

Chapter 132

Caleb leads Marisol back to her room within the Pack's premises less courteously than she'd been treated since her last slumber. Anger boiled within Marisol like a tempest, and as soon as they stepped inside, her fury erupted, snatching her arm away from his grip like she'd been burnt.

"You think this is acceptable? You're locking me in this room, treating me like I'm some kind of criminal when I've done nothing to you! Why am I being treated like this because of you...? Why did you bring me here!?" Marisol's voice echoes with indignation, her eyes ablaze with a mix of anger and hurt, finally finding an opening to ask about Caleb's true intentions since the earth-shattering revelation.

Caleb, taken aback by the sudden outburst, attempts to defuse the situation. He steps closer, cautiously, this time as he holds a hand out, "Marisol, please. I know this is difficult, but you have to understand -"

"Understand, understand, understand! What exactly is it that I'm supposed to understand about being imprisoned and deceived by you!?" Marisol intercepted her tone, a clear representation of the rage that brewed beneath the surface. "Understand that I'm being ostracized because of you?"

Caleb guesses he should've expected this much, but he, too, had a general lack of understanding of the situation. The least he could do at the moment was to try and placate. "I'm sorry. I promise, I didn't mean for any of this to happen," he tried to explain. "We can talk about this."

"Talk about what exactly? How I'm forced to live like a prisoner in a land where my people were deceived to believe I would be treated with respect!?" She shoots back, her words like fiery arrows.

"I'm sorry if you feel that way. It wasn't my intention," he repeats, struggling to find the right words to convey his sincerity and appease the angry Marisol.

Marisol, however, was not having any of it. She shakes her head, almost vibrating with the almost painful whirlpool of emotions concocting within. "Intentions don't matter when the result is the same. I didn't come here for this!" Her words were becoming a frustrated cry, reverberating through the confined space.

"Marisol, there's a reason for all this. Please, let me help you understand," he implores.

She scoffs, her patience wearing thin. "Don't you get tired of repeating the same bullshit over and over again!? I said, I don't want to be here! Let me leave!"

"But you can't go. The prophecy--"

"What prophecy, Caleb!? I keep asking what exactly it is you want from me! What is this about!? Why am I here!? But all you do is give me the same repetitive bull!"

Caleb, caught in a dilemma, hesitates about what would be the right choice of words, "You.... you'll have to wait and see. It's not the right time for you to know," he says, his words shrouded in mystery, earning a sharp inhale from Marisol.

"I demand to know what this prophecy is about!" Marisol exclaims, her eyes flashing with frustration and confusion.

Caleb avoids her eyes, his expression troubled. "It's not time for you to know yet," he repeats evasively.

Marisol was beyond flabbergasted. "Not time for me to know?" she tasted the words on her own tongue, disbelief coloring her words. "So, I'm just supposed to sit around like your puppet, stuck here against my will, for a reason you won't even tell me!?"

"I'm asking you to be patient! Wait, and I'll--"

Marisol cradles her head as she feels a headache at his puzzling words. "Wait? Have you not been listening to a single word I've said!? I'm sick and tired of everything you're putting me through! I want answers, and I want them now!"

The gravity of her situation only seemed to sink further with every passing day spent in Redwood, disbelieving the fact that she'd had this exact conversation with three different people, and none of it had been fruitful. They were hellbent on keeping her here for as long as it took for whatever they needed to be through. Not knowing what it was only pushed her further and further towards complete delirium.

"I really am sorry, Marisol. I promise I'll explain everything when the time is right," Caleb assures with a pained expression, a hint of regret in his eyes.

At those words, he began to retreat. Realizing she was about to be left alone again, feeling trapped, alone and powerless, Marisol rushes to follow after him, low whispers of pained 'No's leaving her chapped lips. However, the door slams shut right in her face, and she hears the door click multiple times, sealing her fate. The heightened sense of panic and frustration forces her to cry and scream as she pounds against the door. Begging and demanding to be let out by whoever would listen.

The feeling of being trapped was suffocating. After her outbursts, Marisol now paces back and forth, her mind racing with thoughts of escape and longing for home. Each passing second felt like an eternity, the weight of her helplessness bearing down on her shoulders.

Minutes could not be told apart from seconds or hours, Marisol felt herself edging closer to hysteria with the slow drag of time. The room, once an apparent refuge, now felt like a cage, amplifying her feelings of entrapment and despair.

After what felt like a few hours later, the door unlocks and creaks open, revealing Lily, who cautiously enters, carrying a tray of food. Her hesitant gaze spoke volumes as if she'd anticipated a negative reaction from Marisol.

However, Marisol was exhausted. She was tired of the constant confrontations. Besides, Lily had been the nicest person since she arrived at Redwood.

As Lily set the food down, she croaks out, resigned. "Are you going to lock me in again?"

Lily ignored both her question and her gaze, pointedly focusing on what she was doing.

Marisol's brows creased as she wondered where the sudden disinterest came from. Lily had never failed to entertain her questions, even when they were more confrontational.

"Lily," she tries again. "Are you locking the door on your way out?"

Lily's frown deepens as she finally turns to regard Marisol with what was almost a glare. "You will not make me cower," she snaps, "I am not your servant."

Marisol chuckles wryly. She felt as if she was going insane. "You too?" She noted.

Lily says nothing else after that and turns to leave.

"Let me guess," Marisol smiled, her tone lacking any hint of amusement. "Word finally got to you that I was a bully and a spoiled brat, and you believed it without questioning."

Lily freezes, turning around but keeping her expression schooled.

"Has anyone of you tried to put yourselves in my shoes? I've been deceived, kept against my will, and fed lies, all while being painted as the villain in this messed-up timeline. What would you have done if you were in my place? Maybe you could give me some advice on how differently you would've reacted."

