

## **When they touch me (Shelagh Milano) #Chapter 31 - 40**

### **Read When they touch me (Shelagh Milano) Chapter 31**

Chapter 31 Finnegan

I nearly rip the door out of its frame as I open it with rage streaming through my veins.

Taking a few steps, I only catch my breath as I hear the door close behind me.

I nearly suffocate at the sadness and pain wafting through me, and I figure that they must be Artemisia's emotions.

Fucking mate bond.

I think about going to town and fuck another she-wolf just to make her suffer.

To have her go through the pain I felt in that prison cell and is now pumping out into my chest.

But my wolf goes fucking feral at the sole thought.

It really takes all of me not to lose control and give over to my wolf who is fighting with all his might to get back to his mate.

The shattered glass that I took with me on my way out, crunches beneath my shoes as I reach the round reception desk situated in the middle of the station.

The two nurses sitting on their chairs shivering, and acting like they hadn't just pissed themselves, look at me with big eyes.

They must have heard everything as we were shouting at each other, not thinking of the other patients who would have another perfect gossip story to tell about me in town.

That I can't even treat my mate decently.

"Hey," I shout, hitting my hand on the desk, making them flinch. "Hurry up to clean the mess. A glass fell on the floor."

"Sure, sir!" One of them stutters before she scurries off.

"And don't slip on the blood," I growl, starting to walk again.

'Return to mate.' Drake growls, making me chuckle.

'Absolutely not, old boy!'

I try concentrating on my steps as I keep pushing him down.

But his desire to go back to her as her scent is vanishing gets stronger by the second.

'She is scared. Mate needs us,' he pushes forward again, making me groan.

'Stop it! She is a fraud. She lied to us.' I hiss at him, making him even angrier.

'She is scared! Mate needs us!' He repeats, making me roll my eyes.

'Shut the fuck up!' I growl, opening the double doors to the outside with a bang.

She called us monsters, and it burns my guts as I can't really contradict her.

Because I'm certainly one.

Standing on the lawn before the pack hospital, I turn my forearm towards me to look at the long cut that a sharp shard slit from my wrist upwards.

'Imagine if it had hit mate,' Drake nearly whimpers, making me ball my fist.

'Shut the fuck up!'

I watch my wound get surrounded with black smoke that seems to come out of it as it heals it instantaneously.

'You weren't honest with her either,' Drake snarls, and I let my arm slump with a dry laugh.

'Fuck off already.'

I start running into the forest, resisting the instinct to shift as Drake would surely hurry back to his mate.

Speeding up, I only stop in front of a border to another pack territory.

The pack warriors must already have been alarmed as they peek through the trees to watch my next steps.

I push out a single laugh as I push my hair out of my face and count about 20 guards sprawled around me on the other side.

You would need more than that to stop me.

Not wanting to start another trouble as Cayden will already be reprimanding me about my scene in the hospital, and I really don't want Artemisia's pack to think even worse of

me, as they already complained to my brother about my mate-collecting mission, I slump down onto a big rock behind me.

“Relax, fellas. I won’t cross any border.” I laugh as the muscles in my limbs slowly relax after my hours-long run.

The sun is already peaking over the mountain tops as I take a deep breath and watch the landscape.

This part of the forest is slightly descending, enabling me to watch over the treetops to take in the amazing scenery.

I hate how my wolf sends pictures of my mate to my brain, making me want to have taken her to see it as well.

‘She wouldn’t care, Drake. Stop it!’ I rub my hands as I lean forward, propping my elbows onto my knees.

Wetting my lips, I let my head hang as I laugh to myself. ‘I fucked up badly, didn’t I?!’

Drake just grumbles, not giving me an answer as my heart squeezes, and I guess Artemisia must be crying again.

The wolves on the other side are still waiting in the wings, as I take a whiff of the air.

“I was wondering when you would show up,” I say, avoiding turning around to look at my brother.

“What are you doing here?” Cayden asks, and I shrug.

“Just enjoying the beautiful sunrise.”

He sighs as he steps next to me, probably scanning the wolves on the other side as well. “I was told by a few nurses that you did a scene in the pack hospital.”

“Ah, it was nothing. Just a little fight,” I groan, distorting my face.

“You can’t be serious, Finnegan.” He inhales sharply as he passes his hand over his face. “It was a great sacrifice by your brothers to stay away from the hospital to let you have a moment with her to find some harmony after what happened. How can you fuck it up?”

I laugh and wipe the dust from my jeans. “You should be used to it by now, shouldn’t you?!”

“Finnegan,” he says, his voice full of disappointment. “You already lost your title as Beta. Don’t lose your mate as well.”

“Sure,” I scoff. “I forgot how I should still worship you for not throwing me out of the pack. But you can stop acting all nice now. And just take her already.”

“What are you talking about?” He asks, feigning shock.

I shake my head, my gaze still locked on the rising sun over the mountains. “We already know that we will lose her to you. And she wants to be a Luna anyway, so congratulations, brother dear.”

“You are out of your mind!” He states, making me stand up and turn to him.

“Am I? Really?” I ask as he glares at me.

“She didn’t say anything in this matter. And she surely isn’t flirting with me while she spends all the time caring for her mates.”

Clicking my tongue, I turn away from him. “Argh, come on. I feel her emotions. And I was just a few rooms away from her room as I felt her affection for you streaming through her body. What did you talk about, huh? Did you already tell her how you want to have a piece of her too?”

“Watch it, Finnegan!” he warns me, his alpha command wafting over me, even if it doesn’t make much if not pricking a little bit.

“Wait.” The air suddenly shifts as he realizes something. “You felt her emotions?”

“Yeah,” I chuckle. “Precious, right?”

“How long has this been going on?” He asks, making me grin at him.

“From the first moment, I laid my eyes on her.”

He stares at me, taken aback, and I walk past him. “We saw how hurt you were as we smelled our mate at the souvenir you brought from the party. But don’t worry, brother. Your secret will be safe with us.”

Laughing, I shift into my wolf, to run back home and leave him behind.

## Chapter 32 Artemisia

“It’s okay, Matt. I just bumped my head, I didn’t lose a leg.” I chuckle as Matthew carries me to my room and cuddles me into the blankets of my bed.

"I don't care. You need to rest, love. I'm just following the doctor's instructions," he says nonchalantly, as he rearranges my pillows.

I thank him with a smile as I lean back with a sigh.

"Can I get you something else?" He asks, and I shake my head as he proceeds to list all the things he could get me.

I laugh because he is so cute, and I love how he wants me to feel better.

"Enough, Matty." Logan stays in the door frame with his arms crossed over his chest as he eyes me up. "Are you sure you feel alright?"

I nod with a smile. "Perfectly fine, thank you."

"We will let you rest, and check on you later. Is that okay?" Matthew asks, his expression heavy with worry.

Thanking him with a smile, I watch him leave my room with his brother before I push out a deep sigh.

I want to go home.

And I have to fight back my tears as I think that my only option to do this would be to go through another rejection.

Or even worse, rejections.

Even if I got a glimpse of hope, I can't see myself being accepted in this pack after Fynn's reaction.

Maybe I should talk to Cayden about it and be honest with him as well.

