

Chapter 172

End

Marisol ended up in a dimly lit chamber, the air thick with ancient magic and foreboding. Her grip on the dagger tightened, its energy pulsing against her skin as if urging her forward.

She didn't know where she was or how she got there. All she did was allow her senses to lead her, and it seemed this was where she was meant to go.

With each step she took, the sense of familiarity grew, though she couldn't quite place it. Marisol's heart rate picked up as it finally clicked, the memories of her immediate surroundings sharpening. It was here, in this very space, that Guinevere had been frozen in stasis.

In her dream, it had taken the shape of a forest, but this was its physical form. Guinevere was still here, too, her frozen figure even more menacing in person with an impossibly dark aura.

With hesitant steps, Marisol approached the still figure, her grip on the hilt of the dagger almost bruising now as she used it to steel herself. This was it. This was where she would confront Guinevere and put an end to the chaos once and for all. All she had to do was strike.

But just as she began to lift the dagger out of its protective sheath, she was lifted off her feet by an unseen force and sent crashing to the ground a few feet away. Pain shot through her body as she struggled to regain her bearings, the dagger slipping from her grasp and falling to the floor with a clatter.

A chilling laughter suddenly filled the chamber, sending shivers down Marisol's spine. Slowly, Guinevere's frozen form began to stir, her eyes snapping open immediately after. They glowed with malicious intent as she slowly approached Marisol.

"Did you truly believe you could challenge me, little hybrid?" Guinevere's voice reverberated with power, each word sending an unsettling feeling coursing through Marisol's veins. "You are but a mere pawn in my grand design. We wanted a sacrifice, and you made yourself available."

"Have you ever tried listening to yourself?" Marisol spat, picking her bruised body off the floor ever so slowly, "You sound really dumb for someone who's supposedly all mighty."

"Oh please, brainwashed animal." She flicked her wrist, and Marisol felt another strong gust of wind that sent her back to the floor, "You are nothing compared to me. How gullible could you be... you let them lead you right into my trap." She had a satisfied glint in her eyes, swirling around in those dark orbs, perfectly mixing with her irritation at the sight of Marisol.

Marisol gritted her teeth, pushing herself to her feet despite the pain coursing through her body. "Says the person who resorts to petty tricks as a distraction. You've gassed yourself so much that you've begun to believe that you're something that you're not. You're nothing, Guinevere."

"Oh, I'll show you nothing." Guinevere snarled, and this time, it was with an even more forceful gust of wind that Marisol was sent flying out of the building. She cried out in pain, struggling to defend herself against the onslaught of magic.

Guinevere's laughter filled the air once again, well conveying her satisfaction at having the upper hand as she floated out of the building with an unrivaled poise, "Foolish child," she spat, her eyes blazing with malevolence. "You can not even begin to dream of defeating me. I am eternal, and you are nothing but a fleeting shadow."

Desperation clawed at Marisol's chest as she fought to push back against the overwhelming force bearing down on her. She searched frantically for any sign of weakness in Guinevere's defenses, a gap that could offer Marisol the chance for reprisal, but the dark witch seemed invincible, her power unmatched.

But Marisol refused to give up. She refused to let Guinevere win. With a fierce cry, Marisol summoned every ounce of strength she had left and lunged forward, her outstretched hand seeking the dagger that flew straight into it, her hand closed around the hilt with immediacy. With a swift motion, she plunged the shining edge right into Guinevere's heart.

Marisol's own heart drops when the Guinevere before her disintegrates into dark smoke, the dagger falling to the floor once again and skidding out of reach.

With a mocking laughter, the real Guinevere reanimates in front of Marisol's face, sending her staggering backwards and her face paling in horror.

"You really are foolish, aren't you?" Guinevere sneered, her voice dripping with contempt. "You really deluded yourself into believing you could defeat me? Do you think you could change the course of destiny?"

Marisol growled, her irritation boiling over both at Guinevere's smugness and being tossed around like a doll, and with a wave of her fingers, she, too, smacked Guinevere across the room.

Guinevere screamed as she got to her feet.

"How dare you!" She yelled, seething as she conjured tendrils of shadow that lashed out at Marisol, seeking to ensnare her in their grasp.

