

When they touch me (Shelagh Milano) #Chapter 71 – 80

Read When they touch me (Shelagh Milano) Chapter 71

Chapter 71 ARTEMISIA

I wake up feeling like I got hit by a bus running at full speed.

Peeling my eyes open, I think I must be hallucinating as his mouth-watering scent invades my senses.

Turning in his strong arms, I find myself in the embrace of Fynn, who is still sleeping peacefully. I rub my eyes, thinking I must be losing my mind, but he doesn't transform, he doesn't disappear.

He is really here.

Lying in my bed.

"Stop fidgeting around so much," his deep and husky voice gets me to halt in my movements. "I'm trying to sleep, you know."

Laying still, I lean my head on his arm, murmuring to myself, "Is this another dream?"

"No, princess." he sighs, and I believe him immediately as he sneers the word out again, mocking me. "You were screaming bloody murder, and I was the only one who got you to fall asleep again."

I look up at him wide-eyed before laughing awkwardly. "You are kidding me, right?"

"Why should I?" he sighs, making me shake my head.

"No way your touch was more soothing to me than Logan's," I push out, regretting my words as he opens his eyes, showing me that the red flakes are already present.

"Well, princess. You two can act all lovey-dovey, but at the end of the day, your body wants what it wants. So, I had to play your cuddle toy for the night instead of being cuddled by my personal fairy."

I squint my eyes at him, before I box him into his stomach with all my might, not even getting him to budge while I risked breaking my fingers. "Oh, I'm sorry for having disrupted your plans, Master Fynn."

He chuckles, making me gasp as he entangles his fingers in my hair, jerking my head back to look at him. "I love it when you call me that."

Scoffing, I try to overplay my arousal but it just gets worse as he leans in to nibble at the skin of my neck. "And I love it when you show me your claws, Kitten."

My eyes roll into the back of my head as he starts sucking my skin between his teeth, and I'm quite sure he will leave a love bite.

Damn him, and his alluring voice...

And body...

And...

Shaking my head as much as I can, I get myself out of his trance and push against his chest.

Suddenly, a doubt arises in me, squeezing my heart. He must be feeling it because he lifts my chin with his finger, looking worried. "What's wrong?"

I look at him, wetting my lips with my tongue, my heart beating into my throat. "Were you with one of your fairies yesterday?"

"What?" he asks me, as if I was being nuts.

"You heard it. Don't act like I'm dumb," I say, trying to sound confident while my air is being cut by my anxiety.

He studies my face for a second before he shakes his head. "Of course not. I'd never do this to you."

Pushing out a breath of relief, I nod. "Okay."

"You believe me, right?" He looks at me, seemingly desperate, and I nod again.

"Good," he sighs, wrapping his arms back around me to pull me close. "How are you feeling, by the way? Still hot?"

He seems to be actually worried, as he slips his hand under my t-shirt to lay his hand onto my back.

groan as I lean my forehead against his chest. "This is a dream."

"How much do you actually dream of me that you assume this so easily?" he laughs.

Leaning my head back, I frown at him.

"I never dream of you," I lie.

"Sure," he chuckles. "You dream of Logan."

I roll my eyes, wanting to get out of

his hold, but he holds me back.

"I

was just saying it because you are

being nice to me, and not insulting me as you usually do."

"Ah, I forgot about the Fynn-mocking-free zone in Missy's dream territory," he mocks me again, but my heart skips a beat as he says it. "What did you say?" I ask, making him shake his head.

"You were in terrible pain. I don't want to be mean to someone who is hurting," he says instead.

"Oh, Master Fynn has a heart. Who would have ever imagined," I mock him, getting Drake to chuckle in my mind while Fynn grins at me. Gulping painfully, I close my eyes as I feel exhausted. "What happened to me?"

"I can't tell you," he answers quickly.

"Because you actually don't know or because you don't want to?" I inquire further, making him distort his face.

"Cayden has given me a deadline, and I plan on taking every day of it until I tell you." He clenches his teeth, avoiding looking at me.

"Here you go, being mean again," I sigh. "When will be the last day of the deadline?"

"The ball for the solstice," he answers shortly.

I purse my lips as I giggle. "I'm not going to the ball with you though."

"Why not?" He growls, making me grin. "Are you already going with Logan? Did the idiot already ask you?"

"Don't call him an idiot. And he didn't ask me, I just thought it would be normal as a Beta Female."

"Ha! Is it official already?!" he pushes out, and my heart squeezes as I see hurt flashing in his eyes. "Congratulations, then."

"No need to be so condescending," I murmur, making him hum.

Without saying anything else, he takes my hand and starts kissing my fingertips. My heart flips in my chest, as my core throbs. "What are you doing?" I ask in a whisper, but he continues unbothered.

Reaching my middle finger, he

slowly lets his tongue glide up

between my ring finger and my

middle finger, causing a shiver to run down my spine.

"So, if I were to ask you," he starts lowly, as my breath hitches in my throat. "Would you still be free to come with me?"

I nod slowly, my senses in a haze.

"Will you come to the big ball with me then?" he asks, making me nod again.

"Your words Artemisia," he growls, and I blink.

"Yes," I answer in a whisper. "Yes, I'll go to the ball with you."

He grins proudly as he beams at me, "Great. This way, I won't have to look for long to find you and tell you what the reason for your rejection will be."

Asshole.

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My plans of accepting the job offer of Mr. Davies get disrupted as I help organise the ball along with Cayden as well as the excursion with the pups.

I hum as Logan's confession keeps me in a good mood, and I actually look forward to going to the ball with Fynn, even if it means that it will be the last night that I will spend with him as my mate.

I only hope that he will make it worth it.

Matthew and Fynn have returned to ignoring me as much as they can, even if I get Matthew to kiss me once in a while when I get him in the pack house alone.

Cayden has returned to being grumpy, and it triggers me as he keeps acting like a five-year-old whose lollipop got stolen.

My heart makes a backflip as I think that the excursion with the pups will be in only two days, and as we will be away only for three days when we will be coming back, there will be less than a week until the big ball.

I have already thought through a lot of scenarios.

From improbable love confessions to me begging him not to leave me.

Which, honestly, I hope will be improbable as well.

I plan to take my rejection with my head held high and concentrate on Logan's promise to want to fight for me.

Standing in front of Cayden's desk silently, I watch him going through the documents that I elaborated with Astrid and Celeste.

"It's the usual route, the usual pension with a little farmyard for the kids to play," I say happily, trying to counter his grumbly demeanour. "On the way,

we will have the stops that I have already discussed with the warrior who will be in charge. And I think that Matthew will accompany us, together with five more warriors, to secure our well-being."

He sighs, passing a hand on his face before checking the documents again. "Looks good for me."

"Okay," I say, taking my folder with a small jump. "I'll be going then. Will I see you at dinner?"

"Sure," I'm about to leave as he calls me, making me turn around. "Did you talk with the adorners about the hall?"

Walking back to him, I open my file, to pull out a plan. "Yes, I did. We went through everything just as we have discussed it."

He takes the plan, studying it intently before he hands it back to me. "Great. Thanks."

"Are you sure that you are alright?" I ask, putting my plan back into my folder. "You have been so grumpy for so long. Maybe I can get a smile because I did well?"

Finally looking up at me with a frown, he even gets me to lose my smile. "I'll smile when there will be something to smile about."

"Okay," I whisper, and clear my throat.