Suddenly, a heavy weight lowers itself onto my chest at the thought of my mates rioting at finding out about my dormant wolf.

Emptying my lungs with a deep exhale, I cuddle myself further under the blankets. Telling him about my little secret might be extremely risky, but I guess it would be better than having Fynn spill it to him first.

"Yes," I shout, torn out of my thoughts by a soft knocking at the door.

Wiping any residue of my tears out of my eyes, I watch a petite Omega balancing a tray with a tea set in her hands.

I sit up carefully and see a huge guy closing the door behind her. She must have caught my curious gaze as she looks over her shoulder before she smiles at me.

"They have guards in front of your quarters," she says with a gentle voice. "In case someone tries something funny."

Someone.

Setting down the tray on my nightstand, she passes me a steaming cup of tea. "I'm Daisy. I'm one of the Omegas appointed to this floor."

"It's very nice to meet you, Daisy. I'm Missy." I say, taking a sip from my tea.

Her eyes sparkle as she nods. "I know! Here, I made you a small cake."

"Oh, thank you so much." I take the cake she is holding in front of my nose with a big smile.

Looks like someone is happy about her job choice.

Taking a bite of the little chocolate cake while she watches me like she is about to burst, I hum. "This is delicious!"

"Thank you," she squeals happily, her eyes sparkling. "I'm the best baker you can find in the pack if I can say so myself."

She giggles, and I smile at her. "I'm very happy you are appointed to this floor then, Daisy."

"Well," she whispers, lifting her hand up to shield her mouth. "Alpha Blackwood is very fond of sweets, but it is a little secret."

I laugh, putting the cup of tea down on my nightstand. "I'll keep it to myself. Don't worry."

She smiles brightly as she straightens her spine back up, crossing her hands in front of her.

"If there is something you need, please call me. I heard that you had lunch at the hospital, so I'll check in on you before dinner."

Nodding, I cuddle back down in my bed. "Thank you."

"Now, rest well. I'll see you in a bit." She caresses over the covers before tucking a strand of her light-brown hair behind her ear.

I sigh deeply after she leaves my room, and close my eyes to get some sleep.

But even if I'm drugged up to the eyeballs with painkillers and I'm feeling drained, I can't seem to catch any sleep.

My anxiety keeps growing even if I do my best to meditate myself into calmness.

In the blink of an eye, it appears to be already time for dinner as Daisy checks in on me with Matthew carrying a big tray.

"Careful, babe," he warns me softly as he positions the tray over my lap.

My heart squeezes as I caress his face, thanking him.

I wonder how he will react to the news.

Maybe at least he will accept me for who I am.

"Do you want me to keep you company while you eat?" He asks, tearing me out of my thoughts.

Shaking my head, I reposition in my sitting position. "You are cute, thank you. But please don't worry about me. I'm fine. Go and have dinner with your brothers."

He nods, flashing me a sad smile.

"I'll stay with her, Gamma," Daisy squeaks, keeping him from protesting.

For a moment, it seemed that he wanted to say something else, but he decides otherwise and doesn't add more to it as he bends down to kiss the top of my head before he walks out.

Slumping back against my headboard, I have to push down a groan as I would certainly have preferred him to stay with me than Daisy.

Also, I don't really know what they are discussing downstairs.

Or what consequences Fynn had to face.

Thinking about how it might be good to have a chatty omega as dinner company to distract me from my anxiety, I convince myself that I have made the right decision.

Unfortunately, the omegas here seem to be trained cult followers as Daisy keeps quiet while watching me eat. She has her hands folded in her lap as she looks at me as if I were some shiny alien she had been waiting to see for the two decades she has spent on Earth.

“So... Have you been appointed to this packhouse or this floor for long?” I ask her as I scoop another bite of food into my mouth.

She nods enthusiastically while beaming at me but still doesn't say anything.

Narrowing my eyes, I wait a few heartbeats until I try again. “Tell me about it.”

“Oh, yes. I have been here since I got my wolf four years ago.” She answers with a joyful expression.

I wait another set of seconds but finally, give up as this seems to be all she is going to say.

To another painfully awkward moment.

Sighing, I take another spoonful of my food and finish my dinner in silence while being observed by the pack fangirl.

As she takes the tray from me and wishes me a good night after having checked my dressing, I couldn't be happier.

Wiggling under my blankets, I take a deep breath and start regulating my breathing pattern anew as my thoughts run wild.

I don't know how many hours passed as I kept tossing and turning as much as my body allowed me to but eventually my eyelids get so heavy that I can't keep them open any longer.

With another deep sigh, I have no other option than to wait for exhaustion to finally take over as my anxious thoughts wouldn't let me sleep.

I try to concentrate on Matthew's scent still floating feebly in the air, but unfortunately, Daisy's scent is far more pregnant in the air to have his calm me down enough.

Just as I'm about to pass out, a new scent invades my room, eliminating all the others lingering in it.

Taking a deep breath, I let myself envelope in it, my body relaxing immediately.

I want to check if he really entered my bedroom or if it's just my imagination, but before I can even turn to take a look, my consciousness submits to my exhaustion, making me fall asleep instantaneously.

## Chapter 33 Artemisia

I wake up with a jump scare the next morning as all my windows get opened brusquely.



I blink into the light streaming into the room as a blonde woman is blabbering nonchalantly while continuing to give me a heart attack.

Turning in my bed, I blink my sleep out of my eyes. I can't see Fynn anywhere in the room, but I can still smell him.

Maybe I'm just hallucinating.

I shake my head at how desperate I am as the woman leans into my field of vision, making me jump. "Babes, are you alright?"

Do I look like I am?

"Sure," I answer with a smile as she narrows her eyes.

She puts her fists on her hips as she gets back up. "Ah, you don't have to act strong with me."

My eyes widen as she looks around the room. "Did the little Omega already look after you?"

"Are you talking about Daisy?" I ask and she clicks her tongue.

"Aaah, yeah, could be that this was her name!" She seems distracted by something as she doesn't notice that I don't respond to her while she walks into my kitchen. "She is a bit strange, but a nice girl, you know."

I giggle to myself as I would definitely agree with her.

"She is the pack's biggest fan. We were a bit concerned about how she would welcome you here." She says, rummaging through my cupboards.

I claw onto my blanket while I try to make sense of this strange situation. "You were?"

"Yeah, Alpha Cayden was so preoccupied that she wouldn't accept you and do something shady. But I told him that she is a good girl and that she deserves a chance." She reappears in my bedroom with a steaming cup of coffee that I take reluctantly. "She seems to love you."

"Yeah," I say while clasping the cup. "She was very nice."

She smiles brightly at me as she sits in the chair where Daisy sat just hours before and crosses her legs elegantly. I hold the cup like an anchor, feeling the warmth of it streaming through my hands and up my arms.

I wait for her to talk again but the people in this pack seem to recite a certain script in their heads before thinking about communication.

On top of that, I can barely think straight as my head is throbbing and Fynn's scent is making my skin sizzle.

"I'm sorry, but who are you?" I ask finally, causing her to laugh out loud.

"Oh, babes, I'm Lisa. I'm the former Beta's daughter." She nods happily as I still look at her confused. But luckily, this time she gets the clue. "Oh, I'm here to help you out a little bit as you are about to take over too many roles to bear."

