Chapter 118

Marisol cracks her eyes open but is greeted by bright lights that force her to shut them right back. Behind her closed lids, flashes of her nightmares haunted her senses. Beads of perspiration adorned her forehead. Her chest ached, burdened by the weight of the lingering fear that refused to dissipate for months now.

She greedily takes in long drags of air, grateful for the ability to breathe again. Unconsciously, she traces her fingers over her neck, half-expecting to feel the pain or lingering scar of the imaginary wound. Her nightmares had begun to feel so real that they'd started to blur with the real world, creating a disconcerting blend of fear and disorientation.

dreamed about the second part or if it was real.

Of all her nightmares, that one was the most terrifying. She still couldn't decipher if she'd

'It was just a dream.' She chants, willing her muscles to relax until her eyes fall on the bathroom

She digs her head deeper into the fluff of her pillow, the weight of her exhaustion only now

door. It was open.

Her heart jumps at that, and she springs to a sitting position, checking her body and the pieces of

scratched wood from where she'd been gripping the window in her second dream, confirming her

But how had she gotten back into bed? She remembers everything fading into darkness after she'd dragged herself back into the room. In her panic, she rushes to grab a mirror from her bedside drawer and check her neck. There was nothing there other than the dampness from sweat.

She falls back, her chest rising and falling rapidly. She felt tears brimming in her eyes again, her nose stinging. Marisol felt like she couldn't keep this hidden any longer; the facade of strength was crumbling.

She closed her eyes for a while and allowed her heart to settle as much as it could. There were still a lot of unanswered questions, but she forced them to the back of her mind.

The Dark Moon Pack had become a formidable force in the supernatural world, their strength and

werewolf dignitaries from far and wide.

messed up her head was as it stood.

go back to those times.

make the ball a spectacle to remember.

decipher what was real and what was not.

telling it all.

make any sense of them."

parents? They could help."

Dark Moon, Estella."

She would wait until after the ball. She didn't have any other option.

fear. Had it been real?

unity unparalleled. The annual ball, a testament to their growth, was a gathering of werewolf dignitaries from far and wide.

It was a celebration of power, diplomacy, and unity among the pack, with Marisol's birthday

Marisol couldn't bring herself to ruin it. She knew that if her parents found out about her dreams, they would call it off immediately, too, on edge to even think of celebrating, much less hosting a celebration.

serving as an additional cause for revelry. It meant a lot to everyone in the pack.

Her mother had done it perfectly for so many years now, and she shouldn't be any different.

Maybe she would strive to be even better, but there was no way that would be possible with how

With a determined sigh, she rose from the confines of her covers, steeling herself to face the day.

Her responsibilities awaited. She was planning the intricate details of the ball that would host

After a quick breakfast, Marisol delved into the preparations for the annual ball. The scent of fresh flowers, the sound of laughter, and the hum of activity enveloped her as she navigated through the myriad tasks that demanded her attention.

The halls of the pack's grand estate buzzed with energy and anticipation. When she was younger, Marisol used to thrum with the exact same level of energy, if not more. How she wished she could

The floral arrangements, the seating arrangements for the guests, and the intricacies of the

ceremonial traditions— all required her meticulous oversight.

the preparations and all. It's nothing to worry about, Estella."

to me." Estella presses, and Marisol sighs, fingers running through her hair.

"Another nightmare?" She questions, and Marisol nods, swallowing.

Despite the excitement that buzzed through the pack, Marisol couldn't shake the nagging feeling that something malevolent lurked in the shadows.

Together, they went through the checklist for the grand event, discussing the details that would

In the courtyard, she met Estella, her closest friend and confidante. Only Estella knew of the

nightmares that plagued Marisol, but she didn't know the details. That would be unnecessary.

"You seem off, Marisol," Estella suddenly notice her sudden mood. "Is everything okay?"