"Am I not working well enough? Or is it just that you can't stand me for too long?" I ask, making him groan.

"Didn't we have that conversation already?"

I nod, repeatedly. "Yeah, we kind of had. But it's just uncomfortable to me if all you do is bark at me or look at me disparagingly."

He lifts a brow at me, and I lift my index finger at him. "No, listen. I'm okay with you not liking me. But I just want to do my job right and all I ask for is a bit of feedback if behind all this behaviour is a bit of content for my work, or if I'm just being a burden."

"You mean as Beta Female?" he growls, making it feel like an insult.

"Yes, it's my title, isn't it?" I take a little step backward, hugging my folders against my chest.

He shakes his head, my heart sinking into my stomach. "Not yet, as far as I am concerned."

Oh, so it's a family thing.

"What is that supposed to mean, Cayden?" I ask, dumbfounded.

He scoffs, pinching the bridge of his nose. "Sorry. That came out wrong."

"Well, how was it supposed to come out then?" My voice reaches a higher-pitched tone as I can't believe what this family is putting me through. "You can't mean that I'm not marked yet because everyone is worried about keeping your little brother entertained, and I have to work my way around quietly because nobody wants to fucking talk to me."

"Missy," he says standing up, but I take another step back, gesturing to him to stay where he is.

"No! I'm playing your silly little game, but I can use my title as the Beta himself allowed me to. If you don't like it, bad for you!"

"Missy..." he tries again, but I interrupt him again.

"It's hard to be part of a new pack if your mates don't accept you as they should. If you are all against me being here, why don't you let me go home?! I could wait for my mating ceremony, if I'll ever have one, surrounded by people I love, and preferably not in pain because one of my mates has something he wants to hide from me as long as he wants to because no one can tell him anything. Not even the fucking Alpha! What is going on, Cayden?"

"He will tell you soon," he tries to calm me, but I laugh.

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"Yeah!" I push out. "In two fucking weeks. How many 'episodes' will I have until then where I will have to rely on someone to help me out who treats me poorly regularly? Or how many times do I have to play those little games? It's not fun to be ignored and treated as if everyone still has to decide if they will keep me or not! I'm not a fucking pet! Also, have you ever stopped one single second to think about how difficult it is to lie to my family and my friends who are asking me constantly when my mating ceremony will take place?"

"It's complicated..." he starts, clenching his jaw as I cut his sentence again.

"How is it complicated, Cayden? Just tell me to step out of your way and I'll do so. I can have Lisa bring you all the notes. This way you won't have to deal with me."

"Will you shut up!" he growls, his Alpha command wafting over me, making me sit down into the chair luckily standing right behind me. don't want Lisa to bring me your notes. And I don't want you to step out of my way. I hate to see you every day because it is like torture for me. And still, I wouldn't be able to

go one day without seeing your

face."

I open my mouth before closing it again, and he takes a deep breath, "So, I try to keep you at a distance to prevent myself from doing anything stupid! That's why I'm fucking grumpy!"

"What do you mean? Doing something stupid like what?" I ask lowly, my eyes tearing up.

"Like kissing you, when you are nibbling on the nail of your thumb pensively, or pulling you close when you lean into me to show me something and your scent practically screams for me. Or fucking asking you to lead this pack with me!"

I claw on the armrests of my chair as I struggle to breathe. "W- What?"

He straightens back up, unclenching and clenching his jaw as he glares down at me.

"I want you to be my Luna, Missy!"

ARTEMISIA

"Missy?" I stop biting the nail of my thumb as Astrid calls me, tearing me out of my thoughts.

"Huh?"

"Are you alright, dear?" She asks me as she leans into my line of sight.

I realise where I am, looking around me lost as I look for my files. "Yeah, yeah. Sorry. I was pensive because I was still thinking about how we were going to organise everything with the escort cars."

"Ah, don't worry about that. The warriors will be driving the jeeps, and I will drive the little bus with the children," she giggles, making me smile. "You are a superstar, Astrid," I sigh with relief.

I'm about to get up as she holds me by my forearms, looking at me worriedly. "Are you sure that you are okay? We went through this already this morning, and you look a bit pale."

"Sure, sure! I'm perfectly fine. Just nervous," I lie, stepping away from her. "I'll talk to Georgius again and see if we are ready for tomorrow. Just to be sure."

She nods, folding her hands. "Thank you, Missy."

"See you tomorrow then," I say, waving at her and the few kids playing in the garden as I walk out through the gate.

Letting go of a deep breath, I start walking back home along the river. People greet me kindly as always and the chirping birds signal me that the world didn't in fact end, even if it feels that way.

I close my eyes shortly as I think back at Cayden's confession the day before and how I reacted in the worst possible way.

Instead of saying anything, maybe even confessing that I had feelings for him too and that I thought of kissing his luscious lips since he teased me at the lake in my old pack, I just got up and walked out of the room.

Like a fucking idiot!

I haven't seen or talked to him since, and I even thought about having Lisa bring him my final notes before the excursion.

I'm such a lost cause.

Groaning, I concentrate on taking a deep breath as the wind blows gently through my hair, wrapping my long colourful skirt around my ankles.

I don't even notice how my feet are killing me as I step into the warriors' training fields. "May I know where I can find Gregorius?"

"Sure," the young warrior says, pointing to a bulky and tanned guy, who is currently talking to Fynn.

My usual luck.

Thanking him with a smile, I walk towards the two men confidently, ignoring the looks my shoes clicking on the pavement attract.

"Gentlemen," I greet them, still smiling as I reach them.

"Missy," Gregorius celebrates, welcoming me with wide arms while Fynn just distorts his face.

I keep my smile up, not wanting to give Fynn any satisfaction. "Would you have a moment to spare for me, Gregorius? It's about the excursion tomorrow."

"Sure," his laugh rumbles over the training court, and he slaps Fynn's arm playfully. "Let's take a look at this boss."

He starts walking into a little hut at the side of the training court and I turn around to talk to Fynn lowly, "You don't have to waste your time if you have more important things to do."

"Don't worry. I have to supervise everything anyway, so getting it in first person is actually better." He answers, laying his hand on the small of my back as we start walking.

I keep myself from distorting my face but fail at not getting his attention.

I forgot that he can feel my emotions.

"Are you hurt?" he asks, looking at me worriedly.

Waving dismissively, I smile at him. "Oh, no. These shoes are just killing me."

He hums, eyeing me up as we reach the hut and he opens the door open for me. "If you want I could mind-link Logan to get you carried back to your room."

I chuckle as I walk past him, "All this jealousy really doesn't suit you, Master Fynn."

He clicks his tongue but I can clearly see him hiding a grin.

Spreading the plans out on the table standing in the room, I get through tomorrow's lineup and organisation quickly.

As we finish discussing, Gregorius looks at Fynn with a big grin, and he shrugs. "Looks good for me."

"Perfect!" Gregorius claps his hands before he shakes me by grabbing my shoulders. "Good job, Ms. Beta."

I smile, trying to keep my balance. "Thank you!"

He nods happily, before walking out and Fynn is about to follow him as I step aside, wondering what the hell got into me.

"Fynn!" I call out a bit too loud, making him halt in his step. Both men turn around to look at me and I knead my fingers. "Maybe I could talk to you real quick. In private?"

"Sure," he sighs, before dismissing Gregorius. "Go ahead, I'll be with you in a minute."

