

## Chapter 125

Marisol's tour felt more like a guarded march than an exploration. There were so many eyes on her that she couldn't even relax enough to really take anything in. The pack members who trailed behind her at a safe distance maintained a stifling silence, their eyes avoiding hers as they moved through the confined spaces of the pack house.

"Um..... So, can you tell me more about Redwood's history?" Marisol finally spoke, attempting to break the awkward silence surrounding them, and at her words, there came an unmissable shift in the already tense air.

The pack members exchange hesitant glances, their lips remaining sealed. It was not very hard to understand that the question wasn't a very welcome one, but Marisol kept an open mind, still waiting for an answer.

"History?" one of them finally says, the voice barely audible albeit the otherwise pin-drop silence maintained in the room. Marisol nodded at that, expectant.

"Yes. I mean, there have to be stories for your guests, right? Like how did the pack come to be, its successes and achievements, all that?" Marisol presses, ears and eyes wide in wait for any information at all.

The silence lingers for a while longer, the previous pack member looking around almost nervously before another one bursts through the crowd and begins ushering her toward her room, "We... uh, we should get you back to your room. It's almost time for your welcome meal."

"But -" She tries to protest, but the pack member interjects quickly.

"That's not something we talk about much here. I hope you understand. We hope that's not a problem and that you continue to enjoy your stay." The pack member finalizes, glancing back at the others who looked everywhere except at both of them.

An unnerving feeling crawls up Marisol's gut as confusion gnaws at her. She feels like she is being kept in the dark, that much was obvious and the thought of that and whatever the reason behind it might be unsettled her, but, she decides not to argue about it any further and yields, silently being led back in the direction of her room.

Upon returning to her room, she finds a lavish spread laid out, the tempting aromas wafting from the dishes call to her and her stomach growls in agreement, but despite her hunger, Marisol's appetite had dwindled to nothingness in the wake of her unsettling experience.

"I thought they'd at least tell me something so as not to seem suspicious...." Marisol thought to herself. Every single thing about Redwood felt off.

Just then, the door swings open, causing Marisol to jolt out of her thoughts. She watched a pack member walk in and set down another platter of food, nodding as they offered a quick, tight-lipped smile. "Enjoy your meal, Marisol. We'll be around if you need anything else."

Marisol fights the urge to roll her eyes at the feigned hospitality. She didn't think for a second that they would be around or care if she wanted something. Every person she'd met so far had either been plain hostile or passively aggressive.

She misses Caleb. She was certain that if he was around, they wouldn't dare treat her in the manner they were.

No matter how much she tried, Marisol couldn't shake off the feeling that something wasn't right. However, her hosts weren't exactly the nicest or most talkative, and the treatment she'd received so far wasn't one that left room for sating her curiosity, so she let it be for now.

She moves to take a seat at the table and picks up her food. Thoughts raced through her mind. She felt isolated, as if she was trapped within the confines of this mysterious packhouse with no understanding of its past or its people.

As she finally brings her first bite to her lips, the door pushes open again, and she feels her heart jump as Caleb comes into view. He walks in slowly, his expression blank. "How was the tour?" He asks almost immediately.

"It was... not as I'd expected," Marisol admits. "They barely said anything, and when I tried to strike a conversation by asking about Redwood's history, it felt more like what I struck was a nerve...." She explains wearily, and Caleb sighs, running a hand through his hair.

"That was a bit of a sensitive topic there. You see.... My pack, we've had to go through some rough times, and there are things we're still trying to put behind us. I hope you understand."

"But shouldn't I be let in on those things if I'm going to become a part of this pack?" Marisol presses, taking a step closer, and he nods, holding her gaze.

"I'll explain everything, Marisol. Just give me some time. For now, you should focus on settling in, yeah?"

Despite his reassurance, Marisol still couldn't shake the unease that he had found home within her. The air in the pack house felt heavy with unspoken truths, every corner and crevice looked like they held a different story, leaving her to wonder what kind of darkness lurked behind the dilapidated walls that made up the mystery that was Redwood.

Whilst the wheels in her head continue to turn without ever locking it in place, Caleb makes himself at home, sitting at the set table and dishing out some food for himself. "Marisol, eat. I promise there's nothing to be so worked up about. If you trust me, then do as I say."

Marisol exhales heavily but nods before going back to take a seat next to him, resuming the task of forcing some food down her throat, unable to really savor the taste of the dishes as she has to force the uncomfortable lumps down her throat with glasses of water.

Her wolf was beginning to feel suffocated. It wanted out of here and nothing sang of comfort and freedom like the air back at home.

She shook her head as if to rid it of the thoughts, reminding herself that Caleb was her mate and her supposed companion for life. She can't get cold feet or homesick now. Instead, she would try to understand the people of this pack better and cleanse it of whatever impurities that filled her heart and mind with worry.

A knock raps against the door, causing both occupants of the room to exchange a look before Caleb sits upright, clearing his throat before he calls loudly, "Come in."

A man troops in almost immediately, "Alpha," he bows, completely ignoring the other presence in the room. "There's something you need to see."

Caleb's eyes and ears perk up immediately, "What is it?" He asks.

The man lifts his gaze, not at Caleb but to stare fleetingly at Marisol, who immediately decides his brown eyes unsettled her. "You should come." He resorts to saying.

Marisol is filled with dread at his words, not wanting to be left alone. Her hand immediately flies to grab at Caleb's, effectively gaining his attention. "Let's go together. We can see whatever it is together."

From a corner of her eyes, she could feel the man's burning stare at where her hands lay atop Caden's, who sucked in a breath before slowly prying her hands off. "Not yet, Marisol. You just got here, and you need to rest. Tomorrow..... I'll let you do whatever you want. Just listen for today, alright?"

Without waiting for a reply, he leans in, and Marisol eagerly meets him halfway, only to feel a kiss on her forehead before he hurriedly follows the pack member out.

Marisol watched him leave, thinking it was weird that he didn't want to kiss her before the man. As she resumes forcing her food down, Marisol tries to think of reasons to support Caleb's actions.

Maybe because they weren't marked yet? She had always craved for the kind of relationship her parents had. They didn't care if the whole world was watching. Her father was always ready to claim his mate without a care, and she'd wished that for herself with her own mate over and over again.

She brings spoon after spoon of food to her lips, seemingly on autopilot as her thoughts run wild. Could it be that the passion they'd felt for each other just the night before had waned considerably? No. That would be unheard of, but the natural flow of things would be for both mates to still pine after the other, at least until they marked the other.

Unable to come to a credible enough conclusion after a while, Marisol concludes that it had everything to do with the fact that she'd lost her mind the moment she stepped foot in Redwood.

When she finally decided she'd had enough of the feast set in front of her, the door swung open like clockwork, and a few pack members immediately cleared up the table.