Giggling, she takes a sip from her own cup, making me mirror her. "You poor thing with those morons. But don't worry, because now that I'm here we will rock the shit out of everyone!"

I laugh, shaking my head. "That sounds amazing, thank you so much."

Feeling a sense of huge relief, I enjoy the coffee that tastes heavenly. "And thank you for the coffee. It tastes really good."

"I have a special ingredient. Everybody is crazy about it." She winks at me.

"Now I know why," I say, taking another sip with a deep sigh.

Playing with the cup, I gather my courage to ask her about my mates. I don't know if I can trust her yet, but I would have to find out. "Can I ask you something?"

"Sure, anything you want," She answers, holding her cup to her mouth.

"It's about-" I get interrupted abruptly as the door opens with a bang, and Daisy stands in the door with big doe eyes.

"I'm so sorry!" she says panicky. "The door slipped out of my hand."

"It's alright, Daisy." I smile at her as she walks to me with her usual tray in her hands.

"Oh, I see that you already got your coffee." She notices and Lisa grins up at her.

"Yes, I provided our princess with it. I have my special brew, you know that."

She nods strangely as she proceeds to put down the tray and immediately tends to my dressing. "I don't know if that's good for her. She should watch her diet to feel better soon."

Lisa makes funny grimaces behind Daisy's back as she speaks, and I have to force down my laughter.

"It's okay, Daisy. I liked it very much. And I don't think that a coffee would hinder a bump from healing." I try to calm the situation down but Daisy still doesn't seem to be amused.

"I will talk to Alpha Blackwood about this. He will decide." Her words are like a slap, and I feel a bit taken aback. I think that I might be exaggerating as it is normal for an omega to go after what your Alpha tells you, but as I see Lisa's distorted face, I know that this isn't in fact normal.

I keep it to myself as it isn't my place to say something and just wait patiently for Daisy to finish. After having tended to me, she puts a cup of tea onto my nightstand and takes my coffee out of my hands. I'm just about to protest as she pushes a plate with a small cake on it into my hands. "Here you go. Enjoy."

"Erm... thank you," I say, looking between her and the cake. "You can go now. You don't have to watch me eat."

She waves at me dismissively, as she keeps standing next to my bed awkwardly. "It's okay. I will wait and take the plates back with the coffee."

I gulp, risking a look at Lisa who scoots her chair closer to me. "Let me help you out."

"No!" Daisy screams, making us flinch. "I made the cake for her. She is going to eat it."

A strange feeling creeps up my legs as I see her panicky yet enraged face. "It's alright. She can have half of it, I don't mind."

"No! I made it just for you." She says, looking like she is on the verge of crying.

Lisa throws her hands into the air and scoots back away, and I sigh. "Okay. Don't worry."

I hurry to eat the cake in a few bites before I hand the plate back to Daisy. "Delicious. Thank you so much, Daisy."

Her expression morphs immediately as she takes the plate out of my hand like the happiest person on earth. "I'm so glad!"

After collecting everything, Daisy flashes me a last smile before scurrying back out.

"What the hell," Lisa breathes out while I'm still staring at the closed door.

What the hell indeed.

## Chapter 34 Artemisia

I take a deep breath as I step into the dimly lit office, even though I didn't get an answer at my knocking.

"What are you doing out of bed?" Cayden asks me as I close the door behind me.

His eyes are still glued on the papers in front of him as I clear my throat. "I wanted to talk to you. Do you have a bit of time to spare for me?"

"Sure," he sighs, still not looking at me. "As long as you return to bed afterwards."

I sit into a chair in front of his desk, my insides tingling eagerly to get his eyes on me. "It has been 4 days now since I was discharged. I'm feeling much better already and I can't stand lying around anymore. Also, I can't continue to take away precious time from everybody's day. Matthew and Logan are looking after me lovingly, but I guess they have more important things to do. Please, let me do something. I'm feeling good enough to help you all out and finally show myself to the pack."

He lifts his gaze to look at me, making me gulp. "I don't know. You still seem a bit pale."

"Pale... It's because you all treat me like I got the bubonic plague. I just bumped my head." I pout, letting my shoulders slump. "Please Cayden, let me do something. I want to be part of the pack already."

A faint smile crosses his lips as he looks back down onto his paperwork. "Okay. Let me think of something you can start out going easy. But as soon as I see you feeling unwell, you will be going back to bed!"

"Yes!" I say, nodding. "I won't protest if that were the case!"

My jaw risks hitting the floor with a loud bang as he chuckles and even teases me jokingly. "Sure."

"Hey," I laugh. "I'm serious! I won't disappoint you this time."

He narrows his eyes at me and his lips stretch into a big grin. "I'm counting on that."

My heart skips a beat, but I try to play it cool, reciprocating the smile shyly.

His eyes suddenly change, and his expression morphs slightly as he continues to look at me.

After a few seconds of us just staring at each other, he tears his eyes away from me to lay them back onto his paperwork. "Can I ask you something?"

“Everything you want,” I answer, feeling my heart flip uncomfortably.

“Have you talked with Fynn since you have been discharged?” He asks, making me shake my head.

I wrap the fabric of my dress around my index as I think of an answer that wouldn’t sound stupid. “No, he was so angry that I thought I would grant him his space.”

“Hmm...” He scribbles something down even if I know that he is set on what he wants to tell me. “I appreciate you wanting to respect his feelings, but he is kind of stubborn. I guess if you want him to apologise first, you are in for the long run. If you want him to talk to you, do the first step. Just so you know.”

I chuckle, nodding. “I appreciate the advice, Cayden. Thank you.”

He is mumbling something about me being welcome as my attention gets caught by his phone flashing up constantly. I remember that I already saw it once but I didn’t put much thought into it.

“It’s the council.” He says dryly, making me look at him like a deer caught in the headlights. “One of my advisers is in the high court and keeps updating me about matters regarding our pack. I don’t

know if you heard, but we have a running case that seems to be more of a bother than we would have thought.”

“Oh,” I crane my neck, trying to get a look at the phone.

He lets out a deep sigh as he takes the phone and looks at the screen. “He is a trusted member of our pack, but he is a bit... well, peculiar. But he does his job perfectly.”

“Isn’t that the most important thing?” I act as if I’m not disappointed about not having been able to catch what he was sending and flash Cayden a big smile.

“I guess so,” He murmurs, lowering his gaze back to his desk.

Pondering over asking him about the executed she-wolf, I open my mouth repeatedly, but in the end, I choose to be silent. Cayden must have caught my strange behaviour as he looks up at me, raising his brow. “Is there something you want to tell me?”

My heart beats so fast in my chest that he must perceive it, but I smile at him, shaking my head as my courage ultimately leaves me.

He sighs again, returning to his documents as something else bubbles up my chest that I let just break out, out of pure desperation. “Did... Did Fynn say something about our fight?”

“No, not really. Why?” He asks me totally unbothered.

My panic settles to turn my stomach upside down, making me gulp. “Well, it wasn’t nice. So, maybe he had said something. He was quite upset.”

“He still is.” Cayden scoffs, seemingly immersed in his next task. “The warriors already complained to me that he is in a bad mood, and asked me to talk to you.”