My heart beats into my throat as he steps closer to me, putting his hands into his pockets leisurely. "What is it?"

"I-I have a little problem," I start, making him roll his eyes.

"Why don't you talk to Logan about your little problem?" he scoffs, about to turn back around as I grab his arm, stopping him.

"I can't! I could barely look him in the eyes this morning. I really tried, but I couldn't tell him. Please, just a second! I don't know who I should go talk to about this, otherwise." I plead, and his expression morphs.

He looks at me worriedly as he turns back around to face me fully. "What is it?"

"It's Cayden," I whisper, gulping.

Leaning into me, he takes his hands out of his pockets to cross them across his chest. "What's with him?"

"You were right!" I shake my head, taking a deep breath. "He wants me to be Luna for this pack."

Fynn chuckles, shrugging. "His Luna?"

I grimace before I nod slowly, getting him to laugh even louder.

"Don't laugh, this is not funny!" I scold him, tucking my hair behind my ear.

"I just knew it," he says with a broad grin. "I'm just surprised it took him this long to tell you."

"What do you mean?" I ask, making him shake his head.

"This is not my place to tell," he simply answers, making me groan.

"What should I do now?" I ask, and he passes a hand through his hair.

"I'm still not getting why you are asking me! Shouldn't you have more respect for your mate's feelings?" he says, acting theatrically offended.

"Oh, stop it. Look who's talking!" I

tsk, "You were different the last time we talked and I thought... I just felt comfortable talking with you. Maybe it's because you plan to reject me anyway, making me feel without pressure around you."

He snorts, and for a short moment, it seems like he is proud. "Okay, look. You like him too, don't you?"

I stare at him for a moment before I nod again, feeling my cheeks warm up.

"We all know this already. You

should just talk to Matthew and Logan about it. Afterwards, you can decide if you want to accept him as a chosen mate or not. As your mates, we just care about you being happy, and just because you choose to listen to your heart while doing something important for our pack, doesn't mean you will lose us over it," he breathes out, squinting his eyes at me as I grin at him.

"Why are you looking at me like that?" he asks, and I shake my head.

He groans, rolling his eyes. "Missy!"

"Nothing," I say, not able to keep my smile from growing. "It's just that you said 'us'."

"It was just a slip of the tongue. It should be clear to you that I meant Matthew and Logan," he grumbles.

I chuckle, as I start collecting the files. "Sure, I know that."

"Argh, let's go, Ms pain in the ass," he growls, already walking through the door.

As he opens the door for me, I notice

that by standing on the high step, I'm nearly as tall as him. Clasp my files in my hand, I wrap my

hands around his neck, hugging him

close to kiss his cheek. His eyes widen as I push myself off his strong shoulders, and whisper. "Thank you so much. I feel better already."

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He growls annoyed, even if it nearly seems like he is trying to cover a purr.

I giggle as I step out of the hut. "Now, if you could mind-link Logan or Matthew, I would need someone carrying me for real."

He rolls his eyes as he closes the door behind us, and I'm just waiting for his eyes to glaze over as he crouches down.

"What... What are you doing?" I ask taken aback, looking around to see if someone is watching us.

"Come on. I'm going to carry you to your room," he says, gesturing to me with his hands to move.

I laugh awkwardly as I play with my fingers, "I was just kidding, Fynn. I just wanted to annoy you. You won't carry me anywhere."

With another annoyed growl, he turns around to grab my wrist, pulling me to him. Before I can wrap my thoughts around what is happening, he is already straightening back up. I wrap my hands around his neck as he eyes me up. "A piggyback would have been troublesome anyway with this enormously long skirt of yours."

"Don't you like it?" I tease him as he murmurs, and starts walking. Lifting a leg, my skirt moves slightly back, showing my ankle adorned with my shoe strap and anklet.

He hums, acting like he wouldn't care, but I can clearly see the red flecks and feel his emotions do a little backflip before he pushes it back down.

"I felt that," I say in a low sing-song, and he chuckles.

Avoiding my gaze completely, he grins. "I don't know what you are talking about."

"I know that you act like you don't. But Drake knows too. He snitched on you," I say jokingly, making him shake his head.

"How would you know what he knows?"

"Oh, we are great friends already," I tease him, making him shake his head. "He tells me about all your secrets."

He barks out a laugh, and I hate how my heart reacts at the sound of it, "He is a traitor then!"

'Hey,' Drake growls, making me giggle.

"He is just being loyal to his mate," I smile up at Fynn, linking my fingers behind his neck.

Clearing his throat doesn't help him disguise how his heart just flipped in his chest.

Looks like the physical contact is affecting him as well.

My heart skips a beat at the thought and I lean back against his frame as he keeps walking in stoic silence. "How long do you think he will be angry with you... For ditching me and going with Blondie?"

"What Blondie?" he asks with a grin, still avoiding looking at me.

"Ah, ah, ah! No dodging questions this time, Master Finnegan," I reprimand him playfully, getting him to groan.

"You have to stop calling me that," he grumbles, making me laugh. "But I guess I will have him back in a good mood in a few days. Especially if I will have a blonde fairy helping me with it."

I shake my head, suppressing a cheeky grin. "You are such an idiot."

"How dare you speak to your Master like this," he jokes, and I gasp theatrically, enjoying his flirtatious side. "I demand respect, little mate."

"Oh, no," I breathe out theatrically. "Am I in trouble now, my Master?"

Fynn finally chuckles, and my heart squeezes as I feel his fingers dig into my skin. "You will be if you keep on playing with fire."

I giggle, throwing my head back. "You know, for someone who claims to be so repelled by me, you sure look too eager to have me play with the fire."

"Oh, I'm just keeping you entertained

because Cayden asked me to be

nice. I really wouldn't want to

destroy the beautiful

have with my brothers. And I

actually enjoy watching you think you were seducing me," he says smugly.

Wrapping my hand further around his neck, I hug myself closer to his frame. "Is that so? Well, I guess you must be a better actor than I

thought. Even faking your emotions you want to make me feel. Or maybe you are just distracted by my charmingness."

"Distracted by your charmingness?" he laughs, lifting a brow at me. "More like distracted by your constant need of being a pain in the ass."

I gasp overdramatically as he continues to chuckle. "Someone has to keep you on your toes. I figured that you get bored too swiftly and I'd hate to see you get too comfortable."

My heart doesn't seem to be able to

calm down, and as I realize that he has stopped walking, and came to a halt on the top of the stairs, it just gets worse. "Comfortable? With you around, comfortable is the last thing I am going to be."

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"Glad to know I am doing my job right," I wet my lips with my tongue, trying to overcome my nervousness, but it does nothing more than attract his intense gaze onto my lips.

Oh, dear...

Holding my breath, I realize that he is inching closer slowly, his voice only a husky whisper. "You have no idea."

His lips graze mine slightly, making my heart skip a beat. My thoughts run wildly, while my nerves buzz, even getting Cassy to move intrigued.

My eyes are about to close as a voice has me jumping, pulling myself away from him.

"Fynn?!" a melodic voice calls my mate's name, having me panicking.

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I turn my head so fast to look at her that I fear that it will have me break my neck and recognize the blonde she-wolf I saw talking to Fynn on the construction site. She is walking towards us from the warrior's floor with cautious steps and my heart breaks a little as I imagine that she must have been waiting for him in his quarters.

Which he shares with a bunch of other wolves, so who even cares?

