

## Chapter 162

As soon as Marisol crossed the border, her bond with the Dark Moon pack crackled back to life, their connection restored.

All the messages she'd been trying to pass across from the moment she realized that she was in trouble were now relayed back to them at the speed of light.

At the same time, she could feel the concern of her Pack members.

Her mother was afraid. Her father was raging mad.

'We're coming.' She heard them say through the link.

She giggled, grinning widely as she punched the air victoriously. She'd felt so restricted and alone for the past few months, and now she was free.

Cedric watched her with a big smile. The administration she saw in his eyes when they met hers surprised her. He was looking at her like he'd somehow discovered some rare gem.

Marisol didn't feel like that though. In the midst of all this, she felt mostly confused. She couldn't understand most of what was happening to her. All she knew was that there was a thrum of newfound energy that flowed within her.

Sometimes it felt like it could overwhelm her, like something she couldn't control or fathom, and she wouldn't pretend and say the possibility of that didn't scare her. At first, she thought that it was caused by the activated mate bond with Cedric, but now she understood that it was her hybrid powers.

It seemed to be as old as time. It seemed like an entirely new and different entity on its own, residing within her. All of it was new and happening all too fast now. Fear of not being able to control it like how she'd done with the door churned in her guts.

Now, she needed guidance more than ever and all she could think about was her family. She needed her mother. Nicole Hallows always had answers to every query she had. Her parents did everything they could to prepare her for that moment, yet she felt incapable and unprepared.

Just then she was wrapped in a warm embrace, Cedric's breath warm on her ear as he murmured right into it, "It's okay Princess." He said, gathering her in his arms "I'm here. You're not alone. You're not incapable either. You're just new to all this. It's okay to feel a little overwhelmed."

His presence alone seemed to calm the storm brewing within her. Marisol would trust him with all that she had and, right now, she trusted that nothing could go wrong so long as she had Cedric with her.

"How cute." A feminine voice cooed right next to them, startling Marisol and Cedric both. "Too bad there isn't an ongoing competition for 'couple of the year', because I'm sure you both would be taking it." she drawled, and their senses flared simultaneously.

Witch! Cedric's senses snarled as they turned to face the intruder.

Marisol frowned as she studied the woman's features. She looked to be at least a decade older than Marisol, her eyes an odd purple as she stared lazily at them, her hair glowing an eerie white.

Cedric made to lunge at her, seemingly in attack mode at the sight of a witch, which was considered a threat but surprisingly, Marisol stopped him with just a hand around his bicep. She had to make sure if this was a friend or a foe before anything else.

"The barrier was your creation." Marisol accused, eyes narrowed, and the witch chuckled, taking a step closer at the same time as Cedric took one in front of Marisol too, a protective arm stretching across her figure.

"Unfortunately, you seem to have trumped it." She sighed, "Now I have to think of a way to make a bigger spell."

Cedric let out a growl, and she took a step back.

Marisol smirked, the witch was afraid and was doing a good job of hiding it.

"We both know that you can't. You'll literally die trying."

Marisol is suddenly filled with an odd sense of confidence. She couldn't explain it for the life of her, but she was convinced, for some reason, that the witch's abilities were nothing compared to hers. That seemed to calm Cedric down. His tense shoulders relaxed, but the witch's presence still had him on high alert.

The witch sighed, waving her fingers around as she spoke, "Yes, yes. You're a witch bane just like your mother and still a full witch. What an anomaly."

Marisol's smirk grows, "Yet here you are on your own will. I bet you'll offer to help me next."

The witch scoffed, arms coming to fold across her chest, "Are you drunk on all that power already? It'll do you no good to be egotistical now. I liked you better when you were humble."

Before Marisol could think of a response, the witch called out behind her, "Alpha and Luna, you can come out from hiding now."

Cedric growled, "Mind the way you talk to my mate."

Marisol could sense the fear that bubbled beneath the witch's masking spell. She could feel her trembling within, at Cedric's underlying threat, yet she carried on with her unfazed facade.

"Oh, my bad. I'm sorry Alpha Cedric. It seems like you're back in charge. I hadn't realized it, trust me, I wouldn't have referred to your brother as Alpha."

Another growl rumbled out of Cedric's throat, his eye twitching in annoyance. The only thing stopping him from ripping the witch into two was Marisol.

'Don't worry, she's just trying to mask her fear.' Marisol assured him through the mind link. 'She's also trying to rile you up to confirm if the curse has truly been broken. If you do any more than you already are, you'll scare her away.'