He lifts his gaze, smiling at me encouragingly. “You see, even if it’s quite a big pack, we are like a big, close, and nosy family. Rumours spread like wildfire, so everyone is informed that his bad mood must be a result of your fight.”

“Oh, no.” I groan, making him laugh.

“Don’t worry, Missy. This is all natural. And I guess the pack already greatly respects you because of how you handled a fight with Fynn. I’m sure they are all quite impressed.”

I close my eyes, leaning back into my seat. “If you say so...”

I’m certainly used to the rumours of a pack. But the last time I was part of it wasn’t the best experience for me, so I’m feeling quite uncomfortable at the thought that I’m now in the middle of attention even if I just arrived.

Clearing my throat, I pass my hands on the fabric of my dress. “Okay, I’ll leave you to it. I suppose you will call for me if you need anything? And I’ll be ready tomorrow morning for my first task in the pack.”

“That’s perfect.” Cayden answers, already absorbed back into his documents.

Feeling like I urgently need some air, I get up and hurry to leave the room. “Well, then. Thank you very much, Cayden.”

I keep myself from sprinting to my room as I pass the omegas dusting off the shelves and vacuuming the floor. I push out the deep breath I was holding only as I close the door behind me.

Stepping out onto my balcony, I shield my eyes from the sun with my hand as I let my eyes wander over the vast landscape.

I watch a few warriors training on the field as my eyes fall onto Fynn’s muscular body. He is standing there wearing only black shorts, which makes it difficult to act like I wasn’t ogling him.

Maybe I should go and talk to him.

It isn't fair that his warriors are feeling uncomfortable or are treated badly because of our differences.

## Chapter 35 Artemisia

My heart beats into my throat as I arrive on the training fields.

I look around but Fynn is nowhere to be seen.

'Guess he sensed you were coming, and ran away from you,' Cassy sneers, making my stomach turn.

"The stables." A melodic voice tears me out of my thoughts, making me look at a bunch of warriors grinning at me.

"I'm sorry. What?" I ask confused.

The young warrior laughs, and his colleagues follow him. "You are looking for Fynn, aren't you? He went to the stables."

"Oh," I say, nodding like a stupid toy. "Yes, thank you."

I start walking towards the stable as another man shouts after me, making the men laugh again. "Good luck!"

"Thanks." I wave without turning around, acting like it didn't bother me.

'How immensely respectful they are.' Cassy laughs at me, and I keep myself from halting in my tracks, even if it was a mean blow.

'Feeling particularly mean, Cassy? How nice to see you in top form again.' I try to hide how hurt I am as I try to reach the place where I can collect my next humiliation.

But the mix of sadness and anger is like swept away as I turn the corner to step into the stables and see Fynn at work. His tanned skin shining in the sun streaming through the windows, making me want to catch the little droplets of sweat with my fingers.

"If you are just going to stare, step aside at least. So, you don't keep people from doing their jobs." His low growl has me jump, and I step aside, letting a man pass me with a shy smile. "I'm so sorry!"

Shaking away another bad feeling creeping up my chest, I clear my throat. "I wanted to talk to you."

"Why?" He asks, not even sparing me a glance.

“What do you mean by ‘Why?’? Do you prefer to sulk or can we talk?” I flash him my best sarcastic smile, and he scoffs.

“Not interested. No.” He answers dryly, continuing to pile up straw without looking at me.

He must be fucking kidding me.

I suddenly feel stupid about having tried to make the first step, especially after how he treated me.

It’s obvious enough that I am the one who should get the apology.

“Fine. Sulk then. And as soon as you got your warriors rioting because you act like a broken-hearted girl, maybe you will see the necessity to talk to me anyway.”

My provocation finally gets him to turn around, but I don’t like the glare he shoots me.

At all.

His growl physically vibrates through me as he takes a step forward menacingly. “Don’t talk about things you don’t understand, princess. And keep my warriors out of your stupid games.”

Crossing my arms over my chest, I hope to get rid of my goosebumps. I must admit that he is scary, and I surely should not provoke him into another fight.

Still, I’m feeling confident enough about the fact that he wouldn’t hurt me.

And I’m at least as stubborn as he is.

Which will surely be my death eventually.

“I can say whatever I want, especially when the rumors going around the pack and YOUR warriors affect me as well. As if I would care what they say about you.” I laugh mockingly, making him growl.

But instead of answering my provocation, he turns around and snarls, “Perfect, because I don’t care what they say about you as well. So, they can go on saying whatever they like. I will gladly put in a few inputs as well. About your fabulous character.”

“You are such an asshole.” I let my arms slump as I shout at him. “How are you expecting me to show any ‘fabulous’ side of me if you keep acting like a mean idiot?”

“Stop shouting, Missy. They have already eavesdropped enough.” He tries to exert his authority on me, but I would need more than that to calm down now.



“No can do, Mister. I’m going to stand here and shout as long as I like to. See,” I say, taking a step towards the wall of the stable. “I’m out of the way, so I won’t keep anyone from working.”

Throwing his head into his neck, he sighs. “You will be the death of me, I swear.”

“Excellent then! What a lovely thing to say to your mate.” I scoff, gesturing with my hands.

“Well, seeing what kind of mate you are, you can’t really blame me.” He says, going back to work.

It takes me a moment to get over that blow, and I press my tongue to my teeth. “Wow. Just wow.”

My blood starts boiling as I see him going on with his work as if nothing happened. Cassy’s words resound in my head, breaking my head once again.

Even before desperation can get me, I take a deep breath.

And as Giorgio used to say, I talk too fast without thinking.

“You are just jealous because your brothers had me while you couldn’t even go as close as touching me.”

Even without Cassy snickering in my head, my heart stops in my chest. My voice suddenly doesn’t even sound like mine as I replay my words in my head.

Just how stupid are you?

Fynn has stopped working and is just standing there.

His strong back is glistening in the sun and his chest must be heaving while he appears to want to keep his cool.

As I’m able to sense his emotions which are now a painful whirlwind, I know that he is about to lose the fight. I can also sense his wolf pushing forward, and I’m asking myself when he will lose that fight.

Feeling my guilty conscience bubbling up my chest, I’m just about to take a step back and apologize as he moves.

My breath gets stuck in my throat as he reappears in front of me as if he was just a step away, and didn’t have to cross a fucking hall.

He is grabbing my chin, pulling my face upwards, forcing me to look at me as he snarls, "I'm touching you now, aren't I, little mate?"

## Chapter 36 Artemisia

I gulp as I keep myself from being impressed by the sparks exploding on my skin and traveling down my neck and chest.

No matter how much I try, I can't remember ever feeling such a strong reaction towards anyone. I would prefer I remembered something like this as it pains me that it must be with him.

"Let me go!" I say through clenched teeth, but he increases his grip, making me whimper.

I claw on his forearm instinctively, as if it would lead him to loosen his grip.

"You enjoy it, do you? Teasing me because I'm not like my brothers." He clenches and unclenches his jaw as he tilts his head, lowering his voice. "Making me pay for the fact that I'm not falling for you like they do."

Shaking my head to get out of his hold, I only get him to growl. "I don't know what you are talking about! I just came to talk to you because of our fight."

