

Chapter 165

Evening approached and sensing that the tension had somewhat eased, Marisol decided to seek out her parents. She knew that despite everything, they loved her, and though they could be a little overbearing sometimes, they were still the best parents a girl could ask for. She hoped their meeting would yield a positive result this time.

Venturing out into the woods, Marisol soon spotted her mother, Nicole, strolling alone among the trees. A mixture of apprehension and hope swirled in Marisol's heart as she approached her mother, unsure of how their interaction would unfold.

Though she had often rebelled against her parents and thrown tantrums, Marisol had never been disrespectful towards them. Today, she'd broken all the rules and her mother's unreadable demeanor throughout the whole ordeal made her even more terrified of her reaction.

Slowly and cautiously, she made her way to her, trying to prolong her journey until she stepped on a twig and immediately caught her mother's attention. Marisol froze like a deer caught in headlights as their eyes met.

Meanwhile, Nicole's eyes lit up upon seeing her.

"Hey, you." she smiled, beckoning her over with a small wave of her hand.

Marisol released a breath she hadn't known she'd been holding as she closed the distance between them.

"Hi," she squeaked, uncertainty laced in her tone.

Nicole laughed softly, reaching out to grab her hand, a smile never leaving her lips.

Marisol couldn't help but feel a sense of relief at her mother's welcoming demeanor. She slowly started to lead them further into the forest, and no other word was exchanged. They walked in silence for a while, the tranquility of the forest surrounding them like a protective cloak.

"Where are we going, Mom?" Marisol finally asked, curiosity getting the best of her as she realized that this wasn't looking like an aimless stroll any longer.

Nicole's smile only widened, a playful glint in her eyes as she replied, "You'll see."

They continued in silence for a while longer before Nicole spoke up again. "Marisol, I want you to know that I am proud of you. So, very proud."

Marisol's heart swelled at the raw emotion and sincerity in her mother's tone, the worry that had been weighing on her heart dissipating. "Thank you, Mom," she replied gratefully, a small smile playing on her lips.

Nicole nodded, her smile softening. "I've known for a while now that you weren't coming back," she confessed, her voice filled with warmth. "I felt it when your powers awoke."

Marisol's eyes widened in surprise at her mother's revelation. "How did you know?" she asked, her curiosity piqued.

Nicole only shrugged nonchalantly. "A mother always knows these things," she replied cryptically, a knowing glint in her eyes. "As long as you're happy, Marisol, I'm happy."

Marisol nodded, absorbing her mother's words with a mixture of wonder and intrigue. It was as if a piece of the puzzle had finally clicked into place, illuminating a path forward for them both.

The surrounding trees gradually thin out, revealing a peaceful clearing bathed in the soft glow of the setting sun. In the center of the clearing, Liam paces back and forth, anxious.

As if sensing their presence, his eyes snapped up to meet theirs, his expression darkening when he noticed Marisol next to her mother. Marisol's heart lurched, her stomach churning with anxiety.

"Where have you been? You took your time." His words are directed to Nicole, who only shrugs casually.

"I got bored, so I decided to sightsee a little," she said, her tone light. "And then.... I bumped into our baby." She added, pulling Marisol forward by their joined hands.

Liam sighed, his gaze shifting from Nicole to Marisol, then back to Nicole. "And what about her?" he asked, his voice betraying his frustration.

Marisol bites down at her lip nervously, unable to meet her father's gaze. "I- I wanted to talk to Mom," she started, stuttering. "And... and you."

Liam looked away at the end of her words, his lips drawn into a thin line.

"I'm sorry, Dad," She finally let the words out, her lips downturned, "I didn't mean to..."

Before she could complete her sentence, Liam enveloped her in a tight embrace, his arms a reassuring anchor around her. "I'm sorry too, Marisol. I shouldn't have lost my temper earlier."

For what felt like the nth time that day, Marisol felt her eyes well up with tears, a relieved sigh leaving her lips as she hugged him back, "It's okay, Dad, I'm more sorry." she murmured and now Liam held Marisol at arm's length, shaking his head as he countered.

"No, I'm very sorry."

"Dad!" She whined loudly and Nicole's amused laughter rang through the air.

"You both are such babies" she teased, and the duo rolled their eyes simultaneously and then laughed at their similar reaction.

"Marisol, I want you to know that I'll always be here for you," Liam asserted seriously after their laughter died down. "I was not in my right senses earlier, but I promise to do everything in my power to support you.... Whatever you need."

Marisol nodded fervently, feeling a sense of gratitude and reassurance wash over her. With her parents by her side, she knew she could face whatever challenges lay ahead.

"Now fill us in on everything about this prophecy and this witch. What does Redwood need?" Liam asked as Nicole joined them in their little cocoon. Marisol felt a wave of happiness and satisfaction wash over her. She was finally truly complete.

Back at Ember Coven, Guinevere stood amidst the gathering of five of the strongest werewolf rogue leaders in the territory, each of them a force to be reckoned with. They found common ground in the fact that they were once destined to become Alphas of their respective packs. However, circumstances had led them down a path of greed and madness, turning them into ruthless rogues who now sought to claim the lands of Redwood for their own.

Rogues were lone wolves, but these leaders had the special ability to draw out loyalty from even the craziest of werewolves.

Unlike werewolf packs, there was no sense of community. They only thrived through loyalty to their leaders and had large numbers. The leaders also had an uncanny ability to transform into their human form and hold conversations.