Another lie. She'd been thinking about her latest dream and how she collapsed. She was still yet to

Marisol forces a smile, dismissing the question with a casual wave. "Just a lot on my mind with

"I had another one." She confesses in a whisper, not missing how Estella's eyes grew in size.

"I've known you for too long to buy that, Marisol. Something's bothering you, and I know so. Talk

"But you had one yesterday, and that one had all of us terrified." Marisol looked away, anxiety already bubbling under her skin.

"They're becoming more frequent, aren't they? You've never told me what they're about. What I

terrifying even for us?" Marisol exhales loudly, biting down at her lower lip as she considers

felt through the bond yesterday scared me, Mare. What do you see and experience that could be so

"Come on. I've respected your privacy and have also kept your secret thus far. Don't you trust me?"

"It's dark and unsettling." Marisol grits out, "It's been going on for months, but I still can't seem to

"I don't want to worry them. Besides, there's something about this, something I can't put into

Their conversation was suddenly interrupted by the presence of Garret. His loud voice reached

their ears from where he'd been laughing and teasing some of the pack members. Although he

words. It's like I'm drawn to it, and that scares me more than anything."

you, Marisol. Do you think he knows something?"

Estella frowns at that, "That's a vague description, Mare, but I'll take it. Why haven't you told your

looked to be busy with them, his watchful eyes followed Marisol's every move, trying to be as subtle as he could manage.

"I've noticed Garrett hanging around lately," Estella notes quietly. "It's almost as if he's watching

Estella steps closer to her, "Are you sure? Do you need me to tell him off?" She asks seriously, and Marisol spares a chuckle.

"Although that would be fun to witness, I'd rather not see you get in a scuffle with the Beta of the

Her brows furrow at the thought, and an uneasy feeling unfurls in her chest, but she already had

so much to keep her on edge. "Don't worry about him," she resorts to saying.

smug look, shrugging. Marisol shook her head, the ghost of a smile on her lips.

Marisol's senses were heightened as she navigated the grand ballroom. With each step, she grows

angrier. Garrett's intense gaze followed her every move, and it was getting on her nerves.

Unable to bear the weight of his scrutiny any longer, she marched purposefully toward him.

Garrett, unbothered by her outburst, or claiming to be, casually leans back against a pillar,

flashing his signature smirk. "Easy there, Princess. I was just checking out your work so far.

Estella gives her a wry smile before stepping away. "I'm sure I could take him." She says with a

"What is your problem, Garrett?" Marisol snaps, giving him a sharp look. "You've been staring at me all night. Are you a guest or a critic?"

roll.

"Cut the nonsense. What are you really up to?"

You're doing a great job handling things. Weldone, Marisol." He says, earning an exaggerated eye

He chuckles before pushing himself back to his feet. "Okay, fine. I was here to tell you something, but your efficiency and party-planning skills distracted me. Your dad's waiting for you. You're

Marisol's eyes widen, and a gasp escapes her lips. She had been avoiding encounters with her father so far, and so much so that the meeting had slipped her mind.

Garrett laughs again, seeming to be enjoying her misery a little too much. "Better not keep the Alpha waiting. He seemed eager to discuss the details. Don't worry, I'm sure it'll be a thrilling

wonder when you became so afraid of him."

Marisol regretted it immediately.

"I totally forgot," she admits with a sigh.

supposed to go over the guest list with him."

conversation." He drawls, nodding at her while Marisol shoots him a glare.

"Thrilling is not the word I'd use, but thank you for the reminder, Garrett." She grits out before walking away.

As Marisol reluctantly headed towards her father, her heart pounded in her chest. She felt like her father was the only person who could get her to unload her burden. It was why she steered clear of him.

"Why don't we go together?" Garrett suggests, spawning next to her.

"No. Why don't you go about your day like you have been continue admiring my work or something."

"I got bored," Garrett replies swiftly. "But I'll let you face your dad alone if you'd prefer that. I

Without waiting for her response, he spins on his feet and walks away in the opposite direction.