"Sure," he chuckles, tscking. "As if the princess would care to make peace with the plebeian scum, right?"

My eyes widen as he leans even closer, making my heart flip in my chest. "Who were you talking to just a moment ago, little mate?"

"Cayden," I answer, blinking repeatedly, and he laughs.

"Of course. No wonder your libido was going crazy. You practically were going into heat."

I finally manage to pull myself out of his grip as he loosens it and I push him on his chest, making him stumble back amused. "How dare you, you idiot?!"

He shakes his head while he is still laughing and wipes his bottom lip with his thumb as he is about to turn around. "How am I the idiot in this conversation?"

Balling my fists, I risk drawing blood at my nails digging into my palm.

I'm already prepared to have him ignoring me and having me look at his back again.

But he doesn't turn around anymore, he just stands there eyeing me up as I try to even my breathing pattern.

Suddenly, my guts can't handle the silence between us anymore, and I finally take a step forward. "If you hate me this much... Why didn't you tell anyone about Cassy?"

"Don't interpret something romantic into things you don't understand, little mate." He mocks me once again, flashing me his pearly whites.

I take a deep breath, gathering all my courage to not step back at this one. "Tell me why then. Let my mind lose all my romantic fantasies. Teach this stupid little mate a lesson!"

"I don't know what your fucking problem is." He snarls.

As he is about to turn around, I bolt forward, grabbing his arm. I pull back my hand immediately as the sparks erupt at our touch, but I still keep him from turning away from me. "No! You can't go on insulting me and then just walk away. This is not how it works."

"Works where?" He asks, and I take a step back.

"Between mates," I answer, making him laugh.

"You are out of your damned mind." He steps closer, and I straighten my spine, forcing me to stay rooted in my spot. "I didn't tell anyone because I'm not doing the dirty job for you. Not because of the mate bond or something. Just because I want you to tell them. See their reaction, and their disappointment before getting what you deserve."

I gulp as he smirks mockingly, enjoying the results of his heart-shattering demeanour. "I'll be standing there, waiting for the right time to chime in when it's time for the rejections."

My heart shatters into a thousand pieces and I take a shaky breath while he continues to grin at me. "Is that what you wanted to talk about, little mate? Hearing me say how precious you were to me? And how desperate I was to be like my brothers?"

As I hug myself instinctively, he turns around with a last scoff as he restarts working. "Yeah, that's what I thought."

I'm still trying to fight for words and overcome the paralysis my emotions are putting me through as Cassy takes it from me completely.

'See? I told you! It's because you lack everything a mate would be looking for,' Cassy snorts with laughter as she puts me down, making my heart squeeze painfully. 'You are ugly and weak. Dirt even for the scumbags.'

Her laughter echoes in my head as I look up to the ceiling, keeping my tears from falling.

“Okay,” I whisper and walk out of the stables, fighting the urge to run.

My tears are already streaming down my face as I hear him calling for me, making me halt in my tracks. “Artemisia!”

Inhaling sharply, I wipe my cheeks even if it wouldn’t make any difference, and turn around to see Fynn standing at the entrance of the stables. A frown has replaced his arrogant expression as he

looks at me.

“What?” I ask, my voice shaking embarrassingly.

He shifts his weight onto his other leg as he clicks his tongue. “Don’t listen to your wolf.”

“Ha,” I breathe out, letting my arms slump to my sides. “Why don’t you just go fuck yourself, Finnegan!”

Turning around, I tuck a strand of my hair behind my ear as I walk through the fields and finally pass the training warriors to get back into the house. My heart beats into the top of my throat as I realise that no one is wearing a stupid grin or a mocking expression anymore.

Climbing the stairs, I ignore the staring pack members and hope not to get too much attention from the omegas currently working on the floors I have to pass.

But as I finally reach my quarters, I’m sure that they will have enough new material to gossip about to have them going for weeks.

Settling in my bed, I have barely pulled the covers over my head as I feel the soft clicking of the lock.

“Hey, babes. Are you alright?” Lisa asks, peeping under my covers as she stands next to my bed.

“Sure,” I answer sobbing, causing her to sigh deeply.

“Oh, no, hun. I’m so sorry. Do you want me to call the Beta or maybe your Gamma?” She caresses my leg over the covers.

I shake my head, burying my head into my pillow. “No, I’m sure they have more important things to do than tend to my tantrums.”

“Oh, honey,” she tsks.

“Is it bad?” I ask her in a whisper, panicking as I see her distorting her face.

“Werewolves are nosy, and have good ears.”

“Oh, fuck.” I cuss, burying myself back under the covers.

“Don’t worry! They will have forgotten it by tomorrow!”

I appreciate her wanting to cheer me up, but this is absolutely disastrous.

I’m so dead, and how am I supposed to work for and make a great impression in front of the people who will execute me in just a matter of time?

Lisa stays with me another bit and even makes me a hot chocolate with her special ingredient to cheer me up.

She does a great job of distracting me and goes on with telling me all the embarrassing things that happened to pack members.

Talking about everyone forgetting tomorrow.

“We are not like other packs. We are a huge family, so these kind of things are seen as pretty funny. You don’t have to worry.” She squeezes my hand gently, making me take a calming breath. “I know that you are scared about facing the pack members tomorrow, but as soon as you see them, you will understand that it’s nothing. Believe me.”

“Thank you so much, Lisa.” I chuckle, and she flashes me a big smile.

“You’re welcome. I gotta go now. Let me disappear before the Reverend Mother comes to check on your sleeping schedule.” She jumps from my bed while I crack up.

I really needed that.

With a last kiss on my cheek, she hurries out of the door. I settle back under my blankets, but I’m far from falling asleep. The sadness and anxiety wafts back over me, and I take a few relaxing breaths to calm myself, but there is no avail.

I guess this will be a long night.

Chapter 37 Artemisia

“Oh, no, Missy, please!”

I stop scrubbing the bottom of the dried-up fountain as Alberta makes me stop to look at her. Pushing my hair back, I see her running towards me completely shocked.

“What are you doing here? Weren’t you arranging the flowers?” She asks, making the omegas working on cleaning the fountain around me hold their breaths.

“Yeah,” I answer with a smile. “But we were done with it, and I figured my help was needed here.”

I also needed to get some aggression out of my system and I figured that scrubbing would be a nice exercise to achieve that.

Naturally, as I woke up, I smelled Fynn’s scent again. And since his disparaging words were constantly resounding in my head, it couldn’t possibly be, so I must have been hallucinating.

Stupid me.

And stupid mate bond.

Also, my two other mates were walking around me on eggshells this morning, driving me crazy as this was absolutely the last thing I needed right now.

On top of that, as I arrived at the town square with Cayden to help them redecorate the square and help with some tasks, everyone was absolutely lovely. And I felt like a royal who was there on a visit to shoot pictures for a magazine while acting like I was helping instead of being of any real help.

So, let me scrub, Alberta. I need that!

She takes a deep breath and grabs my arm gently to help me up to my feet. “Oh, I can’t possibly have you scrubbing dirty floors. What would Alpha Blackwood think?”

“Don’t worry, Alberta. I will gladly take it up with him if he has something to object to in this matter. We are nearly done. Let me finish here, and then you can give me some task that is supposed to be nicer.”

