

Chapter 131

The annual ball, combined with Marisol's birthday celebration, presented the perfect opportunity to set their plan into motion. It was the best and possibly the only way he could infiltrate the Dark Moon Pack and get close enough to Marisol without rousing suspicion, which could thwart their whole scheme.

Before departing for Dark Moon, Leticia had provided Caleb with a perfume laced with an attraction spell. He knew this was his only shot; he had to make Marisol believe he was her destined mate.

His path fortuitously crossed with Marisol during the ball, and as the enchantment in the perfume took effect, Marisol had no way of knowing otherwise and would find herself inexplicably drawn to him. Such a level of attraction could only be equated to finding one's mate, and he played the part, solidifying her belief for his own gain.

For Caleb, it was a weighty burden to string Marisol along this way, knowing his true intentions lay elsewhere, knowing the responsibility of saving his brother and the pack rode solely on this. Cedric's cure was paramount, and Marisol's role in it was supposedly crucial. To make the deception convincing, Caleb knew he had to do this, no matter how inhumane and drastic a step it was.

Caleb, knowing well of Liam Hallows' shrewdness from months of keeping a close watch in the shadows, needed a compelling reason to bring Marisol back to Redwood. So, he wasted no time doing what he knew was bound to make her unable to reject coming back with him. He springs a proposal on her, pulling the words right out of his ass as he feigned a sense of commitment and undying love.

Bringing Marisol back to Redwood was the pivotal move in his intricate plan. Yet, the guilt that gnawed at Caleb's conscience grew with each passing moment. Witnessing Marisol's heartbreak in real-time when he revealed his allegiance to another woman tore at his soul, it was a sacrifice he had to make for the sake of his pack.

The present

Caleb finds himself standing before Leticia's door. His feet had carried him here, seeking guidance or perhaps just a moment of respite from the chaos that had engulfed Redwood. Normally, Sophia would accompany him, but her hands were full trying to pacify Marisol, whose wrath seemed uncontainable.

His thoughts swirled with the increasing turmoil. Trapping Marisol within Redwood had been their plan, but it only seemed to worsen the situation. Cedric's rampage had intensified, and the unanswered questions loomed over Caleb like a dark cloud.

They had resorted to keeping Marisol in a perpetual sleep using Leticia's spells, as her fury rendered any attempt at communication futile. But what was the way forward now?

Lost in contemplation, Caleb remains rooted in his spot, fingers hesitating to announce his presence. The weight of the decisions and their consequences bore heavily on his shoulders, and, on a whim, he decided on just brooding over it in the safety of his office, alone and not involving another person in the uncoordinated mess that was his jumbled-up thoughts.

Just as he turns around to leave, the door creaks open, revealing Leticia standing there with a knowing smirk. Her eyes, like ancient orbs, seemed to hold secrets beyond the comprehension of mere mortals. Without a word, she lets the door fall further open and gestures for Caleb to enter.

The room was cloaked in an air of mystique, filled with the scent of incense and the soft glow of candlelight. Leticia motions for Caleb to sit.

"Troubled, Alpha?" she speaks, her words sounding less of a question and more of a confirmed suspicion, "You seek answers, and I hold glimpses of the threads that weave through the tapestry of fate. Sit, and let us delve into the currents that shape your path."

Caleb hesitated for a moment, still not used to the uncertainty that comes with being under the scrutiny of Leticia's penetrating eyes. He takes a seat, leaving a sigh as he does, and doesn't waste a second to speak of his worries, "I was of the idea that bringing Marisol here would save us, but it only looks to have stirred a greater storm," he laments, a hint of frustration tainting his voice.

Leticia nods knowingly. "The forces at play are intricate. Alpha Caleb. Marisol is no ordinary pawn in this cosmic chessboard. Her destiny intertwines with yours in ways you have yet to fathom."

Caleb leans forward, fingers clasping together as his eyes seek clarity. An advice, a supposition so as to know what to expect... anything. "What should we do now? Cedric is more feral than ever, and Marisol's rage flares beyond expectations."

The witch pauses, her gaze fixed on an unseen horizon. "The unraveling has begun, but redemption may still lie in tangled futures. Seek the path of truth, Alpha Caleb. Unveil the secrets that lie beneath the surface, and perhaps, salvation will find its way to you."

Caleb frowns at her words, repressing the urge to roll his eyes. Witches and their inability to speak in easily comprehensible words. What path was she talking about now?

"Can you be more clear," he urges. It seemed nobody understood just how bad this entire situation was for him.

Redwood was holding Liam Hallow's daughter hostage. Her mother was also a witch bane who could withstand the greatest magic. If they realized what was going on, Redwood stood no chance against their combined fury. What they were currently going through was nothing. They would be wiped off the face of the planet forever.