'Good.' Cedric grumbled back. The witch was way too cocky for his liking.

Just then, Caleb and his mate stepped out from hiding, hand in hand.

"Finally," the Witch exclaimed. "What were you so afraid of? This is a proper family reunion."

"Enough of your bullshitting!" Cedric finally snapped, startling everyone present except for Marisol, who had expected the outburst at some point, "What do you want, witch?"

The witch recovered quickly, her features stretching to reveal a smug smile that grated at Cedric's nerves, "Shouldn't you be thanking your brother and his mate? If not for them, you'd still be prowling the hidden castle and causing havoc."

Cedric raised an unamused brow, "What is it to you, Witch? Like you said yourself, it's a family business. Shouldn't you be on your way back to your coven?"

The witch rolled her eyes at his words, "Alpha," she started, an exhale following, "I have a name. It's Leticia. Secondly, do you think the battle is over? You know better than that, don't you?"

"Again, what I know is none of your business and, if anything, I'd like to know why you are still sticking around. We don't condone witchcraft here in Redwood."

Leticia narrowed her eyes, resignation flashing in them, "I'm still here because of the prophecy. I cannot leave until it's fulfilled."

Cedric and Marisol exchanged a look, turning to give her unimpressed ones.

"Okay, I'll be honest. I'm here to help. I'm amazed at the sheer power Marisol wields. It calls me like it calls others like me. Normally, when a witch manifests powers for the first time, it's always in small proportion until he or she is ready to grow. Yours is different, Marisol. The powers in you are immense for someone who is still so new to it. That's not all, I'm sure you've noticed that instead of being new and fresh, the energy flowing through you is ancient. It is as old as time and impatient. You need help to control it or risk it controlling you."

Everyone in their small gathering stared wide-eyed except Marisol. She only nods in understanding.

"But that's not all, is it, Leticia?"

Leticia smiled, her eyes glinting with relief at being listened to and a hint of mischief, "Oh that's just the tip of the iceberg. The prophecy hasn't even begun to unravel in its totality. It mentioned war. Guinevere is coming, faster than you all can imagine, and I promise you, we're nowhere near ready for her."

"Fine." Cedric grumbled, impatient "What do we need to do?"

Leticia shrugged, "I cannot advise you wolves. I'm only interested in the Hybrid Witch. So come and find me when you're ready. You'll soon find that the ball is in your court, Marisol. Always has been."

With that, Leticia vanished from plain sight. The ambiguity of her cryptic words leaving the air crackling with a tense energy.

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It wasn't until a few days after Leticia's sudden appearance and disappearance that Marisol understood the meaning of her parting words.

She found herself torn between two worlds. On the one hand, she could flee Redwood and return to her parents and original pack, leaving behind the chaos and uncertainty that was Redwood. But on the other hand, she couldn't bear the thought of leaving Cedric. Cedric and her newfound pack needed her now more than ever. The thought of turning her back on them filled her with immense guilt and uncertainty.

She hated that she was unable to make a decision quickly. It filled her with so much guilt that she began hiding away from everyone. With Cedric, she made sure to think happy thoughts wherever he was around.

She wanted to seek out Leticia's help in unlocking the full extent of her powers as a witch because she knew that understanding and harnessing her abilities would be crucial in preparing for the looming conflict. But she wasn't sure that she was ready for that.

Meanwhile, the atmosphere within the pack had become increasingly tense as news of Cedric's liberation from the curse spread like wildfire. The council wasted no time in pushing for Cedric's reinstatement as Alpha, eager to restore order and stability to the pack. However, Cedric remained elusive, knowing that assuming the role of Alpha would also make Marisol his Luna, a prospect that filled him with both joy and apprehension.

He knew that they'd developed a deep connection but couldn't bear to force her into a position she wasn't ready for. Especially when he knew that she was battling to make a decision.

He understood the weight of her decision and respected her need for time and space to come to terms with her newfound powers and responsibilities.

So to the pack, he feigned difficulties adapting to his human form again, allowing Caleb to retain his position as Alpha for the time being.

For Cedric, Marisol was everything. Her presence filled him with a sense of purpose and completeness he had never known before. He would do anything to protect her, to stand by her side through whatever trials lay ahead. Their bond was unlike anything he had ever experienced, and he cherished every moment they spent together.

Little did he know that her decision was the least of his problems. Trouble was coming to Redwood and this time, it wasn't in the form of Guinevere.