Gasping for air, she tries to find the right words and even looks at her staff lost. “But... your head... the Alpha...”

“It’s alright. I will let you know if I’m feeling sick or dizzy. Our Susan here is keeping an eye on me and will tell you right away if I were to collapse due to the hard work,” I say, making Susan jump behind me.

“Yes, ma’am. I’ll observe her strictly,” Susan shouts, making me giggle.

Alberta nods slowly, and I squeeze her arm. “I’ll talk to Cayden. He can’t resist my puppy dog eyes anyway.”

A round of 'aaws' resounds around us, and I laugh.

Those people are out of their minds.

And I love it!

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I slowly begin to understand all those people living happily in those happy-farming cults as I feel delighted at arranging pots along the stone walls of the alleys.

Susan is humming as she is plucking at the flowers next to me. The rhythm of her song mixes with the chattering voices and the happy screams of the playing children and calms my soul better than any meditation technique.

Suddenly, the atmosphere seems to change as the voices get louder, and the chatting gets more intense.

Turning around, I see Matthew walking towards me with a big smile, as he manages not to fall over the pups running around his legs.

I giggle as he reaches me and gives me a kiss. Susan bows respectfully with blushed cheeks as she greets him before scurrying away.

"Looks like you are popular," I say jokingly, making him laugh.

"They are just so blinded by your beauty that they mistook me for the Alpha."

"Aaaw," I slap him playfully. "You are too cute to be true."

He lifts his arm, scratching the back of his neck, as he turns shy. "Listen, Missy."

I smile at him patiently as he clears his voice being cutely nervous. "Yes?"

"You had quite a rough time the last few days, and I was wondering if I could treat you tonight... Like with a nice dinner perhaps."

My smile brightens as he lowers his arm. "Are you asking me out for a date?"

"Would that be okay?" He asks, making me nod.

"I would love to have dinner with you tonight, Matt," I answer his invite, making him look like he just won the lottery.

"Oh, wow. Awesome." He beams, and I chuckle.

“It’s not really a surprise that I said yes, isn’t it?” I ask, and he scoffs.

“Are you crazy? I was concerned about having my heart shattered across the town square.” He jokes, making me shake my head.

Pulling at his shirt, I get us to diminish the already non-existent distance between us. “As if I could ever do that. I really like you, and I can’t wait to spend the evening with you.”

“Oh, man,” He breathes out. “I have to go now. Before I snatch you away.”

I lower my voice to a whisper as I scrunch up my nose, “Wouldn’t really mind if you did, honestly.”

“Bad way to answer, mate.” He groans as he smirks at me.

Leaning in, he kisses the corner of my lips gently, making me close my eyes to enjoy his vicinity.

“See you later, Missy.” He whispers, having my insides tingling.

“Can’t wait,” I answer.

He waves at the people standing around us, and like the happy cult-pack they are, they cheer as they wave back at him.

I laugh and watch him walk away, careful not to lose myself in my indecent thoughts as I admire his muscular body.

Maybe I can get him to take a few of my aggression away from me too, when we meet tonight.

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As I finish helping with the easy tasks around the town square, I actually can’t help but feel more fulfilled than ever.

Seeing the decorations click into place and the place changing its atmosphere is actually amazing.

It doesn’t help me with my growing anxiety, though.

As the hours pass by, and my date comes closer, I can’t feel nothing but excitement and nervousness.



I want to stretch out the distractions as much as I can, but soon enough, everyone is pushing me to go back home to get ready for my date.

Before I can protest, I find myself taking a relaxing bath to ease my nerves.

And boy, am I nervous.

Chapter 38 Artemisia

“Hello, Missy.”

Two young Omegas are smiling happily at me as I open the door. They are standing in front of my quarters with an army of trolleys.

“Oh, hey girls. What are you bringing me?”

They giggle as they answer, speaking in unison once again. “Dinner!”

They push the trolleys through my rooms and out onto the balcony. I actually love this idea as the temperatures are still warm, and the summer night with its sounds and its atmosphere is quite romantic.

I watch them arrange everything on a table they set on the terrace, and scoff as they keep me from helping.

Finishing by putting a small vase with a rose onto the table, they both do a small curtsy before scurrying outside and closing the door behind them. “We will call for the Gamma right away, Missy. Enjoy your dinner and have a good night.”

“Okay. Okay. Okay,” I breathe out, passing my hand over my short skirt.

I suddenly feel terribly self-conscious about wearing a flowery dress with long puff sleeves as I start feeling like I can’t breathe. Playing with my necklace, I put my hand on my chest, confirming to myself that because of my low neckline, there is nothing that could be strangling me.

Standing in my living room awkwardly, I can’t seem to do anything with myself as I wait for Matthew to come up.

I knew I shouldn’t have agreed to him coming to my place but I should have insisted on wanting to eat at his place.

It definitely would have been less awkward this way.

With another deep breath, I start swinging my arms back and forth, as if I wanted to keep them from getting numb.

Just as I think about sitting down because I might collapse due to my legs giving out beneath me, I hear a soft knocking at the door.

“Okay. Okay. Okay,” I repeat, filling my lungs with a deep inhale before I reach the door.

After having exhaled all the air back out to calm my shaking hands, I open the door to a beaming Matthew.

“Hey, Matt,” I say, maybe a bit too loud.

“Hey, Missy. You look stunning,” he compliments me, making me blush.

I feel like a love-sick teenager as I wipe my sweaty palms against my skirt while he stands there looking like he is about to record a thirst trap.

His light blue shirt stretches over his muscular chest and the fact that he rolled up his sleeves has definitely more impact on me than it should have.

The mate bond must be hitting me with all effect as I suddenly desire nothing more than to rip his shirt off him.

Shaking myself, I free myself from my indecent daydream and hope that he didn’t notice my embarrassingly awkward drooling.

But he doesn’t seem to be bothered by it as he flashes me a smile, and leans in to press a chaste kiss on my lips.

Stepping aside, I invite him in, and we walk towards the terrace.

I have to think about what a gentleman he is as his brothers would have lifted me as soon as I had opened the door to start dinner with dessert.

“I hope this is okay for you. I thought it would be nice to dine outside,” he says as he pulls my chair back to take a seat.

I push the indecent pictures out of my brain and sit down, thanking him with a smile.

Looking up at him, I nod as my eyes follow his movements of him sitting down. “Of course! I thought it was very romantic, to be honest.”

“I’m glad.” He smiles at me, and I clear my throat, concentrating on my napkin which I fold over my lap.

I must be blushing horribly, and my nervousness just gets worse as he keeps gushing happily over how glad he is about us dining together, and repeats how beautiful I look.

Luckily, as we start lifting the cloches from the plates and bowls, we change the subject automatically.

Soon enough, we are digging in while chatting leisurely. We don't even get how the sun sets, something Matthew is very disappointed about, as he wanted to share the moment with me.

"Sorry, Matty," I try to cheer him up. "But it surely won't be the last sunset we can look at together, and it is much more pleasurable to forget time while talking with the person you like."

His face falls slightly before he flashes me the most beautiful smile that I have ever seen. "You are right."

"Is everything okay? Did I say something wrong?" I ask him, feeling my chest squeeze as I notice his reaction.