With Cedric's recent continuous outbursts, the council grows more and more agitated. Vehemently pitching the solution of just putting him out of his obvious misery once and for all, liberating the pack of his unpredictable tendencies and for Caleb to become the proper and rightful Alpha of the pack. But Caleb would rather drop dead himself before he entertained the idea of killing his own brother.

Things had not been looking up for a long while now, and he began doubting if Marisol could really be the key to everything.

He looked to Leticia for anything more she could share, but she seemed to be done with him. He was unable to decipher the meaning behind Leticia's vague guidance and was desperate for any help he could get.

"Please," he begged, "I need more than cryptic messages. Redwood is treading on very thin ice."

Leticia chuckles softly at Caleb's impatience. "Ah, Alpha Caleb, you underestimate the depth of this cosmic design. The answers lie in the truths yet unveiled."

Caleb feels his frustration building. If there was a table anywhere near, he would be flipping it, but he currently settles for balling his fists. "But what about Marisol? You said she could save us... But how?"

The witch's laughter resonated through the room, causing Caleb's eyebrows to twitch in slight annoyance. There was nothing amusing about Redwood's predicament. "Marisol, oh, Marisol. Do you even know what she truly is?" Leticia inquires with a knowing smirk.

Caleb answers without missing a beat. "She's a hybrid werewolf, daughter of Liam Hallows, and her mother is a witch bane. A powerful lineage..." He hesitates before adding, "That much I know." In almost a whisper.

Leticia's laughter, this time, bounces off the wall with the loudness of it. Caden cringes, "Ignorance and impatience, young Alpha. Marisol is much more than that. There are layers to her. You haven't even come close to unveiling it."

Caden lost the battle against his growing annoyance this time, his voice rising with his next words, "Then tell me! Show me the way! You keep speaking in all these twisted riddles when you know I'm as good as blind compared to you."

The witch's amusement remains, proving time and time again, how unintimidated by Caleb she was. "The way forward lies in discovering the truths obscured by veils of uncertainty. Seek the truth, Alpha Caleb. That is your path."

"Can't you give me another prophecy? Some direction.... I don't even have the slightest idea of how exactly Marisol is expected to save us! Does that seem fair?"

Leticia's gaze turned solemn. "I'm sorry, but there are no more prophecies. The threads of fate intertwine in labyrinthine ways that even I can not predict. You must watch it unfold."

With a surge of anger, Caleb decides he'd had enough and storms out of Leticia's room without another word, feeling more lost and frustrated than before. The weight of Redwood's precarious situation bore down on him, leaving him seething with emotions he couldn't contain.

He bumps into Sophia on his way back, and she regards him with an expectant look as she looks between him and Leticia's door with a raised brow.

"Caleb, what did she say?" she asks, tenderly, her wolf sensing Caleb's unconcealed anger and disconcerted state.

Exasperation is evident in his tone as he recounts their conversation. "She speaks in riddles, Sophia! No prophecies, no clear answers. Just... 'seek the truth!'"

"Perhaps there's wisdom in her words, Caleb. We need to uncover the truths hidden beneath the surface." Sophia placates softly.

Caleb shakes his head, still seething. "But how, Sophia? Marisol's supposed to be our saviour. How do we work with just that fact, knowing nothing more!!!"

"We'll find a way. We must trust in our instincts and unravel the mysteries together."

Despite her words, confident as they were, Caleb's heart remained heavy with doubt and apprehension. Grappling with the cryptic guidance offered by Leticia was messing with his head a lot more than he would like to admit. Letting out a groan of frustration, he grips at his hair.

"I'm sick and tired of it all at this point!" he confesses.

"Look Caleb, these prophecies are never straight. They'll never be. We've done our part and brought Marisol here. That's already a step completed successfully. Now, we should focus on getting her to cooperate."

"Cooperate how?" Caleb growls. "Even if we are able to get her to listen, how then would we proceed when there is no clear indication of what exactly she's here for in the first place?"

Sophia shakes her head, lips parting to try and reason with her mate, but he continues, "Do you realize that she's being held hostage? If we're to get her to agree to our terms, we need to have those terms spelled out atleast! But we have nothing! Everything is a mess that seems to only grow messier!"

"How about..... we calm her down enough to lead her to Leticia's presence? The prophecy came when you sought Leticia's presence, didn't it? Maybe directions will be revealed when Marisol is led there."

Caleb blinks, processing the words. Sophia, as always, was making a lot of sense.

"That does sound valid." He acquiesces, "But, how do we get someone that livid to visit a witch?"

"We can lead her there?"