His glare is still locked on me as I look back between the two and laugh awkwardly, "Oh, erm... My shoes were killing me, so he carried me." Rage flashes on his face as I wind myself in his arms, making him let go of me, "Sorry, I can make it easily from here. It's just a few more steps."

I flinch as I take a step back, separating myself from Fynn, cracking my heart another bit. My own emotions must be overcharging myself as I can't seem to feel his.

Maybe he was faking what he was sending over to me all along.

Forcing up a smile, I turn back to look at Fynn who is now clenching his jaw. "Thank you very much, Finnegan. I'll see you in a few days then."

I could kick my own ass as I even do a stupid curtsy before I turn around to walk away.

"Just give me a moment, Harper," I hear Fynn growl as I'm already descending the stairs to Matthew's quarters.

Harper.

I close my eyes as I remember how he had looked at her on the construction site, and force myself to clench my teeth to cope with the pain streaming up my legs.

I'm so absorbed by it that I don't even notice him following me until he grabs my wrist, spinning me around.

By the force of the movement, I not only spin around but also risk falling backwards, making my heart stop in my chest.

Gasping, I hold onto his shirt as he wraps his arms around my frame, stabilising myself in his arms. "Fuck, sorry."

"Are you insane?" I bark up at him, having him frown down at me.

"I already apologised, princess. It's not that something could ever have happened," he growls back, and I start hitting his chest. "Let me go, Fynn. I'm so fed up with you!"

He hugs me closer, pulling me flush against his body, impeding me from hitting him further. "Stop it already!"

"Don't you have places to be?" I ask, and he tilts his head at me.

"Why did you push me away? Why did you make up an excuse about being with me?" He hisses, making me look at him dumbfounded.

"Are you fucking kidding me? She is the one you want to date, right? I didn't want her to feel bad."

"Are you my fucking wingman, or what? What the fuck does this even mean?!" He snarls, and I glare at him.

"Is she, or isn't she, your fling?" I ask him, trying to keep my voice from shaking.

My heart hurts as he keeps quiet, even if his head seems to be rumbling with his thoughts. As even Drake keeps quiet, I shake my head, putting up a saddened smile.

"As I thought... Don't make me the one acting the wrong way in this

situation. Because I'm not."

He stares back at me lost as the rage slowly leaves his face, and I lay my hands flat onto his chest. I speak calmly, as I plead with him, "Let me go, Fynn."

It takes a few seconds, which surely

feels like an eternity, but he finally lets go of me. As soon as I'm certain of the fact that I won't fly down the stairs, I flash him another sad smile and walk away.

I can feel his gaze on me until I pass the big wing doors, entering Matthew's floor.

Feeling already crushed, I try to knock on his door in the hopes of getting a good feeling before my departure tomorrow.

I'm already looking forward to spending a few days with him alone, but as he opens the door with an empty expression, every joy I felt because of the pleasant anticipation leaves my body instantaneously.

"Hey, is there anything left to discuss for tomorrow?" I ask, forcing up a happy expression.

He simply shrugs, leaning against the door frame of the door he has only opened a crack. "I don't think so. Isn't everything clear already?"

"Yeah," I nod, pushing out a laugh. Pulling out a sheet of paper from my crumbled pile, I hand him one of the plans I made. "This is the plan for the warriors. In case you want to have it."

He takes the piece of paper with a nearly disgusted expression, and I bluff myself towards the end of this interaction.

"Well then, see you tomorrow," I say in a sing-song, making him nod and close the door into my face.

Pushing out a deep breath, I murmur to myself. "Oh, thank you so much, Missy. I can't wait for the trip with you, Missy. Have a lovely night, Missy."

I jump as I spot two Omegas

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giggling in the corner and I roll my eyes. Continuing my painful way up the stairs to my quarters, I pull myself together until I'm in the safe surroundings of what I'm forced to call my home.

And I can finally give in to my tears.

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Chapter 76 ARTEMISIA

"One, two, three... Would you please hold still?"

Lisa and I chuckle as we watch Celeste count the pups that can't seem to hold still.

"They are so cute," I say, pushing myself off the small bus that we are leaning on.

Lisa is still biting on a straw from the juices we just drank. "Terribly cute."

"I've packed everything now, Missy. You won't miss anything even during your excursion," Daisy appears out of nowhere, carrying a huge rucksack on her shoulders.

I force a smile as Lisa laughs. "Great! Thank you, Daisy."

Suddenly, the pups start jumping up and down as they see the warriors approaching and we step around the car to look at them getting closer as well.

"Strange," I murmur, getting Daisy and Lisa to look at me questioningly. "I can't see Matthew."

"Oh," Daisy says excitedly, making us look at her shocked. "I heard there was a change of plans at the last minute. He won't come with us because of pack matters."

I shake my head dumbfounded, "What pack matters? Nobody told me anything! I spoke to him last night and it was all alright."

Taking out my plans hastily, I scroll through the pages, looking for everything that would have to be organised anew if he didn't come with us. "Who's going to cover for him?"

"In that case, I have bad news for you, princess,"

My heart falls to my stomach, making me feel the thud of the bag hitting the floor physically.

I turn around to see Fynn grinning at us, and I groan. "You have to be fucking kidding me."

"Oh, Master Fynn," Daisy shouts happily, making me roll my eyes.

Really, Daisy as well?

"Ladies," He greets us smugly before he opens the passenger door, gesturing to the interior of the car standing behind the bus where the children are currently settling in. "Get in."

Scoffing, I get into the car and he closes the door behind me. "You two will ride the bus."

Lisa and I exchange a saddened look, but they comply without protest, and I see them join the pups that are already sitting on the bus.

While one warrior gets into the bus, I see Gregorius get into the other car with Celeste, and my heartbeat starts increasing as I realise that I will be alone with Fynn for the entire trip.

"I had planned for five warriors to accompany us," I say, hoping to be able to distract myself. Tucking my hair behind my ear, I take a look at my plans. "We made a few changes as Matthew was replaced by me. You won't need all those warriors if you have me," he grins at me and I let my plans slump into my lap.

"Of course!" I groan, tucking my plans away. "But wouldn't it be nice if Master Fynn would talk to poor little beta-princess Missy about the changing of plans?"

He laughs as he sets back, and waits for the bus to drive off. "Sorry, it was really last minute."

"But it wasn't last minute enough to have Daisy know about it," I murmur while staring at the bus driving away, seeing the other car driving in front of it. I notice that we don't move, and I turn my head to Fynn to say something, finding him already looking at me.

"There is no link whatsoever between me and Daisy. All the Omegas call me Master since I was stripped of my title," he says calmly, and I gulp. "It apparently was the only thing they could call someone of a higher rank without a proper title."

Pushing out a breath of relief, I lean back into my seat as he starts driving after the bus. "I would have never gotten over hearing that you had something with Daisy."

"Yeah," he shifts in his seat before he suddenly chuckles, "And the fairy entertains everyone who wants her to."

Lifting his fingers off the steering wheel for a second, he looks like wanting to explain it to himself. "I don't know why she followed me upstairs."

I laugh, pressing my tongue to my upper teeth, "Come on. Now you are pulling my leg!"

"I swear! She was one of the

she-wolves dancing for me and my men in the warriors-quarters, that's true. I admit it, but Drake told me that you were looking for me because you were in trouble, and I suddenly felt sick." He pushes his tongue out as if he were to gag as he has his eyes glued to the street. "And I don't know what she took as an invitation."