He clears his throat as he takes a sip from his wine glass. "No, no."

Even if I'm not sure if he is being truthful, I decide not to push him.

We fall silent, and I concentrate back on my plate, looking for a subject I could get us on. Matthew seems to be unable to withstand the awkward silence as he clears his throat again. "My brothers use that nickname to make fun of me. Because I'm the youngest. So, no one in the pack uses it."

"Oh, I'm sorry, Matt. I didn't know," I apologise, and flash him a sad smile. Reaching out to him, I lay my hand on his. "I won't use it again if you don't like it."

He chuckles and turns his hand to link his fingers into mine. The sparks increase at our connection, and I have to swallow a gasp at the intensity of it.

"Don't worry. You couldn't have known." His eyes are locked on our entangled hands as he continues to speak to me. "And actually, I liked the way it sounded as you said it."

My heart skips a beat as he lifts his gaze to me, locking his eyes with mine. I shift in my seat, clenching my legs together in the hopes of alleviating some of the pressure that grows between my legs. "You are cute."

He laughs, lifting my hand to his lips. "Just like you are."

As he presses a kiss onto my knuckles, my brain goes into a frenzy.

Cassy shifts in the back of my head and my brain gets flooded with delectable pictures of him grabbing me to lift me onto the table.

By the time my mind is completely overrun by my horny thoughts, I fear that he must be feeling my arousal.

Just as if on cue, his eyes darken, its green flecks appearing with a twirl.

Oh, Goddess.

I'm already plotting to see how far he would go without his brothers as I pull myself together before things escalate.

Tucking my hair behind my ear, I gather all my courage as it seems the right moment to spill the beans.

"Could I talk to you about something, Matt?" I ask feebly, making him look at me worried.

"Sure, anytime. What is it?" He asks, and I take a deep breath.

"It's about my wolf."

### Chapter 39 Artemisia

"What's with her?" He asks me, and I curse myself as I see the green sprinkles in his eyes disappearing.

As he seems to perceive the change in the atmosphere, I'm disappointed to see how fast he adapts to it.

He loses his flirtatious demeanor swiftly and replaces it with his usual caring worry for me.

I should have known. Matthew is always like this, and I should have known that he would immediately react like this.

I should have taken the chance and explained everything to him in bed.

After getting some steam off.

At least I would have been executed with a pleasurable memory on my skin.

Clearing my throat, I pull my hand back, making him look at me even more worried. "Is everything alright?"

"Uh-huh," I answer, trying to force a smile.

After taking a big gulp of my wine, I start telling him the same things I told Fynn in the hospital.

I recite them like I was about to rip off a band-aid.

Holding my head low, afraid to see the same rage in his eyes that I saw in Fynn's, I go through everything again.

His tension wafts over to me when I reach the part of Rick rejecting me, and I can nearly feel his pain as I tell him about my wolf being mean to me.

Clenching my eyes closed, I breathe through the entire time as I empty my heart out to him as if it were some painful medical procedure.

But as my heart and mind goes constantly back to my recollection of Fynn's reaction, I feel it even harder to tell everything as I'm waiting for his reaction panicky.

Or even his immediate rejection.

"This is all," I say, ending my rambling with a deep sigh. "And I'm so sorry that I didn't tell you sooner. But trust me if I tell you that it wasn't some kind of scheme on my side, I was just afraid of you all rejecting me."

Taking another deep breath, I lay my hand on my chest. "I didn't think I would survive it. And I was scared of all the consequences that would come with that."

He continues to look at me silently, while his worried expression has slightly morphed into something else.

And even if it is not that raw rage that Fynn showed me, I don't like it.

At all.

The gears in his head turn nearly audibly as he glares at me before he finally finds the words to speak.

"Why would you say something like this?" He asks, making me look at him agape.

I try to make sense out of the question, but I can only guess what he might be referring to.

His worry has now disappeared completely from his face while he changes into his Gamma-mode, examining every little expression of mine.

I'm quite taken aback by this demeanor of his, as I usually see him as a cute teddy bear. And not like a beast that is ready to swallow me whole any minute.

“What?” My brain is too slow to form an eloquent answer to keep up with his question, and he shifts in his seat.

“Why would you apologize while swearing on the fact that it wasn’t a scheme on your part?” He repeats, grimacing.

Rubbing my hands together, I clamp them between my knees as if wanting to get rid of the coldness that he is sending through my heart that goes on distributing it further through my body. “So that you know that I didn’t want to trick you into something. That I didn’t want to play you.”

“Why would you think that? Why would you guess that I must be thinking that?” He scoffs, his eyes shooting daggers at me. “Did you think of using it as a scheme before?”

“No,” I shout. “Of course not!”

Shaking my head, I gulp, wanting to push down the lump forming in my throat. “I was afraid because there were certain rumors about you and your pack.”

“I can imagine,” he snorts, making me glare at him.

“Matt!” I exclaim, my desperation growing.

He shakes his head as he rolls his eyes. “And you were so convinced of your ‘oh, so wonderful and perfect pack’ that you wouldn’t ever have a chance to show you otherwise. Don’t worry, I get it.”

“No!” I protest quickly but close my eyes as I am too fast to answer. “I mean, yes, of course. You certainly have the idea of your pack being the best and perfect as well, right?”

He lifts his brow at me, as my shoulders slump. “Right?”

“I don’t know what you want me to tell you, Missy.” He sighs, throwing his napkin on his plate. “I didn’t think anything about your pack as it came to you. I just wanted to be with my mate. But maybe it is different for you because you have no wolf.”

I gasp audibly at the impact his words have on me. It feels like a hard hit into my stomach and my insides turn, making me want to empty my stomach onto the romantically decorated table.

I would never have thought that it could blow up into my face if I told him.

Matthew was actually my last chance of getting at least one of them on my side.

But I should have known.

They do not care about weakness.

This is why their pack members are all so happy and cult-like unburdened.

They are the strongest in the Northern Hemisphere.

And would all cringe at a mate without a wolf.

Without exception.

'You are worthless to them,' Cassy sneers, shooting tears into my eyes.

"I'm being serious. It's all new to me, and my pack had these prejudices regarding your pack. Now I can see that it's all total bullshit. But before seeing and realizing all this I was very afraid!"

Taking a deep breath, I add pleadingly. "I just wanted to tell you because it is right that you know. I will tell Logan and Cayden as soon as I get the chance to as well. I understand if you are disappointed and mad at me. And I'm so sorry!"

He stares at me for another heartbeat, but for me, it seems like an eternity.

"What about Fynn?" He asks, his face expressionless.

"Huh?" I blink, making him groan.

"What about Fynn?" He repeats himself. "Does he already know?"

I think about lying to him shortly but eventually nod, making him exhale distressed.

"I told him in the hospital," I answer lowly, and he nods repeatedly while pinching his bottom lip.

"Did he react like an asshole?" He asks, a strange tone in his voice.

I scrunch my nose, shrugging. "If you want to put it like this... Yes, he was really mean."

"Okay," he breathes out and pushes his chair back to get up. "Okay."

I watch him pass me and re-enter my bedroom while my heart breaks.

Cassy is laughing hysterically while I feel myself tear up.

I don't know how much more I can take.