Caleb huffs with a shrug, "Okay let's try that. But I doubt it will work."

Before dawn the next morning, Marisol stirs from her restless slumber, her once vibrant spirit now subdued by the recurring effects of the sleeping spells. Caleb and Sophia stood by her side in wait, witnessing the toll it took on her frail form. She looked disheveled, weary, and unnaturally pale.

Her breaths were coming in short and fast. She'd been asleep most of the time for the past few days, and that could not spell good for her health. They were going to give her one last shot at this before they resorted to other means to get her to cooperate.

As Marisol's eyes flutter open, a soft growl escapes her lips. In a display of resistance, she turns away on sighting them, ignoring their gentle pleas for her to eat.

The Omegas persisted, trying to entice her wolf with the scent of food.

Marisol coughs and stubbornly remains backing the food presented to her.

"No, I will not eat, and you can't make me." she refused weakly, her voice coming muffled. She could barely move as it was.

"Marisol, please, you need to eat something." Sophia tried again. "You haven't had anything in days now. You need energy."

Marisol refuses to budge, ignoring her words. No amount of talking was going to convince her.

"Leave me alone." She rasps out, curling into herself.

Caleb, torn between the urgency of their mission and the guilt he felt towards Marisol, moves closer to her.

"We're doing this to protect you and Redwood. Please understand -"

In an instant, Marisol swipes her extended claws and seizes Caleb in a vice-like grip around his throat, catching him completely off guard and sending a shiver down his spine. Her claws threatened to sink into the soft skin and tear out his jugular. Any swift movement could kill him.

She bares her teeth at him and growls, the animosity wafting out of her in waves. "You! She growls, "What do you want from me?"

Sophia is immediately dashing closer to even and help her mate, a growl leaving her lips, but Caleb raises a hand, stopping her in her tracks even as his throat bobs heavily and with effort. Sophia whimpers helplessly, resorting to using her words.

"Marisol, please, let him go. We're not your enemies." She pleads.

"Lies" Marisol counters in a growl, her grip tightening around Caleb's throat, and the latter could swear he saw his life flashing before his eyes.

"Let him go, please!" Sophia cried out, "You're here because we need you. We do not want to bring you harm, I promise! We need you to fulfill the prophecy, Marisol. It's the only way to save us all."

Marisol laughs, and it feels dry, unamused, and dripping with malice. "By us all, don't you mean yourselves? Because I don't remember a prophecy bearing my name, and that means it doesn't affect me. Now, let me go if you want your mate and Alpha to live!" She demands, voice bouncing off the walls. She watches as Sophia's eyes dart between Marisol's fingers around her mate's throat and Marisol's pained expression.

"Please, Marisol," She implores, her eyes reflecting her desperation, "We need you to understand."

"Cut the bullshit and Release me now," Marisol yells, her grip on Caleb unyielding.

"We can't, Marisol. It's not possible," Sophia's voice is tinged with helplessness as she answers.

"Do you think I won't go through with this?" She presses further into Caleb's throat, who exhales shakily at the force. "Remove whatever force field you put around your pack and let me leave!"

"We- I can't release you, Marisol. You need to understand where I'm coming from."

In response, Marisol maintains her grip, the air charged with tension.

"You want to lose your Alpha then." She growls, Caleb lets out a low hiss as unforgiving fingers dig into his throat, just shy of breaking the skin, but just like that, the grip loosens almost immediately and Marisol falls back into the bed with a dull thud, unconscious.

The door swings open, and the entrance of Leticia, her smile ominous and enigmatic, marked an unforeseen twist in the unfolding drama.

"Seems like we're dancing on the edge already, doesn't it?" Leticia chuckles, ever the joker.

Her presence suggested that she'd done something.

Caleb, who jumps back as soon as he is released, gasps, his fingers replacing Marisol's on his sore throat. "What did you do?" He questions, just as Sophia's body collides with his as she burrows further into him with a relieved cry. She'd been terrified. Her wolf howled in unease.

"Shouldn't you be thanking me?" Leticia smirks, head tilting.

"Thanking you? Look at her. She looks terrible. We don't need her on another sleeping spell." Caleb croaks out his disagreement.

"Did you think she was bluffing, Alpha? A soul as desperate and agitated as hers would not have hesitated to take you down with herself if I hadn't intervened." She drawls, her tone eerily light considering the gravity of her words.

"You're not getting the point!" Caleb exclaims, exasperated.

Leticia shrugs and begins walking away. "We all are still lucky that she hasn't awoken. And how unlikely you guys give her some breathing space to actually process her situation? It's highly unlikely that she'll listen when you are always in her face and repeating the same words each time she comes to. Leave her alone, and maybe you'll stop needing my sleeping spells."