The meeting had been dragging on for hours, with Guinevere attempting to forge an alliance with the rogues. However, their stubbornness and fragile egos made them difficult to converse with. Each one of them had an agenda of their own, and they saw Guinevere as nothing more than a means to an end.

Guinevere's patience wore thin as the rogues continued to bicker and squabble among themselves, refusing to see the bigger picture. She clenched her fists, her magic swirling around her in a menacing aura.

"Silence!" she finally yelled, her voice cutting through the air like a whip. The room fell silent immediately, the rogues staring at her in shock.

With a heavy exhale, Guinevere attempted to reel herself back in. She knew she needed to assert her dominance if she was going to get through to them.

"Listen to me," she started, her voice dripping with malice. "We need to unite if we are going to stand a chance against Redwood. We need the numbers and the manpower that we could only get by working together. Together, we can overthrow their leader and claim the lands for ourselves, after which, you can all carry on with your own agendas." She suggested, and the room is thrown into chaos again.

The rogues grunted in disagreement, their mistrust of each other and of Guinevere evident in their expressions. Guinevere felt her frustration bubbling to the surface. She had been trying to reason with them for far too long, and they were still unwilling to cooperate.

Enough was enough. If they weren't willing to work with her, then they weren't worthy of living at all. With a snap of her fingers, Guinevere unleashed a powerful blast of magic, striking each one of the rogues dead where they sat. Their lifeless bodies slumped against their chairs, eyes wide with shock.

Guinevere regarded them with a scowl, a mixture of satisfaction and disdain swirling in her eyes. She never would have it without their interference. She wondered why she hadn't thought of this earlier instead of dealing with a bunch of feeble-minded, sloppy men.

As the echoes of her dark magic faded away, Guinevere began to plot her next move. With the rogue leaders out of the way, nothing stood in her path to claim Redwood for herself. She would stop at nothing to achieve her goal and anyone who tried to stop her would meet a fate worse than death.

With a wicked smile, Guinevere turned and left the meeting room, her mind already racing with schemes and plots. The battle for Redwood was about to begin, and she would emerge victorious, no matter the cost.

A few minutes later, Guinevere, draped in her cloak, ventured deep into the heart of the forest, the totem containing the essence of the rogue leaders' power dangling from her neck. With each step, the dense foliage seemed to close in around her, and the darkness of night melded with her cloak billowing behind her like a shadowy shroud. She clutched the totem, pulsating with the essence of power she had extracted, and strode away purposefully.

Her brother taught her that if she wanted something done perfectly, it was better to do it herself.

As she ventured deeper into the heart of the forest, Guinevere could feel the magic thrumming in the air, responding to her will. She had crossed her own boundary, stepping into the realm beyond her control, where the wildness of nature reigned supreme.

With the moon hanging high above, casting an ethereal glow upon the forest floor, Guinevere halted in a clearing. Here, surrounded by ancient trees and whispers of nature's power, she began to chant the incantation that would unleash the power contained within the totem.

Her enchantment, low and melodic, rose and fell with the rhythm of the forest, weaving a spell of dark enchantment that echoed through the night. The more she chanted, the totem in her hand began to respond, pulsating with sinister energy, emanating an eerie glow that cast eerie shadows upon the ground.

Suddenly, the totem began to emit a series of haunting howls, each one more chilling than the last. It was the voices of those trapped in it crying out in defiance and rage.

In response to the totem's call, the surrounding forest came alive with movement. From the shadows emerged a multitude of rogue wolves, drawn to the sound of their fallen brethren's cries. They converged upon the clearing, their eyes gleaming with feral hunger and obedience.

Guinevere stood at the center of the gathering horde, her cloak swirling around her like a whisperer of the darkness that she was. She raised the totem high above her head, the pulsating energy of the captured power radiating from within.

"Behold!" she cried, her shrill voice ringing with authority. "I am your Alpha, and you are my loyal follower. Together, we shall claim the lands of Redwood as our own, and no one shall stand in our way!"

The rogue wolves, sensing the power and dominance emanating from Guinevere, bowed their heads in submission. Like she'd commanded, she was now their leader, and they would follow her commands without question.

With the totem in her grasp and the rogue wolves at her command, Guinevere felt a surge of exhilaration course through her veins. With her newfound army by her side, she was going to be unstoppable.

The moon cast its silvery light upon the gathering and Guinevere's wicked smile stretched impossibly wider. The stage was set, and the battle for Redwood was about to begin.

Now all that remained was a sacrifice. She needed to offer up something earth-shattering, something that would make the spirits succumb to her will as the wolves had done.

She needed to go into hibernation and by the time she woke, the spirits' demand would be relayed to her. The beings that had once tormented Cedric were still hanging closely around her, eager to return to their rightful place in Cedric's mind.

He was her tool for world dominance. All she had to do was take his pesky mate away from him and watch him self-destruct.

The thought of it fills her with an immeasurable satisfaction. Taking away Cedric's mate also meant acquiring the hybrid witch's power for herself. Her powers had only just activated, and she had no business touching what was rightfully Guinevere's. It was why she was set to attack so urgently. She couldn't help but smile at herself. Redwood really was a treasure mine, wasn't it?

The earlier she took her out the better. 'A trick', she thought to herself, she would sow a seed of discord within them and take the hybrid witch while they were all distracted.

All she needed was a perfect vessel. She needed a disgruntled soul from within them. But first, she had to hibernate.