

Chapter 124

HENDRICK

I sense Cayden wanting to move, and I take a step forward to lay a hand on his shoulder.

"Think of Missy," I whisper before grinning at the bitch. "Madam Patricia, how lovely to see you again."

Her smile falls only for a split second before she regains it again, "It's still Rachel, Hendrick."

"Rachie, right," Finnegan shouts as he puts his arm around Matthew's shoulder, and both look at her with a smug expression. "How is life treating you?!"

The men laugh while Cayden holds out his hand, summoning Artemisia to his side, who had been looking at him expectantly while she must have noticed the tension in the air.

She takes a few fast steps, reaching Cayden to take his hand and he pulls her to his side with a smile. "Are you tired? I'm sure they will be done wasting our time soon, and we will get escorted to our rooms."

Rachel's look darkens slightly as she watches Cayden speak to her lovingly. I know that they were meant to be by a higher being, or whatever they call that, but I don't think I ever saw Cayden talk with, or even look at, Rachel as he does with Artemisia.

Which honestly makes my malicious joy grow.

"It's okay. I slept a lot during the ride," Artemisia answers with a smile, and I can see Rachel fuming as she turns around, gesturing to the entrance.

"I'll show you to your quarters. If you may follow me."

Cayden squeezes Artemisia's hand, and we follow them as they start walking after Rachel.

"Thank you, Patricia." He says coldly, making me swallow a laugh.

We walk through the enormous luxurious foyer and along wide hallways which make the wolves stare in awe.

Even I, myself, who have seen an awfully tiring number of castles and palaces during my excruciatingly long lifetime, have to admit that it is quite fancy.

But more than the palace's decorative walls and arched passages, I enjoy observing Artemisia, scanning her surroundings with sparkling eyes.

"This is the west wing, where the ladies will reside," Rachel stops in front of a ridiculously large door with two guards standing at each of its sides, making us frown.

"I beg your pardon?" Cayden asks, and I can feel how the others are keeping back their indignation to not undermine their Alpha's position. *www.novelWorld.com*

Rachel still has the smug grin plastered on her face, and I have to take a deep breath to stop my heart from twisting in anger. "Well, the high council has decided that Artemisia has to be separated from her mates to guarantee a safe and fair trial. You won't want them to think you are controlling and manipulating her, right?"

This is outrageous, and I'm already taking a step forward to protest as I sense Fynn moving, and I put my arm out, stopping him from going any further.

"That's not acceptable," Cayden says calmly. "Until any order from the high council we are still considered to be married, so there is no way I'm leaving my wife's and pup's side in a place like this. Not when we are being constantly attacked by her family. The high council surely will know that our bond has to be respected until we are proven of something which would lead to its elimination."

Rachel purses her lips, crossing her hands elegantly in front of her frame. "I understand your concerns, Cayden, but-"

"It's still Alpha Blackwood for you. And as I understood, you are here to welcome guests and play with scented bubbles, but not to make decisions," Cayden growls, interrupting her. "So, it's rather you calling an elder from the high council to speak to me or you prepare her room where we are staying."

"Oh, burn," I hear Matthew whisper behind me, and I press my lips together to keep my grin from spreading on my lips.

Because honestly, this shit has stopped being funny weeks ago.

We still don't know why Artemisia's family is putting up all that trouble to harm us like that, but I suppose that we will find out soon enough.

I'm also pretty confident that we will come out of this trial as the winners but I know how much this entire situation has been hurtful to Cayden.

"Fine," Rachel says, leading us to the other side of the castle. *www.novelWorld.com*

Logan scoffs as it takes us an eternity to get there. "They wanted to keep us apart pretty good. What the fuck are they scheming?"

I breathe out exhaustedly, shaking my head. "I don't know. But this does not look good."

Rachel leads us into the east wing, showing us the rooms where we are residing, and after reciting the basic pieces of information about the lunch times and general palace rules, she shocks us with the information that not only we and our accusers are present but a lot of other Alphas and Lunas from other packs are as well. *www.novelWorld.com*

As if this was some kind of awkward cult gathering.

"Your trial has downright created a sensation. It's only natural that everyone who has the possibility to wants to get a piece of it."

Cayden clicks his tongue and without answering her provocation and turns towards Artemisia. "Choose the room you like more."

"Okay," she whispers back before pulling him towards one of the rooms at the end of the hallway.

"Well, I guess that is it. I don't think we will need you from here," I say, turning to look at which room I could take.

Finnegan chuckles as he waves at her, "Yeah, thank you, Patty."

Rachel flips her blonde hair over her shoulder before she struts out of the wing, closing the door with a loud bang, leaving us behind.

"This is going to be hell, guys," Matthew sighs, still looking at the door. "Why do I have such a bad feeling?"

"Because it's going to be bad," Finnegan answers, stretching himself with a groan. "There must be something more behind the Guerrieris worrying about their daughter's wellbeing."

I nod, agreeing with him. "Yes, they are definitely planning something."

"Could it be that they aren't doing this because of us, but because of Artemisia herself?" Logan asks, making us look at him shocked. "I mean, we just found out that she is pregnant, but maybe there is more to it."

"What do you mean?" Artemisia's voice makes us jump as she practically materialises back into the hallway, staring at us with a crestfallen expression.

Logan takes a step forward, and I can sense how sorry he must feel to make any assumption about her family attacking us. "I mean that you have a lot of mates and this usually alludes that your wolf is special. Maybe they know something that we don't and want your wolf's power back for their pack."

"This is ridiculous!" Artemisia exclaims, scrunching up her nose. "They would never do anything like this to me."

"Well, they are kind of doing big-time things to you right now, princess," Finnegan interjects, making her distort her face into a saddened expression, and my heart breaks.

Logan shakes his head, inhaling deeply. "Also, they must have gotten the news about the baby just recently, but they surely wanted to push their luck, thinking that you must already be pregnant. It usually doesn't take long for a she-wolf to get impregnated by her mate. Not even to mention how the possibilities skyrocket when she has three of them. Maybe it's the offspring that they are aiming towards."

"No, no, no!" Artemisia protests, stepping closer. "This doesn't make any sense. Also, my family doesn't know anything about my wolf. Just like me. I shifted once before I was rejected and I was far away from home then."

She takes a deep breath, visibly fighting against her tears. "This is just all a big misunderstanding. Both sides are so entangled in their hatred for each other that you are just using me as a token, and this is going in the wrong direction for both sides. I'm sure of it!"

We fall silent, watching her hug herself lost and I guess that my fingers itch to want to comfort her just like for the others but I'm pretty sure that she would reject any form of consolation right now.

"What about Richard?"

Artemisia jerks up, turning towards Cayden who is looking at her with a clenched jaw. "Huh?"

"What about Richard? You said you shifted once before getting rejected," he speaks calmly but manages to unleash a storm in each one of us. "Did he see your wolf?"

Our eyes widen knowing the answer even before Artemisia can overcome her instant paralysis and nod feebly, wetting her lips with her tongue. "Yes. Alpha Riccardo was there when I shifted. He saw my wolf."

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