Shaking my head, I turn towards him, my heart skipping a beat as he smiles. "Thank you for saving me, by the way."

"Meh," he shrugs, but Drake's voice rumbles through my head, exposing him.

'Oh, he loves being your hero!'

He gets me to laugh, making Fynn look at me confused. "Sorry, I was just in thought."

Turning back to watch the passing landscapes while he concentrates back on the street, we fall silent.

The constant buzzing of the motor

and his scent get me to relax so

much that nearly fall asleep. I

blame the mate bond for making me feel this comfortable around

swnevel

someone who constantly bullies me.

And the fact that he has been treating me slightly better in the last few days doesn't help at all.

Clearing my throat, I try to shake myself awake and find the courage to break the silence. "And Harper?"

He arches a brow, avoiding looking at me. "Don't worry about her."

He states it so simply as if it wasn't supposed to hang so heavy on my heart. Taking a deep breath, I try to change the subject, hoping to alleviate my pain. "Your title. Why did you lose it?"

"Argh," he grimaces. "I fucked up. But I can't tell you that part without telling you all."

"Come on," I plead, shifting in my seat. "Give me something. You can't have me wait forever."

"It's not forever," he teases me. "Just until the ball."

I groan, crossing my arms, "Come on, Fynn. Be nice to me. Just for once."

He looks at me before looking back at the street in front of us, clasping the steering wheel tighter. "Okay, I will tell you a bit. But you will have to wait for the rest without any question."

"One question!"

"No!"

"Okay, no questions, but you will tell me everything else before the ball as well."

He groans, biting his bottom lip. As he stays silent for several heartbeats, I am already thinking that I lost the deal as he mumbles, "I challenged Cayden for his Alpha title."

"What?" I gasp, and he distorts his face. "Why? How? When? And you lost?"

"That's five questions. You are so bad at keeping deals made, aren't you?" he mocks me, and I press myself back into my seat.

"Sorry, that's just crazy information," I say lowly, avoiding his gaze before trying again. "How come he didn't cast you out?"

Shrugging, he clicks his tongue. "It's Cayden. But he isn't dumb. I probably would have gone on a rampage if it wasn't for him granting me a second chance. I just..."

"You just what?" I ask but he shakes his head.

"I already answered a question I shouldn't have. You will have to wait for the entire story," he sighs deeply, and I nod.

Clamping my hands between my legs, I ask, "But I will be allowed to ask questions then, right?"

"Is that your only concern? After what I told you?" he asks while laughing, and I shrug.

"Well, yeah."

"You are something else, princess." He chuckles, and we fall into comfortable silence again. I return to watch the landscapes changing around us and

I jump as I suddenly feel his hand on my leg.

Moving slowly, he wraps his hand

around my thigh, holding me right above the back of my knee. Myè heartbeat skyrockets as I try to act unbothered by his touch even if the

sparks alone make it impossible.

swne

But it doesn't keep me from scooting closer to the side of the seat, getting him to tighten his grip.

Chapter 77 ARTEMISIA

It's funny how my initial anxiety transforms into disappointment as we reach the first checkpoint mid-way where the pups can run around while the drivers get a little break after the long drive.

The moment Fynn pulls his hand back to park and get out of the car, I feel like a piece of me has been taken away from me.

It's getting worse by the minute.

'We have to finally drop the mutts to take on the offer of the Alpha,' Cassy purrs carefully, and I guess she got the right moment as Drake doesn't put her in her place as usual.

Or maybe he has already begun to distance himself from me.

I get out after him, and join Celeste and Astrid in serving the lunch packets as they are already swarming out to reach the playground in the picnic

area.

"Incredible that we are still on pack grounds after a four-hour drive," I say astonished, making Celeste laugh.

"Yes, one of the perks of being the strongest pack, right?" She retorts proudly, and I nod with a smile.

I'm just getting my attention on a little boy who is ripping his lunch out of my hands as Fynn's deep voice rumbles over the court. "We are checking the surroundings. Keep them on the playground."

"Yes. Don't worry," Astrid confirms to Fynn before he turns to the two warriors standing at the tree line. I see the smallest of them still drinking his fruit drink while Gregorius just puts the last bite of his sandwich in his mouth.

I take a step towards Fynn, asking him concerned as the little boy is still clinging to me while nipping at his drink. "Didn't you want to eat something?" "Don't worry about me, princess," the men grin back at me before they take a step into the woods surrounding us and shift into their wolves. The children scream excitedly, and Astrid turns toward me with a smile. "He needs something a bit... different... when he needs to work properly." "Oh, okay," I say, acting like I understand what the hell she meant.

She walks to the kids playing and Celeste keeps them from running off, and I sigh. Just as I caress the little boy's hair, and want to tell him if we want to join the others to have him play a bit as well, my heart strangely picks up its beat.

Even before the children scream again, I sense that Drake is about to barge back out through the trees.

Sighting the huge black wolf, I push the little pup still clinging to my leg closer. I gulp as he stalks directly towards us, and the teachers look at me shocked, Astrid realising that she is too far away from me to get the pup away from me in time.

Goddess, he wouldn't hurt him, right?

His deep red eyes are set on me, and I lift my hand slowly, wanting to signal the panicky Astrid that everything is in control. Even if I'm not sure about that, she couldn't keep him from ripping me into a thousand pieces even if she really wanted to. With another slow movement, not to anger him in his hunting stage, I move in front of the pup, shielding him with my body. "Drake," I shout, amazed at how my voice doesn't shake at all. "Slow down. You risk scaring everyone to death."

My heart flips at the coughing sound the beast makes, and I can see Astrid's eyes widen in the corner of my eyes.

I concentrate on Drake and try to keep my breathing regular as he reaches us with heavy steps which he seems to be taking in slow motion.

As he finally reaches us, I lift my hand instinctively, as if he were calling out to me.

He lowers his head, rubbing its side against the palm of my hand, and I get torn out of my paralyzed state, my fingers moving to slide through his surprisingly soft fur.

"Oh my Goddess," I hear Astrid murmur shocked and I giggle. Lifting my other hand as well, I wrap my hands around his big head, caressing him. Drake purrs, enjoying me cuddling him, and suddenly moves his snout to my stomach, nudging me slightly.

"Hey," I shout out with a laugh, pushing him back gently. "Stop it now. You have to work."

He gives in to my push, stepping back with a playful growl.

"Good boy," I laugh, and he seems to like the compliment as he shakes his head.

Suddenly, the pup standing behind me, huddles between my legs only to break out to caress him as well. Drake lays down to make him pet

his head before he skyrockets up et

lightly, pushing the little boy with his snout gasp, fearing the boy must have had the scare of his life, but as I lean down to check on him, he is already sitting up with a big smile. He cracks up while Drake wheezes in what I suppose to be laughter.

With a last snap at my clothes that makes me take a step towards him, he straightens back up, and in the blink of an eye, he is gone. Leaving me behind with a giggling boy at my feet.

'That was fun, mate,' I hear his voice rumble through my mind, making me smile brightly.

Looks like he isn't going anywhere.

"Amazing what a mate bond can do," I hear Celeste praise the Moon Goddess, and my heart feels lighter instantaneously.

Helping the little man onto his feet, he takes up as soon as his feet hit the floor, reaching his friends happily.

