Chapter 116

"You sound like you'd rather do something else," Nicole quipped.

Marisol sighed, "There's a concept called rest Mom. You know, resting after such an intense session?"

Nicole raised a brow at that, "But you arranged your schedule yourself. And I seem to remember you brushing me off when I complained about how tight and unflexible it was."

Marisol purses her lips at that before nodding reluctantly, "You have a point there."

"Is everything alright, sweetheart? You seemed upset earlier." Nicole asked in a heartbeat, jumping at the slight opening in worry.

and responsibilities."

Marisol hesitated, her gaze momentarily darting elsewhere. "It's nothing, Mom. Just pack matters

Nicole stays silent for the next few moments as she studies her daughter, recognizing the familiar

deflection. She was her mother's daughter after all. Marisol had inherited not only her physical traits but also a knack for shielding her emotions.

That trait had served her well a few years back, but it had also been toxic and had denied her a

few things.

"Marisol, you can always talk to me. You know that, right?" Nicole reassured tone almost in a

whisper as she reached out to gently cup Marisol's cheek, still a bit damp from the proof of her hard work. Marisol nods, the mask of composure slipping for a moment as she breathes out a smile. "I know,

Mom. It's just... I've been feeling different lately, and I can't quite explain it." Nicole's concern deepens, brows creasing as she steps even closer. "Can you try and explain just

what you mean by 'different'? Is it physical? Emotional?"

"It's hard to put into words, Mom. Like something is changing somewhere in me, but I just can't put a finger on it." Marisol admitted, her voice a whisper carried by the wind.

Nicole's mind is immediately thrown into a whirlpool, considering the possibilities. Werewolf

physiology was complex, and subtle changes could indicate various things. Were her powers

coming to light? She needed to consult with Liam. "Let's find your father. We'll talk to him together," Nicole suggested, keeping her tone as soft and comforting so as to maintain their little bubble of privacy and vulnerability, but something seemed

Her walls coming back up, if the way her gaze gardens before she masks it with an obviously forced smile was anything to go by.

to snap in Marisol as she was blinking and stepping out of reach the next second.

just be that I'm overreacting to the pressure from all the preparations. I'm sure it's that. But I'll talk to him later, I promise." Marisol rushed out. "But-" Nicole started to say,

"Ah. I'm running late, Mom. And so are you. Besides, I don't think it's that big of a deal. It could

"Bye, love you," Marisol interrupted, leaning in to leave a hasty kiss on her mother's cheek before

dashing away.

she walks further in.

on her forehead.

"Something's amiss," Nicole starts the second she steps into Liam's office, their eyes locking as

against her ear and Nicole giggles, his breath ticklish as she melts into her mate's warmth. All the weight on her shoulder dissipated to nothing. He pulled away too quickly for her liking, holding her face between his palms and planting a kiss

"Mhmm," Liam hummed absentmindedly, pulling her into his arms. "I've missed you." He rasps

Nicole's wolf purrs in satisfaction, wanting nothing more than to remain in his arms. They'd been mates for a little over two decades now, but it never felt like that with the way his touched always seemed to make her body tingle in the newest ways.

Liam holds her gaze, eyes unbelievably soft and full of love like he had read right into her thoughts. The woman who held his heart in the palm of her hands, whom he would be ready to give it all to in a heartbeat.

In a swift movement, he sweeps her into his arms, gently depositing her on his desk before diving in for a much-welcomed kiss. Their lips slot together with the precision of a puzzle piece falling into place and Nicole sighs into it.

Liam chuckled, his arms tightening around her, "but I missed you," he said, obviously not affected by her words, as he leaned in for another kiss.

Her breath comes out heavy when she finally pulls away, smacking him on the chest quite weakly,

"This is why we can't work in the same space," she chides softly, "you're so distracting"

around his neck as his hands and tongue grow more demanding. She whines at the kiss, returning it with as much fervor.

"Ugh," a voice groans loudly as the door to Liam's office flies open. "And here I was thinking you

Never one to not fall for his charms, Nicole welcomes him again this time, arms going to rest

hold on his mate as he shields her from the eyes of whoever dared to intrude on their moment, teeth-baring even without his fangs.

Liam replies with a loud instinctual growl as he breaks away from the kiss, keeping a protective

Garrett raises his hands in surrender, shaking his head as Liam shuts his eyes in exasperation. He leisurely strolls to the couch in the office, taking a seat, his features still bright with amusement. James pokes his head in next.

Nicole bites back an embarrassed whine as she buries her face in Liam's chest. She could never get used to their intrusions.

"Don't worry," Garrett laughs, waving him in, "We're all clear."

like... something's coming, like a storm is brewing within her."

After a few minutes pass, she clears her throat and tries to pull away from Liam, who growls lowly in his throat before pulling her even closer. Without much of a fight, she gives in, staying

perched against him. He hums in satisfaction before regarding his two closest people in the world.

Garrett smirks and James shrugs, his usual disinterested face on.

"Marisol," Nicole spoke up, and he nodded, his expression morphing into one of seriousness.

"I've sensed it too. Is that what's troubling you?" Nicole swallows before replying, "Yes. She's been... different. I don't know how to explain it. It's

"Why are you here?"

were discussing your daughter."

Liam's brows furrowed. "I understand how you're feeling. James, how was training today?" James shakes his head. "Whatever this is, it's not physical. She's in top-notch form."

till the end."

"I'm not surprised." Garrett adds immediately, "She's a lot like Nicole. She is determined to hide it

"She's been avoiding me lately," Liam supplies.

They all looked pointedly at Nicole, who rolled her eyes at the accusation.

"And that's another thing," James sighed

"Yeah. Marisol's smarter than all of us put together. I think she believes that we'll make a huge

"Or she's avoiding her father because she knows that he'll get the truth out of her," James said, and

fuss out of what she's trying to convince herself is nothing." Nicole says, lips downturned.

"Well maybe, if you weren't such a helicopter parent, she would've come to you." Garrett laughed.

Marisol. She looks around the room before crossing her arms over her chest.

before they could all reply with sounds of agreement, the door swung open once again to reveal

They all looked away as guilt threatened to eat them up.

"Aren't you all supposed to be busy?" She hissed.

"Once again, you are all gathering and worrying over nothing. I'm sure there are more important pack matters to worry about, you know?" She says, making a beeline for the cabinet and pulling it open to grab some files out of it.

"Prove it then." Garrett suddenly says, nobody misses the way Marisol immediately spins around to meet his eyes, but he is unrelenting, "Prove to us that there's nothing to worry about."

"How, Beta?" She asks, voice tight.

"Restore your link with the pack."

"I will. But only after the ball." She replies without missing a beat.

her each night, what would they do if they were to find out the whole truth?

was close. They were onto her, and it looked like they now only needed something to prove their suspicions. And it was all because of her recent nightmare.

If they were reacting this way after getting just a glimpse of the emotions that tumbled through

With one final look around the room, Marisol rushed out of the room, her heart pounding. That