

## Chapter 169

Leticia blinked at the young hybrid, steeling herself and forcing her heart to remain still even after being caught. She wondered if it was the right time to reveal her true form.

“What are you talking about?” She said instead, donning a confused look.

“Don't piss me off,” Marisol grumbled, shutting her eyes. “Perhaps now would be the right time to inform you that just before Cedric burst into this place, my energies met and clicked like two perfect puzzle pieces. I can see you, Leticia. I can see the shroud that cloaked your true intentions.”

When Marisol's eyes snapped open this time, they glowed an eerie red, causing Leticia to shudder.

“Tsk tsk,” Leticia sighed, looking away from the spine-chilling sight in favor of returning to her former position on the ground. “You're too powerful for your own good.”

Marisol smirked, “No. We both know that's far from true. I've only begun to scratch the surface of what I am.”

Leticia crossed her legs and closed her eyes, “Well, you're moving too fast. It's not time, dear.”

Marisol returned to her own position, mimicking Leticia's pose. “No, I'm not. Don't try to feed me with your doubts, I'll rip your head off.”

Leticia cackled, but Marisol could feel the fear coursing through her. She focused her thoughts on Guinevere. And as Leticia had said, she could feel Guinevere's minions prowling within the pack, seemingly in search of something.

The sight of them infuriated her, and with a loud growl, she sent them scampering. When she opened her eyes again, she met Leticia's curious gaze.

“You were right. The rogues were a distraction. She was searching for something.”

Leticia did not comment on that, looking away as if she was unimpressed.

“Have you heard of Yin-yang? Leticia asked instead.

“You're a liar, aren't you?” Marisol countered immediately. She was trying to take a peek into the depths of Leticia's memories but was met with resistance.

Leticia shrugged, effectively masking her panic with disinterest. “No. I may have purposely omitted information, but I never lied.”

“Now be truthful. My wolf hates liars. Why are you here? You're not a selfless being, Leticia.”

Leticia laughed, “Not everyone can be like those in your lineage. Is that not what creates variety in life?”

“What do you want?” Marisol repeated, ignoring her words.

Leticia sighed, resuming stirring a cauldron at the other side of the room with a wave of her fingers, “Before I answer, tell me, has my sister awoken from hibernation yet?”

With immediacy, Marisol shut her eyes and the frozen Guinevere appeared behind her shut lids again. Only after she'd confirmed Guinevere's state did Leticia's words ring in her head, her eyes widening to the size of saucers.

“Sister!?” Marisol blurted, conveying her shock.

Leticia nodded with a heavy exhale, “Mother had three of us, and she strived for each one to unlock the extent of their full potential. However, unlike my mother, Phineas and Guinevere had an affinity for something else. They were more interested in the dark arts. Because she followed in his footsteps, Phineas adored Guinevere. And when my mother tried to stop him, he murdered her.”

Marisol felt her eyes almost drop out of her skull when Leticia suddenly transformed into the woman with the cloak but a different version, the puff of clear smoke that aided her transformation disappearing to give her a clearer sight.

“Guinevere!” She gasped in shock. She was almost identical to her. The only difference seemed to be the white hair.

“Yeah. Twins. Ying-yang.” Leticia breathed out. “Phineas killed my mother and tried to kill me when I refused to join them. I let them think I was dead. I had the element of surprise on my side, and that was how I was able to kill Phineas. Redwood is one of the magical hotspots on Earth. It is the source of ancient powers like yours, and they thought it to be the reason why Redwood had been so prosperous. Phineas wanted it, and neither Cedric nor his parents could stop him. I'd been running for years before the visions began. I hated them, I wanted them to stop, but they continued to torment me until I succumbed. I will finish what I've started and restore balance to our coven.”

“Why'd you involve me in all this?”

“I didn't. You were always destined to be here.”

Marisol nodded. The witch wasn't lying, but she was still holding back so much information.

“You've been stalling,” Marisol accused after a beat of silence, “The meditation exercise is the only thing that has proven useful.”

Leticia smiled grimly, “Because I can not teach you anything new. You know it all. You're just yet to unlock what you know.”

Marisol shifted uncomfortably. She already hated where this was going. “What about Guinevere then? How am I supposed to defeat her?”

“Nothing mortal can defeat my sister. She has evolved to be the most powerful of us. As soon as Phineas died, she made a hefty sacrifice to protect herself. None of the spells will work. Nothing can harm her.”

“But-”

“When the prophecy mentioned you, I was confused.” Leticia started, cutting her words short, “I expected it to be someone experienced.... With the know-how of the ins and outs of witchery, someone like your mother. So I tried even more to understand it because it seemed like an unfair match. That's when I came across something that made me regret ever trying.”

Marisol could not help the way she leaned in closer, impatient. Looking at Leticia with a mixture of determination and apprehension, her heart pounding with anticipation as she awaited Leticia's response that was taking too long to come.

“Tell me, Leticia. What is it? What else have you been hiding?” She urged, and Leticia hesitated for a moment, her expression guarded as she avoided Marisol's eyes.