"Oh my Goddess, Missy!" Daisy

squeals as appears next to me. They must have run for cover on the

bus as didn't see them until now She breathes heavily as she grabs my upper arm, "Are you okay?"

swnt

I shrug my shoulders, her touch feeling uncomfortable on my skin, but she doesn't let go. "Sure, why shouldn't I be?"

"I have never seen Drake so close. I

even think no one else, other than his brothers and a few warriors, got to be so close to him." I lift my brow at her gushing, but my gaze gets captured by something else.

Lisa is standing a few steps away from us, a strange expression on her face. "Normally, that would have been a death sentence."

"He is my mate," I force a smile while she continues to stare at me. "Isn't this how it is supposed to work?"

"Absolutely, Missy!" Daisy giggles, clapping her hands and interrupting our conversation.

Bummer, I would have loved to hear her response.

After one hour, the warriors return, and we get the pups back onto the bus.

Strangely, even if I like hearing him, Drake is back being his chatty self and something just doesn't sit right with me.

I think back to Astrid's comment, and I look at him in thought as I try to figure out if he got what he needed.

"Something you're looking for, princess?" he mocks me as he catches me staring at me, and I tear my eyes away from him.

Rolling my eyes, I can literally feel him standing next to me with a smug grin. "You wish."

Lisa hugs me before getting back onto the bus, and Fynn laughs as she walks away. "Oh, Logan would have loved to see that. Have you got a threesome scheduled already?"

I slap his chest playfully, while she just ignores him. Pushing down the feeling of his comment bugging me, I wave at Daisy, who follows her onto the

bus.

We get into our car silently, and I manage to hold my tongue for a bit before it bubbles out of me. "Why did you say that?"

"What?" he asks back nonchalantly as if I wasn't able to see the twitch at the corner of his lips.

I groan, hitting my head on the leather seat as I lean back against it. "You know exactly what I mean."

"I don't like her," he says, his expression growing serious. "That's all."

"Why don't you?" I inquire further, making him shake his head.

He sighs, clenching the steering wheel. "I don't know. Something bugs me. Wasn't she the one that gave you that stinky brew?"

"No," I laugh. "Actually, yes. She and Daisy both."

Shaking his head, he smiles, even if the smile doesn't quite reach his eyes. "I just get a bad feeling when she is around you."

My breath hitches in my throat as he looks at me shortly, his eyes getting fully black. "And it's not Drake telling me that."

ARTEMISIA

By the time we arrive, I can't wait to go to my room and fall into my bed.

Lisa and I had been excited about this trip, and we were looking forward to our private sleepover. This feeling didn't even diminish as Cayden made Daisy tag along as she was getting too anxious about me skipping my meals.

As if something like that would ever happen.

After Fynn told me about him not liking Lisa scurrying around me, we didn't talk any further.

Not even one word.

The silence for the last two-hour drive was nearly killing me.

I fought hard to keep my mouth shut, not wanting to disrupt the awkward silence by saying something even more awkward.

I could bet that Fynn was feeling my inner struggle as I was constantly flooded by the feeling of amusement.

He had promised to tell me everything before the ball, and I could only hope that I could get him to tell me before we got back home.

My questions were just piling up, and I hoped the moment would come sooner rather than later.

As we get out of the car, I pull at the seam of my shorts to adjust them with a big sigh.

While Daisy is already going into the cosy-looking hostel to get our room, Lisa sits down on a bench next to a pond and starts reading a magazine.

I help Celeste and Astrid with the pups, and we let them assemble in front of the entrance to have them go directly to their rooms and Astrid goes in to announce our arrival together with Daisy.

Crossing my arms, I try to distract myself from Fynn stepping up to stand next to me. He puts down our luggage, and stretches, making me look away swiftly to not drool over his flexing muscles.

He is about to say something to tease me again as he gets interrupted by Celeste handing him a bottle of water. "Here you go."

"Is this for me?" he asks confused, making me lift a brow. Only as she nods does he take it from her hesitantly, and she turns towards me to pass me mine. "And for you, Missy."

"Thank you, Celeste," I say happily, hitting Fynn with my elbow, getting him to murmur a 'thank you' as well.

Astrid comes back out again, and I am a bit concerned by the sad look on Daisy's face as she appears behind her. "Okay, everyone. It's getting dark and we are all tired. So let's go to bed."

She claps her hands before she opens them towards me with a smile. "Missy has organised a little supper in our rooms, so feel free to spend the evening as you want while Celeste and I will bring the pups to bed."

"You know what this means, children." Celeste chimes in with her happy sing-song.

"Bednight stories," the children answer in unison, making me smile.

Instinctively, I turn my head to look at Fynn who, with a swift movement, tears his eyes away from me just in time for me to still catch him watching

me.

This is bad.

Walking up to the entrance, Astrid stops me from entering the place. She lifts a key with a heart-shaped key pendant, flashing me her biggest smile. "This is yours."

"Oh, thank you," I say, my eyes widening as she tells me that I have to take a little path to get to our separate pool house.

"I beg your pardon?" I ask, still trying to process the shock, and she waves dismissively at me.

"Well, you are here with your mate. I couldn't possibly have you sharing bunk beds with us, could I?" She says with a light laughter, making a lump form in my throat.

No, no, no!

Turning around, I hope for Fynn to barge in by saying something stupid about how he would rather eat glass than spend the night locked in a little pool house with me.

But instead of being his usual jerk self, he just grins stupidly. My skin is already covered in goosebumps as he takes the key with a smug expression.

"Oh, Astrid That is very thoughtful of

you," his warrior friends chuckle

lowly, probably seeing through his

I

act like I do, while Fynn gloats down

at me. "Something the matter,

mate?"

"Of course not, darling," I retort, sneering the pet name with a false smile. "Thank you so much, Astrid."

I start walking up the narrow path, passing the romantic flowery beds without even registering those as my blood keeps whooshing through my ears increasingly louder.

I can sense Fynn following close behind me as I stomp up the stairs to the pool house with my arms crossed.

Halting in front of the cute door, I can't even look up at him as he opens the door with the key. "You'll need this, sweetheart."

I can't even glare up at him as he mocks me, because I feel like I'd lose all my confidence.

"After you, my lady," he chuckles as he gestures for me to enter before him theatrically.

"Thank you," I groan, stepping into the air-conditioned space.

The interior of the small house reminds me of a romantic cottage as it has predominantly wooden elements. It consists of one floor, which is designed as an open space. A little kitchen with an island on the right, a set of stairs to reach a cosy-looking living room with a fireplace on the left, and a bedroom

screaming at me right in the middle.

With only one fucking bed.

You have to be fucking kidding me.

As I practically freeze after having stepped in, Fynn closes the door behind us and goes to put down the bags on the chest standing at the feet of the bed.

"So... Are you going to take the couch?" I ask, and he laughs out loud.

Turning around with a grin, he shakes his head. "Nope."

"Oh, come on," I groan, getting out of the strap of my purse. "You surely don't want to share a bed with me."

He chuckles his smug expression prominently on his face. "I don't care who is in my bed as long as she has a great pair of boobs."

"You are such a jerk," I scrunch up my nose, setting down my purse on the small table standing next to the entrance. "But thank you for the compliment, I guess."

Sighing, I watch him as he starts

unpacking his bags and suddenly, a

feeling of sadness streams through

me, triggering me into doing something that I should know by now, I shouldn't do.

Provoking him.

