

Chapter 128

ARTEMISIA

"You should go to bed," Matthew steps onto the balcony, tearing me out of the dark pit my thoughts dragged me into.

"Did you find him?" I ask, ignoring his worried statement and my heart squeezes as he shakes his head.

"Fynn and Hendrick are still out looking for him." He clears his throat as he distorts his face. "They told me that I should tell you that they checked several times, and he is not with Rachel."

With a deep sigh, I let myself slump back into my chair, rubbing my head. "This is all my fault. I said so many mean things."

"Don't be so hard on yourself," he says, crouching down.

His touch feels so comforting as he lays his hands on my knees. "You both went kind of all in with your temperaments." *Ww.novelworld.com*

"Yeah," I chuckle, biting the nail of my thumb. "This situation is the worst. I just want to go home."

"Me too," he pushes out a deep sigh. "This situation wrecks all our nerves."

We fall into silence as I lift my gaze to look at the stairs until he clears his throat. "You meant home with us, right?"

"Of course!" I answer straight away, shaking my head. "Of course, I meant home with you."

Taking a deep breath, I caress my still small belly, and Matthew stands up. "Come on, my love. Let's get you to bed. Tomorrow will be a long day."

I take his hand and let myself get steered to my bed where I cuddle in. I'm a bit disappointed as he tucks me in, and wishes me a goodnight with a kiss before he disappears. But I guess that he doesn't want to enrage his brother even further should he come home.

Or maybe he is disappointed with me as well.

I cuddle into the huge bed and close my eyes, trying to reach my mate over the mind-link again.

'Please, Cayden. Everybody is worrying about you.'

Just as I thought that he had his wall still up to ignore me, his deep voice rumbles through my mind, making my heart flip relieved.

'Are you too?'

I hug my pillow, sighing. 'Come back and I'll tell you.'

He doesn't respond anymore, and I am already convinced that he isn't going to come back tonight as a shadow moves on the balcony. *Ww.NovelWorld.com*

His scent envelops me before I can see him undressing in the dark, and he gets into bed.

"You are cold," I gasp as his arms wrap around me, and he pulls himself closer to me.

He kisses my shoulder, caressing my hair to one side as he growls, "Warm me up then."

Turning around, I look into his sad gaze. "Where have you been?" I ask in a whisper.

"I needed a bit of air," he answers lowly, biting into my shoulder. "And air some frustration out."

I click my tongue, shaking my head, "It was stupid of you... Run away like this. It could have set off a judge."

"Set off a judge," he murmurs angrily. "I'm still allowed to go fetch a bit of air, aren't I?!"

"Of course you are," I answer lowly.

I feel him observing me as I run with my fingers on his chest absentmindedly, tracing his scars softly. "Is it true that you never attacked us? Never provoked our patrols to get into fights."

"I can't say that my brothers weren't wreaking havoc in the towns. In particular, Finnagan was involved in a few bar fights and got arrested several times, but other than that we didn't provoke anyone and surely not warriors patrolling at pack borders." *Ww.NovelWorld.com*

I scrunch up my nose, laying my hand flat onto his chest to feel his heartbeat. "What's going on, Cayden?"

"I don't know, love. I wish I could tell you and get you out of here." He drives his fingers through my hair, inspecting my face. "I knew that they hated us, but this doesn't make any sense."

Tugging at my hair, he gets me to look at him. "But I promise you that we will find out, and you will come back home with us."

"Let's hope so," I sigh, and he nods.

"Hendrick is already preparing the papers to send to the judge tomorrow with the new information we gathered. They won't get away with this."

Pursing my lips, I cuddle closer to him. His fingers let loose, allowing me to lean my forehead against his warm chest.

I listen to his heartbeat, closing my eyes until a thought passes my mind, striking me.

"What if they already knew that I was mated to a Blackwood?" *Ww.NovelWorld.com*

He stiffens, a growl vibrating from his chest. "How?"

Shrugging, I look back up at him. "I don't know. Did you never have the impression that something strange happened as you met up with members of my pack?"

"Like what?" he asks, distorting his face as he looks at me sceptically. "My brothers often accompanied me to my meetings, but I don't think that any of them ever had the impression that their mates' scent was clinging to one of your pack members. I mean... I can't see Finnegan or even Logan smelling you and acting like they wouldn't have smelled it. Do you?"

"Not really, no," I answer with a sigh, moving my eyes to look at the ceiling. "But what other motive would my family have to make up such a story? And creep out an entire pack, on top of that?"

Cayden turns onto his back, his fingers still tugging at my hair ends as he puts his other arm over his face. "I can't see it. Slowly it is driving me crazy. Not knowing what is going on, I mean. Also, I feel like the Big Bang is still waiting for us. And, honestly, it scares me."

Propping myself up onto my arm, I lay my hand on his chest, caressing him with my thumb. "Remember that you said it was going to be alright? I still believe it firmly. They can't take me away from you, and the judge was nice, wasn't he?"

"I'm sorry to tell you," he says, peeking out at me from under his forearm. "But the judge is an asshole. He isn't as nice as he acts."

My heart beats faster, making me gulp. "Why are you telling me this? You should be positive."

"I'm sorry, my love." He moves, pulling me to lay beneath me. "I don't want you to be too disappointed about what might happen. Also, I want you to be extra careful when you talk to him. This is his modus operandi. He fucks people over with things they told him because they thought he was a nice guy."

The sides of my lips drop automatically, and my heart stills in my chest at his expression, even before his words reach my ears.

"I don't want you to worry yet, just brace yourself for the worst. Let's think about the pup first."