“I'm not sure that you want to know what I'm talking about.” She resorted to saying.

But Marisol could see through Leticia's facade. She knew there was more to the story, and there was a battle looming for goddess' sake. What better time to find out about something so crucial? Leticia had already held off on her for far too long, Marisol wasn't about to let her off the hook that easily.

“Don't start with that now, Leticia. Spill it already.” She warned firmly.

With a defeated sigh, Leticia relented, “Fine, I'll tell you. But you're not going to like it. There's a reason I've been keeping this information from you.”

Marisol's heart raced with anticipation as she waited for Leticia to reveal the big secret.

“There's an ancient dagger that has the power to wipe out Guinevere and her coven once and for all. It's the only weapon that can destroy her completely.”

Marisol's eyes widened in shock at the revelation, her voice pitching. “Why are you only now telling me about this?? We've been wasting all this time here for nothing!”

Leticia's gaze was heavy with remorse as she croaked out a reply. “Marisol, using the dagger, comes with a heavy price. It requires a hybrid to wield it, and even then, the consequences are dire. No one who uses the dagger survives, not even you.”

Marisol felt her heart drop to the bottom of her feet. She sucked in several deep breaths, her fingers coming to massage her temple. It was no news, just how twisted ancient magic tends to be. She knew what it meant to sacrifice oneself for the greater good, but the thought of losing her life in the process was almost too much to bear.

“So you're saying that if I use the dagger on Guinevere, I won't survive it?” She repeated, grim, and Leticia nodded, her expression grave.

“I'm afraid so, Marisol.”

Marisol's mind raced with conflicting emotions as she grappled with the weight of Leticia's revelation. She knew that defeating Guinevere was their only hope for peace, but Marisol had never imagined losing her life at such a pivotal point of it. It wasn't just about her. It was about Cedric and her parents too.

“Yes. I didn't make it known because, although it would mean putting an end to Guinevere's tyranny once and for all, it's your decision and only yours to make. If anyone else found out, they weren't going to agree.”

Marisol nodded. She could sense that there was more to be uncovered, but she'd heard enough for now.

She suddenly felt heavy. Her wolf was agitated. It wanted another way out, but the new energy within her was oddly calm.

“I don't know if I'm strong enough to make that sacrifice,” Marisol muttered truthfully “I thought I was ready to do whatever it takes to put an end to Guinevere's reign of terror, but now I'm not so sure.”

Leticia offered a sad smile. “I understand, I've been there too.”

Marisol raised a brow, and Leticia snorted. “When I discovered the dagger, I was annoyed. I wanted to destroy it.”

“Why?” Marisol blurted out, a little disconcerted.

“The dagger destroys Guinevere and the whole of the Ember Coven. I am a part of the Ember coven. It didn't make sense that I would discover what would lead to my own demise. That's when I understood the prophecy. Your father is a hybrid too, and if he uses the dagger, he'll succeed in wiping out not only Ember Coven but everyone in his pack. Do you understand?”

Marisol shook her head, feeling utterly lost.

“Right now, you're like a lone wolf, Marisol. You may be mated to Cedric, but you're not bound to Redwood. And I know you noticed the shift when your parents arrived. Your bond to Cedric effectively cuts you off from Dark Moon. So if you die, no one will be affected. Cedric may feel the worst effects, but he won't die because you may be bound to him, but not in its totality. At least not yet.”

Her candidness hurt more than Marisol could've imagined. She nodded, deciding that would be enough for today. She pushed herself to her feet, wanting to get out already. When she'd begun interrogating Leticia, she wasn't sure what to expect, but she was certain it wasn't this.

“Remember. No one should know about this until your decision is made. And I don't want to sound insensitive, but you need to hurry up with that decision.”

Marisol swallowed thickly. Her jelly-like legs carried her to the door. Just as she reached for the doorknob, a thought sprang to her mind. When she turned around, Leticia was back in camouflage. That sent a shiver down Marisol's spine. Leticia was not at all who she seemed to be. She distractedly wondered whose face it was she'd been wearing all this time.

“What's your real name?” She asked.

“Genevieve,” came the reply.

Marisol nodded, “Do you not feel any sort of connection to her? You're identical twins.”

Leticia smiled, “She thinks I'm dead and has been trying to corrupt my essence for more than a decade. I feel her. I know her every move, but she doesn't feel the same way because she believes I don't exist anymore and is only interested in harvesting my powers.”

“What do you think will happen if she finds out?”

Leticia looked away, “I don't think I can resist her. She's much more powerful than I can ever dream of being. If she finds me, we're doomed. No matter what decision you make, find that dagger. I hid it in the library, in a hidden castle.”

Marisol sighed, her heart broke for herself, Leticia, her parents, and worse of all, Cedric.

Just as she made to cross the threshold, Leticia spoke up again, “I've become a liability to you, Marisol. We are all now liabilities. Do not come back here. And even if you decide to sacrifice yourself, don't wait for her to wake up from hibernation. She's in her weakest form now. Use that opportunity to end it quickly. You may be powerful, but you're no match for her, at least not yet.”