Marisol dodged quickly. With a defiant cry, she summoned her own magic, weaving strands of light to counter the darkness that still stubbornly reached for her.

The air crackled with magic, and their surroundings became a battlefield of elemental forces. Marisol conjured torrents of fire, sending waves of intense heat crashing towards Guinevere. But Guinevere laughed, her own magic swirling around her like a shield as she countered with blasts of icy spears, freezing the flames in their tracks.

The ground trembled beneath their feet, the very fabric of reality warping and twisting with their power. Marisol gritted her teeth, her muscles straining against the force of Guinevere's onslaught. Drawing upon the depths of her inner strength, she unleashed a barrage of lightning bolts, crackling with raw energy. Guinevere staggered slightly, her laughter turning to a snarl as she retaliated with a storm of shadowy tendrils.

Marisol is relentless, but Guinevere fought with experience, her wall of ice deflecting each and every one of Marisol's fiery attacks.

She was soon knocked off her feet as Guinevere returned with her own set of flames. Marisol cried out at the heat of the flames licking at her skin. She hadn't expected that at all.

But Guinevere was not finished yet. With a sinister grin, she conjured blades of shadow that sliced through the air with deadly precision, seeking out Marisol's vulnerable points. Marisol dodged and weaved, her movements fluid and graceful as she danced through the chaos, but the shadows followed her every move, relentless in their pursuit.

Marisol felt the sting of cuts and bruises as Guinevere's attacks found their mark. Blood flowed freely from her wounds, staining the ground beneath her feet. Marisol tried to retaliate, but Guinevere was faster.

With a blast of dark energy, she sent Marisol flying across the field. She crashed to the ground with a thud, her breath coming in ragged gasps as she struggled to push herself upright.

But before she could regain her footing, Guinevere was upon her, silver chains now wrapping around Marisol's limbs with a suffocating force. Marisol cried out in pain as the cold metal dug into her flesh, immobilizing her.

With a triumphant smirk, Guinevere stood over her fallen adversary, her eyes glowing with malicious intent. "You are no match for me, little hybrid,"

Just then, Marisol heard a terrible battle roar, both their heads snapping in the direction of it, but Guinevere recovered quickly. Marisol's heart pounded against her chest. She could feel Cedric's presence. It filled her with energy.

"Aww, do you really think they'll make it in time to save you?" Guinevere cooed mockingly, "I have an army bigger than your little band, and you'll be in pieces before they ever make it here."

Despite the pain she was in, Marisol croaked out a chuckle, "I'm guessing you haven't heard of the Dark Moon Park?"

Guinevere narrowed her eyes before rolling them at the thought of Marisol's attempt at deflection. "I'll be sure to send a piece of your dismembered body to your parents back home as a tribute."

Marisol laughed, spitting out a glob of blood, "I really do wonder how you ever managed to get this far when you really lack any senses. Can't you feel the numbers of your silly army dwindling rapidly? It's only a matter of time before my mother finds the source of your pathetic magic and destroys it permanently."

Guinevere lifted her head quickly at that, as if truly trying to connect with her dummies, and Marisol took advantage of her distraction, snatching the totem from her neck and smashing it into pieces.

Guinevere screeched as she began to lose her hold over the rogues. In a fit of rage, she conjured multiple silver daggers and sent them piercing into Marisol's body, causing her to scream in agony.

She was in so much pain. She wanted everything to end, and at that moment, like a lightbulb flickering to life in her mind, she realized what Guinevere's weakness was. Guinevere believed that she knew everything.

"Aren't you curious?" Marisol hissed, shutting her eyes as she tried to summon the Dagger.

"No!" Guinevere screeched, her fingers digging into Marisol's jaw as she grabbed her face tightly. "It's time to end this for good."

"So, you're not curious about the witch who's been helping me? The one who sent me here?"

Guinevere's brows twitched in irritation, "I don't care. I'll deal with her myself."

Marisol laughed with great difficulty. The points she had been stabbed were beginning to feel like they were on fire. "Are you sure you don't want pointers? Doesn't Genevieve ring a bell?"

Guinevere finally halted at that. Her eyes narrow, and she asks in a stunned whisper, "What did you say?"

"Yes," Marisol grinned, her bloodstained teeth coming into view. She had her exacted where she wanted her now. Guinevere was so thrown off that she didn't notice her hold on Marisol loosening, causing her head to slack slightly.