"Well, I guess it is fine for me as well... As long as you don't touch me."

My heart doesn't even get the time to skip a beat as he moves and reaches me in a blink.

Chapter 79 ARTEMISIA

Before my brain can even register what is happening, I'm already being slammed against the wall, my air getting knocked out of my lungs. "Fynn!" I shriek after filling my lungs back up with a gasp.

I push against his chest, but he ignores me, leaning in to nibble at my skin. He lets his lips travel up and down my neck, overwhelming me with the friction he creates on his way.

Soon enough, I stop fighting him, and start melting in his arms, making him step even closer. As he grabs my legs, he lifts me to have them wrapped around his waist, pressing himself onto me. I moan as he makes me feel his hardening dick, causing him to bite into my skin softly.

"Fynn, wait," I breathe out, and he surprisingly reacts, distancing himself from me.

My chest heaves as I look up at him, and he tilts his head. He waits for me to speak as he draws me into his spell, making me lose myself in his eyes. This isn't going to end well.

Make him stop.

He doesn't want you as his mate.

While my inner voice is still screaming at me, I blend it out completely as I notice how he is inching closer.

My breath hitches in my throat as his lips graze mine, and I close my eyes, waiting for him to claim them.

Only that nothing happens.

Opening my eyes slowly, I find him grinning slyly at me.

"Glad to see how you absolutely hate it when I touch you," he mocks me smugly, making me slap him.

I'm convinced that he just moved his head with my slap to prevent me from breaking my hand, but he clenches his jaw nonetheless.

"Get the fuck off me!" I shout, and he takes a step back, looking at me angrily. "And wipe that expression off your face. Stop being a jerk to people if you don't like them to react unpleasantly to you."

He simply continues to glare at me while I breathe like I was just running a marathon. "Look, I get it. We are both feeling the pull because of our bond. But we can't keep going on like that. My heart can't take it anymore."

"And what do you want us to do?" he asks, rage still present in his eyes.

I shrug, sighing. "I don't know. But don't you think this isn't fair? Also, for Harper."

"Goddess, why are you bringing her up?" He moves his hand over his face, pushing out an exhausted breath.

Shaking my head, I swallow a sob. "Because I saw how you looked at her. At the construction site. You told her to wait for her in front of your quarters. You told me there was a she-wolf-"

"She isn't the she-wolf I want to get off with," he interrupts me.

"Who is she then? See, you have to stop sending me all those confusing signals," I shout, gesticulating wildly with my hands.

"It's not that easy, Artemisia," he says, making my heart stop at him saying my name without any mockery.

Passing my hand through my hair, I lean back against the wall. "You all have to stop telling me that something is complicated."

He takes a step towards me, cupping my chin to make me look at him again, "I will tell you everything, but you have to trust me until I do. Can you do that for me?"

I nod my head feebly, tears prickling in my eyes.

A slight smile appears on his face, but I make sure he loses it instantaneously. "Would you please sleep on the couch tonight?"

As he nods, I sigh relieved. Taking a step into him, I get him to move out of my way.

He stands there for a split second as I start unpacking my bags. "I will warm up dinner. Will you eat something with me at least?"

I nod again, uttering a low 'uh-huh' but refuse to look at him.

Fynn walks to the kitchen and starts warming up the dinner they had prepared for us silently as I put away my clothes.

As I turn around, I get the shock of my life as I discover the dolls sitting on a sideboard. They are all looking at me creepily, making me shudder. After putting my clothes in one of the drawers, I check if Fynn is watching me before I stuff the dolls into the lowest drawer of the sideboard.

We sit down at the island as if it was normal routine after he had dinner warmed up for us.

I can hold my tongue for a little while until I can't take the silence anymore. "Can we at least not spend another couple of hours without saying anything because I don't like it."

He smiles faintly as this gets him to finally look at me, "Sure."

"Okay, thanks," I breathe out.

"Have you thought about what Cayden said to you?" he asks, making me glare at him agape.

"This of all things?" I counter, stabbing my food repeatedly.

He reaches out to me, laying his hand on my side. "Sorry, I just thought it was the only thing we could talk about without getting into a fight."

I purse my lips, his touch calming me significantly. "No, I didn't."

Looking back at my plate, I sigh. "I honestly would like to be with him though."

"Really?" he asks, taking a sip of his water, causing me to nod. "What is the problem then?"

"Wouldn't it be strange? And how will Logan and Matthew take it?"

He shrugs, letting his eyes wander through the room. "Strange? No. And you have to find out, but I guess they will accept it, eventually."

I scrunch up my nose, and he grins at me. "I heard you have the best arguments."

"Pervert," I slap his shoulder playfully, making him laugh.

As we grow silent again, I scoop around a little potato on my plate pensively.

"How did you know that he liked me?" I ask him finally, making him hum.

He swallows a bite before he distorts his face. "The night he went to your brother's coronation... He came back and directly into my room. He woke me up to tell me that he had met someone... Well, special."

"Oh," I whisper, and he exhales downheartedly.

"Yeah. Oh. We had our problems, but

I I

I guess I helped him through a rough

break-up once, so he must have wanted me to be the first to know As he didn't stop in his room and

came straight to me, he was still holding like a piece of your clothing of the evening in his hand,

He puts his fork down, turning fully towards me. "Goddess, it smelled so good. I didn't get one fucking word of what he was telling me."

I look at him with wide eyes, as he

leans closer. "But I did get what he was trying to tell me. And I snapped. The day after, he barely got me to sit down with my brothers and we discovered that we had a mate He was so heartbroken. I could tell it from a mile apart even if he tried to hide it. I don't think that my brother got it, but you should have seen the smile on his face as he woke me up."

He shakes his head with a smile, "Don't get me wrong. I can totally be a possessive prick. But what kind of monster would I be to keep you two from being together if you get him to smile like that."

Breathing gets harder as he smirks at me, and turns his head away from me. "Weren't there some creepy-ass dolls?"

"Huh?" I jerk up, wiping my tears from my cheeks. "No... What? I didn't see any dolls."

He looks back at me with squinted eyes, and I lower my eyes back onto my plate, changing the subject immediately. "So funny that Daisy hasn't yet turned up to check on my meal."

"Ah, that," he says, taking another sip. "I told her that I would be fucking you raw by the moment we cross the door, and that, if she would even try to check on you or your nutrients,

I would decapitate her."

We look at each other for a moment, before I burst out in laughter, making him chuckle as well. "You can't be serious."

"I swear. Also, I'm still not convinced about what she spiked your food with. Cayden is getting the brew tested, but that might take a while."

He plays with his glass absent-mindedly, and I reach out to squeeze his arm. "Thank you for looking after me. And I desperately needed the break

from her."

"No problem. I'll talk to Cayden and get her to step back a bit. Don't worry," he empties his glass with a swing, standing up.

"I'll go for a run. If you don't mind?" He says as he puts his plate into the sink.

I take a bite of a potato, nodding, "Sure, have fun."

Leaning in, he presses a swift kiss onto my cheek before he walks out of our lodge.

After having finished eating, I clean up and finally get to let myself fall into bed.

I cuddle in, close my eyes, and wait for sleep to claim me, but it never comes.

Scoffing, I caress my locks out of my face and check the time.

Just as I'm about to groan to myself, my heart stops as the door opens and Fynn walks in to reach the bathroom.

