wish to know?" Rhianna asked with a mysterious smile on her face as their eyes met.

Gard blinked slowly, surprise crossing his. "You know the baby's sex already?" It couldn't be possible. They were only just pregnant; the child was barely days old!

Rayne could feel Gard's excitement even though she was just as astounded that Annie knew what they were having so early. She met her mate's eyes and raised an eyebrow. She really didn't mind knowing the baby's sex if he wanted to.

Rhianna didn't answer his question but her smile did become wider.

"Put him out of his misery, Annie," Rayne laughed softly. "I'll never hear the end of it if you don't. I'd really like to know if we're having a boy or a girl."

"Well, if you're both sure," Rhianna grinned. "You're having a son."

Pride welled up inside Gard's chest, a strong, deep feeling of utter joy that his son was growing inside his mate. He had never dreamed he would find the one woman who would make his long days of lonely existence come to an end. Now he not only had his exquisite wildcat but she was also giving him a son to cherish. He had hoped for a little girl, one exactly like her mother but he figured they could work on that for their next child.

"A son," he breathed quietly, his voice thick with emotion. "We could call him Tobias. I've always liked that name."

Rayne turned to look at him, her expression one of disagreement. "Tobias? You want to name my son Tobias? I don't think so, vampire." She was lightly stroking her stomach, smiling even as she put her foot down. Her son was inside her, a perfect little boy who would be just like his father, only he'd have much better taste in names!

"What's wrong with Tobias?" Gard growled as the others laughed at his disgruntled expression. "It's a perfectly good name for a boy. I don't hear you coming out with anything."

"I'm just coming to terms with the fact you knocked me up so quickly," she bit back struggling to contain her laughter as his expression changed to one of complete outrage. Her mate actually spluttered as he tried to formulate words and she did burst out laughing then.

"If you can't come to an agreement on naming the child, I have the perfect solution for you," Rhianna suddenly said. Her voice was quiet yet they both turned to look at her. There was something in the tone that was quite hypnotic as if she was combination of both Annie and Anakatrine in that moment.

Rayne was immensely curious as to what her new sister considered the perfect name for her son. "What would you suggest, Annie?"

"Kothari."*www.ovelŴôrm.(c)ôm*

Gard went so still at her side that for a moment Rayne was convinced that he'd stopped breathing. Their mate bond was completely silent as he stared at his sister with a stunned expression on his face. A trickle of unease went down her spine for a moment as the siblings looked so intently at each other.

"Is there some special significance to Kothari?" she finally breathed out when Gard remained silent.

Rhianna's gaze moved from her brother and met hers. She smiled a beatific smile. "I've always thought that sometimes tradition can be a wonderful thing," she sighed softly. "Sometimes it's just perfect to name a son after his father."

Rayne frowned, taking her words in, turning slowly to look up at Gard who had a sheen of moisture in his eyes as he sat so quietly beside her. Rhianna's words finally penetrated her mind and understanding rocked through her.*ww@.nôvêl(w)ôrm.côm*

"Your name is Kothari?" The words tumbled out on a stunned breath. She had never considered her mate had any other name. He was...he was just Gard. Wasn't he?"

Gard's gaze finally dropped to hers and a hint of amusement crossed his face as he looked down at her. "Gard the Guardian?" he said drolly. He was still stunned at hearing his birth name spoken once again after so many millennia of it never passing anyone's lips. He should have known Anakatrine would never forget it as everyone else had. He was just unprepared for how emotional it had made him feel hearing it once more.

"Kothari is my birth name. It's just been so long since I've heard it that I was a bit surprised hearing it after all these centuries." His shock easing, he smiled down at his mate. "I was so puffed up with my own self importance of being the Guardian that I announced it continually when Anakatrine was being her most wilful."