"That's the exact reaction I was hoping for. See, I don't have much on her, really. Just that she sends her greetings." She added smugly, focusing her energy on finding the dagger. She could feel it coming to life where it once laid lifelessly in the energy radiating from her fingers.

"Stop bluffing."

Marisol's smile dropped the moment the dagger slipped into her hands. "We both know that I'm not bluffing, witch."

Before Guinevere could react, Marisol drove the dagger into her heart in one forceful swing. Her eyes blew wide, and she fell right on top of Marisol, pained choking sounds leaving her lips.

"And one more thing. She says to let you know that she killed Phineas with her own hands."

Guinevere croaked loudly as the dagger fell linked completely into her chest.

In that moment, the entire Ember coven goes dark, the dark magic that sourced every semblance of life it held snuffed out in an instant.

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As the dust settled, Cedric frantically searched for Marisol, his heart pounding with fear and desperation. When he finally found her, lying unconscious amidst the wreckage of the battle, his world came crashing down around him. He fell to his knees beside her, his hands trembling as he checked for signs of life. There was none.

With a sense of urgency, Cedric gathered Marisol into his arms and carried her back to Redwood, ignoring everything in his path as he raced, praying that Leticia's spell had worked. As they returned to the safety of their pack, Cedric's mind raced with worry, his thoughts consumed by the fear of losing the woman he loved.

Upon their arrival, Leticia was nowhere to be found. Looking sickly pale, Lily had explained that she suddenly puffed into smoke after clenching at her heart in pain.

Caleb was frantic, even though Lily and Sophia assured them that Leticia had finished her spell before the tragedy happened.

Caleb felt his control slipping as he held Marisol close to his heart in a deathly grip. He couldn't let her go. He wouldn't.

There and then, a memory floods back into his brain. When Guinevere was attacked on the day of his coronation, he'd found himself in a new, almost otherworldly environment as he tried to fight off the spell. He remembered seeing Marisol rushing to help him. That was why her face held hints of familiarity even on their first encounter.

It hurt so badly to think he was about to lose her. Just then, he felt something thrum to the life in the limp body he held. With his breath caught in his throat, he checked again, and relief flooded through him when he felt the faintest beat of her heart beneath his fingertips.

"There's life! There's life in her!" He screamed, and he was quickly surrounded by people who tried to help him get Marisol comfortable, but Cedric elbows through them all, finding a space and setting her down ever so gently.

For the next few days, Cedric stood vigil by Marisol's bedside, his eyes never leaving her unconscious form as he waited for any sign of awakening.

Three long days passed before Marisol finally stirred, her eyes fluttering open to the dim light of the room. Cedric almost cried in relief as he rushed to her side, watching her consciousness return, but his joy was tempered by the knowledge of the dangers she had faced.

As Marisol regained her strength, Lily arrived and spent the next few hours by her side, where she explained Leticia's protective spell and the sacrifice she had made to keep her safe. Cedric felt a surge of gratitude towards the woman who had risked everything to protect his mate.

"Where's she?" Marisol asked softly, looking around the room, and they all bowed their heads wordlessly. Marisol immediately understood what that meant.

With the dust of the battle settled and the threat of Guinevere completely eliminated, Cedric and Marisol emerged as the new leaders of Redwood, their bond stronger than ever before. As they exchanged vows and pledged their lives to one another, Cedric knew that he had found his true partner, his equal in every way.

As Alpha and Luna, Cedric and Marisol led their pack with wisdom and compassion, guiding them through times of peace and prosperity. And as they looked towards the future, Cedric knew that their love would endure, a beacon of hope in a world filled with darkness.

With Cedric back in his rightful place and completely rid of the darkness that was Guinevere's hold on him, Sophia and Caleb could finally leave Redwood with their minds and hearts cleared of any burden or guilt. They resumed their lives as travelers, fulfilling their dreams of exploring the world together. They traveled far and wide, experiencing all the wonders that life had to offer, never for once taking a moment for granted.

In the end, love triumphed over adversity, and Cedric and Marisol's story became a legend, whispered among the wolves of Redwood for generations to come. And Marisol's powers? She finally earned them back, becoming one of the most powerful beings to ever exist.