"Matthew!" I call for him while I skyrocket out of my seat.

Throwing my napkin onto the table, I don't know what actually gets me to react like this instead of just staying in my seat in shame and letting go of my tears depressingly, but I can't seem to do otherwise.

I can't lose him as well.

Not my Matthew.

As soon as I stumble back into my bedroom, I halt in my tracks shocked.

Matthew is standing there and is looking at me with his head tilted.

His hands are in his pockets as his eyes rake over me, and I take a few steps closer towards him slowly even if my brain screams at me to run the other way.

Cassy fell silent and is now as curious to see his intent as I am.

My heart beats painfully against my rib cage as I wait for him to move or to insult me, and it takes him an eternity to do so.

"Do you want me to reject you, mate?" He asks me, sending a shudder down my spine.

Chapter 40 Artemisia

"Do you want me to reject you, mate?" He asks me, sending a shudder down my spine.

My breath hitches in my throat as I freeze, and he flashes me a wolfish smirk.

"Do you want me to reject you?" He repeats, and now I shake my head immediately.

"Then I don't care!" He says, clenching his jaw.

My heart halts in my chest as my brain struggles to process what he just said.

"Huh?" I ask stupidly, watching him take a step to reduce the distance between us.

Leaning in, he speaks directly into my ear, sending a shiver down my spine. "I don't care, love."

He chuckles, pressing a kiss on my neck, and a low moan escapes my lips. "You are my mate and you are mine."

A purr rumbles through his chest as he breathes me in, making me feel like my legs are about to turn into jelly. "If the prick wants to reject you, I don't care. More for me!"

I whimper as his declaration hits me right in my core.



Straightening back up slightly, he lets his gaze roam on my face, moving it from my lips back up to my eyes. The green spots in his dark irises are practically glowing as his demeanor changes into something predatory. "Right, mate?"

I can't do anything else but nod, feeling as if I were being put in a trance by him. He keeps me hostage for another few heartbeats before he takes one last step to wrap his arms around me.

My breath hitches in my throat as he leans in, stopping just a few millimeters in front of my face. His lips hover over mine, and I can feel his teasing smirk on his tempting lips even if we aren't touching yet.

I know that he is playing with me, and normally, it would make me furious. I never liked the fuckboy or playboy type who gets a kick out of teasing women for their ego.

But I don't feel any anger.

This entire situation feels a lot different. It feels like a seductive play for him to see how much he can make me lose my mind.

And I'm totally in for that.

Instead of feeling anger and frustration, my body gets flooded by lust and pleasant anticipation.

My mind gets totally blanked out while his alluring scent invades my senses.

I feel like I'm not even blinking anymore as I keep my eyes on him, fascinated by the fact that he has me yearning to see his next move like this.

As he finally claims my lips with his greedily, taking my breath away, it doesn't take long for me to relax against his frame.

While reciprocating his kiss, I feel his hands move down to grab my ass, and I wrap my arms around him. With a light jerk, he lifts me up, having me wrap my legs around his body automatically.

Cassy seems to have retreated into the back of my head, seemingly not elated at all as my thoughts and senses overflow with just him and the fantasies about what I want him to do with me. I breathe him in hungrily as I feel him move towards my bed.

"I love this dress," he growls as he caresses my thighs, moving his hands up to my ass again.

Letting me fall onto my bed, he follows me on it to hover over me and pulls my dress over my head.

"It has a zip," I squeal as he forces it over my head cumbrously and laughter bubbles up my chest.

He pulls me to him, lowering himself to kiss my neck up and down. "You should be happy I didn't trash it."

"Pervert," I breathe out with a giggle as I start opening the buttons of his shirt.

Getting back onto his knees, he pulls his shirt down his shoulders, before opening his pants.

I watch him, feeling like burning up, and bite my bottom lip.

Just as he slams his lips back on mine, I'm just about to drive my hands into his hair, but flinch as a stabbing pain pierces through me.

"Everything alright?" Matthew stops kissing me and looks at me worried as he must have felt the spasm in reaction to the pain.

Nodding, I try to push down the uncomfortable feeling and cringe as Fynn's image flashes up in my mind.

No. No. No.

He must be feeling my desire and me making out with him.

Damn it!

"Are you sure?" He asks again, making me force a smile.

I figure that I can't stop to think about my options and mind Fynn's feelings as my guilty conscience at the thought of making my mate suffer even slightly would surely win the fight.

And he doesn't deserve such a thoughtful mate.

Not after what he said to me.

Sliding a hand around his neck and up into his hair, I pull him back onto me.

I need these aggressive feelings out of my body, or my frustration will end up eating me up, pairing with my anxiety once again.

Also, Matthew deserves everything.

He deserves to feel good.

After breaking the kiss one more time, he moves down my body to nibble at my skin. I enjoy him kissing my neck and down my chest, purring happily.

As the uncomfortable feeling just gets worse and brings my chest to squeeze painfully, I curse my weak resolve but eventually push against his chest gently, making him stop and look at me with a questioning expression.

“Do you need to call your brothers? I mean... What’s with your agreement?” I ask feebly, not knowing how he would perceive my question.

He studies my face shortly before he frowns slightly. “Do you want me to call them?”

“Not really,” I say in a whisper, shrugging and my heart flips in my chest as a big smile appears on his face.

“Then no. As long as we don’t cross a certain line, it’s okay,” he answers, flashing me a wolfish smirk.

“By a certain line you mean... we can’t...” I stutter while trying to ask him, feeling my cheeks turn deep red.

He laughs and leans back down to bite into my neck lightly. “We can’t go all the way down, sweetheart.”

“Ugh,” I say, surprising myself with my cheekiness as I throw my head back. “You can’t be serious. I need you, Matt.”

His happy hum vibrates through me as he continues to explore my body with his lips, teeth, and tongue. “I can’t claim you entirely tonight. But I can make you feel good.”

I gasp as I feel his fangs rasping at my neck, his warm breath fanning my skin and making it prickle pleasantly. “If you want me to.”

“Yes! Yes! Yes!” I breathe out, getting an approving growl.

He doesn’t show the same carefulness with my lingerie as he did with my dress, as he rips them open with his claws, freeing me from the laced fabrics in seconds.

Positioning himself closer to me, spreading my legs wider, he presses his hard-on onto my throbbing core, making my juices drench his boxer briefs.

“What was your decision on the toys?” he asks me as he pushes a finger into me, making me moan loudly. “Maybe there is something you like particularly.”

What is he doing? Doing a pitch in such a situation.

"I just want your cock, Matty!" I scream as my brain fails to hold this conversation with him factually. "I don't want any toys."

He stops moving his fingers in and out of me, making me whimper disappointed as he slides them back outside of me. I watch him lick my juices off his fingers in relish, setting me on fire.

"You say so because you don't know how much pleasure I could make you feel with one of those." His husky whisper makes my burning desire reach its peak.

Even if I open my mouth, my voice fails me, and he smirks slyly at me.

"I'll choose something for you. And then you'll tell me."

I can't get my brain to function fast enough to form any answer as he puts his lips back on my body and moves down to my now painfully pulsating clit.

A loud scream of pleasure explodes from my chest at his first lick.

And it just gets more intense.