

Chapter 129

ARTEMISIA

My puffy eyes hurt as I open them against the feeble morning sunbeams streaming into the room.

Sitting up, I find my mates sprawled in my bed around me and I smile as I watch them sleeping.

"Good morning," Hendrick says quietly, making my head snap to the side to see him sitting in an armchair. "Would you like a cup of tea?"

"Good morning. Yes!" I flash him a smile and climb out of the bed, trying not to wake anyone.

Of course that doesn't work like I would like it to, and Fynn grabs my arm, just as I'm about to get out of bed, looking at me half-asleep. "Where are you going?"

"I'm just going to fetch a cup of tea with Hendrick. I'll be right back," I giggle, kissing him while getting out of his grip.

He sighs as he turns around, cuddling into the sheets again, and I tear my eyes from his muscular back before I start drooling.

"Don't. Or nobody will get any tea in the next few hours," his growl hits me right into my core, and I scurry away before he can grab me again.

As I reach the kitchen, Hendrick is already filling boiling water into a cup from a kettle before he dips the tea bag into the hot water and he hands me my tea with a smile. "Careful. It's hot, but these herbs are good for the baby."

I squint my eyes at him, making him laugh. "This is the truth, this time."

"Ah, I'll be traumatised for the rest of my life because of Daisy," I sigh, as I wrap my fingers around the hot cup.

Hendrick lays his hand on my waist, gesturing to a sitting room right next to the kitchen. "Why don't we take a seat?"

I walk into the sitting room followed by him while I continue to dip the tea bag playfully. Sitting down on a cosy loveseat, I purse my lips, observing him slump into the loveseat standing in front of mine. "What's that face?"

He pushes out a deep breath, looking at me with a saddened expression as he leans forward, folding his hands. "I'll tell you because it's important that you know to make the best of your interrogation and medical assessment today. But we have to keep it from Cayden. At least for the moment, okay?"

I nod, feeling a sense of dread expanding in my chest.

"He needs to keep cool. We can't risk having him starting a war at his fear of losing you. I know that he already told you that it isn't looking good for us. But the truth is that I have an insider in the court system. And he informed me last night that the judge met up with the other judge to talk about your baby."

"My baby?" I ask in a whisper, making him nod.

"Yes. He wanted to discuss who would keep the baby."

I shift in my seat, straightening my spine uncomfortably as my heart squeezes painfully. "Who would keep it when?"

"In the future. When they remove the mark from you after you gave birth," he clenches and unclenches his jaw, looking at me intensely. "They are discussing if the pup should stay with you, or if the father has a primary right to it as it is his heir for the Alpha position."

Laying a hand on my stomach, I put the cup onto the couch table. "Oh, my Goddess. I'm feeling sick."

"Do you want to lay down?" He asks, getting me to shoot daggers at him.

"No! I don't want to lay down. I want to go home." I take a deep breath and he shifts, sitting on the loveseat next to me.

"I know, but we have to get through this. It's not decided yet, we can still turn this around. We will send in a new argumentation today, and all is going to be fine," he says calmly, squeezing my arms soothingly.

I take a deep breath, trying to calm myself down while I look up to the ceiling to keep my tears from falling.

"The herbs in the tea..." I say, wanting to change the subject as bile continues to rise in my throat. "You did it again. And you still haven't told me how you know so much about herbs and plants."

He pushes out a deep breath, and suddenly he is up, standing at the door and peaking into the hallway to make sure that nobody is eavesdropping on us before he closes the door behind him.

"I have never told anyone about this, so... Give me a second."

I nod as I look up at him, and he paces around shortly before he sits back down next to me. "I was working for a doctor when I died... Was turned, actually. He was kind of a creepy guy, but apparently good at his job. So, that's why I know something about herbs and medicine. It just stuck with me and I kept my interest and through the years, I got an amazing expertise."

"Oh, wow." I scrunch up my nose, taking his hand into mine. "Is that the reason why Cayden told me that you didn't like doctors?"

He laughs, nodding. "Yeah, that is kind of my trauma."

"I'm sorry about that," I pout, closing my eyes as he caresses my curls out of my face.

"But I like you," he whispers, pressing a kiss on my lips.

Smiling at him, I managed to get my thoughts of the mess totally as I want to know more. "So, you were in training to become a doctor?"

He shakes his head, smiling sadly at me. "Someone of my social rank would have never been permitted to become a doctor in those times."

"What do you mean?" I ask intrigued, making him push out a laugh.

"I was a slave, Artemisia." My eyes widen as he leans in. "I just happened to be at the creep's mercy. I didn't choose to be in that field."

"Oh, my Goddess," I whisper, feeling inconsolably stupid. "I'm so sorry about this. I shouldn't have asked you and gotten you to relive it."

His grin makes my heart flip, and he reaches out to caress my cheek with his fingertips. "No, don't worry. I really wanted to tell you. Go on, ask me all you want!"

My eyes move back and forth between his eyes until I gather my courage, and let the question bubble out of me. "Was it him who turned you?"

"Yes," he nods. "He was already drinking from the men that worked for him. And he loved to do certain experiments with us. It was normal that we would get a new slave every few weeks as another disappeared. I think I was the one he kept the longest. And as I got sick, he turned me right before the Black Death would take me away from him. I guess he was really obsessed with me."

I stare at him agape, and he cups my chin, getting me to close my mouth back up. "But don't worry. My vampire genes were so good that I got my revenge pretty soon, and got to escape him."

"I'm so proud of you," is the only thing I can manage to say, the horrors of his tale swapping my mind as he grins at me proudly.

"Wait! Black Death? Are you meaning to tell me that you are somewhat around 700 years old?"

He shakes his head, chuckling as I take a relieved breath.

I really can't imagine the loneliness someone must feel to be immortal for such a long time.

"No, no. You know that there have been several types of the Black Death, right?"

"Sure," I smile, "So, which Black Death was it? The one in the pitches of the Second World War, I presume."

Even though the thought of him being a slave in that period of time wouldn't quite match, he is already shaking his head again.

"No. The Justinianic Plague," he answers nonchalantly, making me look at him shocked.

"What?" I whisper, my lips shaking as a sly grin appears on his lips, and he leans in, making his husky whisper vibrate through my system.

"See, my beloved. I didn't wait for you for centuries. I waited for you for over two millennia."