Even with the door closed, I can hear the shower running and curse myself as I can't seem to fight off any of the indecent pictures that keep creeping

into my mind.

I clasp a pillow close, closing my eyes firmly but all my confidence goes down the drain as the door reopens, flooding the room with his mouth-

watering scent.

Fuck.

Continuing to act like I was sleeping, I try to ignore my nagging thought that he must sense that I'm not sleeping pretty easily.

I hear his steps on the wooden floor, and my heartbeat calms down lightly, only to skyrocket again as I feel the bed dip.

"Sorry," he whispers huskily, causing goose bumps to rise on my skin. "But my wolf needs you close. He would never let me spend the night on the couch."

I hug my pillow tighter as he scoots closer, pulling me against his frame.

Chapter 80 ARTEMISIA

Oh, my Goddess.

I sigh happily, even if the fire expanding in my chest makes it hard to breathe.

Clasping the bedsheets, I withstand the first wave of pleasure rippling through me.

"Fuck," I breathe out as Fynn's tongue slides through my folds slowly, making me wake up with a moan.

I lift my head, seeing him move between my legs with closed eyes. It looks like he is tasting the best thing he ever had in relish. "Fynn," I moan, failing to get his attention.

His tongue continues to glide over my clit pleurably, my heart skipping in my chest as he tilts his head to suck my nub between his lips.

My back arches off the mattress as I scream in pleasure. Finally, he looks up at me, grinning slyly as I try to keep my breathing even.

I drive my fingers into his hair, I give up fighting the orgasm building in me. "Ah, Fynn."

Just as he starts increasing his rhythm, and another electric shock surges through me, I gasp, opening my eyes.

Blinking repeatedly, I find Fynn staring at me. His hair is tousled, his muscular chest on display as he propped himself up on his elbow to look at me. By his darkened eyes I guess that my pleasurable sensation got him to wake up as well.

"What were you just dreaming about?"

Fynn is looking at me with a sly grin, the same one I just saw, and I look down at my body panicky, only to see that I'm nowhere near the pleasurable happy ending I thought I would be getting.

Meeting his gaze again, I jerk up, wiping the corner of my lips, fearing that I might have been drooling. "Nothing. Why are you so close?"

"You woke me up by calling my name. But it didn't sound like you were in danger," he mocks me, his grin widening.

"Ah, shut up!" Throwing my blanket from me, I get out of bed, escaping him trying to grab me by a millimetre.

He chuckles as he lets himself fall back onto the bed.

I run to collect my clothes and get into the shower quickly with the aim of getting out of this hellhole as fast as possible.

As I get out, about to put my hair up into a loose bun, I find him leaning against the headboard. I divert my eyes, hoping to hide my blush as I play with my bracelets. "I'm already late for joining Astrid and Celeste, so I'll get going."

He simply grins at me while he continues watching me and I halt in my tracks. "Stop looking at me like that. What are your plans for today?"

Reaching out to look at his phone on the nightstand, he shrugs. "Don't know. Seems like it is pretty uneventful, and my men are already bored. So, I guess I'll take a dip in the pool."

"Okay," I nod, turning around.

I have already opened the door as he practically materialises behind me, closing the door back again.

Lowering his head to my ear, he whispers, "Join me."

I have to press my lips together, swallowing a moan at the effect this simple gesture has on me.

Shaking my head, I shift my hand, gripping the door handle anew. "Fynn, please..."

He leans in further, passing his tongue over my neck, up to right beneath my ear before pushing himself off the door, and letting me slip out of the house.

"Sorry, I'm late!"

Astrid turns around to look at me wide-eyed as I reach her with fast steps.

"Oh, Missy. Are you kidding? We weren't expecting you at all. Didn't you want to spend time with your mate?"

I fake a smile, shaking my head. "I didn't come here for my honeymoon, did I?"

She laughs, hugging me to her side and we walk towards the little petting zoo where the kids are currently playing together.

The day passes fast while I spend it looking at the kids, helping to prepare the meals, and trying not to melt under Fynn's gaze.

He joined his warriors to watch us from a short distance, only to sit with us for the meals. I think it is totally exaggerated, but by seeing the demeanour of the others, it seems to be totally normal.

I have the impression that Fynn tries to approach me several times, but we keep getting interrupted, and if we don't he just changes his mind all by himself.

Pushing out a deep sigh, I sit down on the stairs behind the main house facing the fireplace. The children are sitting around it, listening to Celeste doing an awesome interpretation of Snow White while chewing on marshmallows.

I'm already drowning in my own thoughts as I jump up as I feel little hands pulling at my skirt.

"Want to come sit with me, my love?" I ask, making Emma nod her head.

"Very well. Come on," I lift her up to sit in my lap and she turns around, leaning her little head onto my chest.

I squeal lowly at how cute she is, as I hug her close, starting to rock her.

Leaning my head on top of hers gently, I feel my eyelids get heavy as I enjoy the atmosphere of this summer night. "May I join you?" Fynn asks.

It's unfair how he looks even more breathtaking in the glow of the fire.

I smile up at him, straightening my spine and scooting to the right to create a bit more space for Fynn to sit. "Sure."

He sits down, and we watch the spectacle in front of us in comfortable silence, before he turns towards to look at me. "She looks to be very comfortable in your arms."

"She must be smelling your scent clinging to me," I retort, making him chuckle.

"Maybe," he says, rubbing his hands. "But you are nice to be with, so maybe it's that."

"Don't act all cute suddenly," I laugh, caressing Emma's back as she stirs. "Did she fall asleep?"

He nods, leaning in to look at her closer.

Avoiding looking at him, I let my eyes roam, noticing a few eyes on us.

"We must be looking cute," Fynn whispers, making me look at him again.

I scoff, glad for the absence of light which helps me hide my blush. "Imagine how cute we would look if it were one of ours."

Something that I can't quite decipher flashes through his eyes, and I hold his gaze, the desire for him to kiss me bubbling up my chest.

A feeble-clicking sound gets me to

tear out of my trance, and I spot Astrid with her phone pointed at us. "Sorry, but it was just too lovely to let it slip," she says in a sing-song, making us laugh.

We watch her take her seat back at the fire, and Fynn clears his throat as I concentrate back on Emma.

"You know, the pack has never treated me as kindly as since you are here," he states lowly, making me smile.

"I wonder why that is, Mr. arrogance." I sway to bump into him lightly, and he shakes his head. "They are amazing. So friendly. They made me feel at home right away."

Staring at the fire, he smiles sadly.

elk

"We are the strongest pack in the Northern Hemisphere. They usually aren't like this to new arrivals. But you are special, and not only because the Moon Goddess granted you three mates. They must feel that there is more to that."

"Thank you for saying that," I whisper, leaning my head against his shoulder.

Sensing how he is slowly starting to feel uncomfortable, I straighten back up, changing the subject. "Can I ask you something?"

"Aren't you already at it?" he smiles at me cheekily, making me grimace at him.

He laughs, grabbing my chin to kiss my nose. "No, seriously. Go ahead."

My heart does a backflip, and I gulp hard to keep my sanity. "Does Drake talk to you often?"

"Yeah," he groans. "He is a chatterbox. Never shutting up."

'If he would talk more, maybe I wouldn't have to do all the work here,' Drake growls in response, making me giggle.

Fynn watches me intently with a smile that takes my breath away.

"Do you think we could talk?" he finally asks, after what seems to be an eternity.

"Sure, we are locked in together anyway."