Lily's guarded expression immediately falls, and her gaze drops to her feet like she is ashamed.

Marisol sighs, her body sinking further into the bed. "What a nightmare. I can't believe it. Now I'm the most hated, who's also supposedly after your precious Alpha. What nonsense."

"I- I'm sorry," Lily stammers out.

Marisol could not think of a worthy response. There was too much pain in her heart to do so.

Lily finally leaves this time, but just as she is about to shut the door, she says, "I'm sorry again, Marisol. I should have thought better. To answer your first question, No. Alpha Caleb instructed her not to lock you in again."

Marisol didn't budge until she heard the door finally shut. She exhaled loudly, closing her eyes for a few minutes before sitting up and finding her way to the food Lily had brought, her mind now focused on a strategic shift.

Once finished, she decides to return the tray herself. She had no intention of being the victim any longer. Instead, she sought to navigate this unfamiliar territory with a level-headed strategy. She'd observed enough during her time there to know that she needed a different approach if she wanted to survive and find a way out. Understanding their motives and alliances seemed to be the key.

Her thoughts were clear. There was no more futile rage, no more futile pleas. Instead, she would become as cunning as those who had managed to ensnare her. To achieve this, she needed allies, and she needed to unravel the mysteries of Redwood. As she navigated the hallways, she realized that gaining insights into the workings of this pack was crucial for her survival and eventual escape.

The pack members seemed cautious enough around her, avoiding direct conversations or eye contact, except for the stupidly bold trio that she was now sure would steer clear of her. Marisol would use this for her own gain. It would be an opportunity to observe whilst not engaged, to learn their behaviors, their alliances, and their interactions. She would become adept at overhearing conversations to piece together the truths and lies that circulated within Redwood.

Marisol decides that she will find time to scope out the library. Scouring through books and documents would help with learning about the history of Redwood, the complexities of pack dynamics, and seeking any information that might help her understand her predicament better.

The kitchen was empty when Marisol arrived, and she efficiently placed her used plates in the dishwasher. To her surprise, Lily enters just as she is on her way out. Their eyes meet, and Marisol offers a small, friendly smile before continuing on her way.

"Thank you," Lily blurts just as she is about to exit, and Marisol nods in acknowledgment.

"Thanks for letting me use the kitchen, Lily." She replies.

"No problem." Lily shrugs, her tone taking on a lighter note. "It's good to see someone around here who doesn't act like a total brat."

Marisol raised a brow. She was certain that that comment wasn't for her but aimed at someone else. She wondered who.

"Well, I try to be civil." Marisol matched her tone. "By the way, do you know if there is a library here?" she asks leisurely, careful not to raise any form of suspicion.

Lily replies almost immediately. "There's definitely one."

"Can you point me to it then?"

Lily's eyes lit up with enthusiasm as she nodded "Oh, sure. I can take you there. Follow me."

As they strolled through the corridors, Marisol decided to breach a topic that had been lingering on her mind since her arrival. Now that they seemed to be on friendly terms, maybe Lily's reply wouldn't be as stiff. "Do you know why I'm here?" she asks, keeping her tone light.

Lily chews on her lips nervously before looking around as if ensuring no one was eavesdropping on their conversation. She then leaned in, her voice hushed. "I don't know the details, but they brought you here to save our pack. It's some kind of secret mission," she reveals quietly.

Marisol's brows bunch as she digests the information. Sophia had said something along the lines earlier, but she hadn't been level-headed enough to process it. "Save the pack? From what?" she questions, hoping Lily has some insight.

Lily shrugs, her uncertainty evident. "No one knows. It's all very well hidden," she admits.

This only deepened Marisol's intrigue. "Why all the secrecy?" she probes further. However, Lily's demeanor changes abruptly. She grew hesitant and guarded.

"We've all sworn an oath to the Alpha. Can't spill the beans, even to other pack members. It's a rule."

"An oath? What does it entail... if I may ask?"

"Keeping our mouths shut, basically. We're not allowed to reveal certain things. It's serious business." Lily whispers with a decisive nod "Everyone in the packhouse has sworn an oath to the Alpha, bind them to keep certain truths hidden. The pack members do not know."

Marisol's heart skips a beat. That seemed like an important detail to remember, and she was compelled to ask more, but she wouldn't want to risk Lily totally closing up on her again. Lily's revelation had opened a window, but the curtains remained drawn.

As they approached the library, Marisol decided to redirect their conversation. "Thanks for showing me the way," she said appreciatively.

Lily nods and then looks here and there before adding in a whisper, "Be careful in there. Some of the books are... interesting."

Marisol couldn't contain her curiosity as they stepped into the library, surrounded by the rich scent of aged books and the whispers of knowledge. She turns to Lily, her eyes reflecting a hunger for understanding.

"So, Lily," Marisol hums, testing the waters again. "If no one knows the exact details of the mission, how do they expect me to save your pack?"

Lily bites her lip nervously, contemplating how much she could reveal. "I think they believe your presence alone will make a difference. Like you have some unique ability or knowledge that can help us."

Marisol, unsatisfied with the vague explanation, presses further, "But how can I help if I don't even know what the problem is? Don't you find it strange?"

Lily sighs, looking around like a silent thief making his escape once again. "It is strange, but I'm sure the Alpha has his reasons. Maybe there are things he can't share for our own safety."

Marisol nods, absorbing the information. "And why keep it a secret from most of the pack? What are they afraid of?"

Lily sighs, "They're afraid that if too many know, it might leak to our enemies, or someone might betray us."

"But how can you even trust me if you don't even know why I'm here?" Marisol questions, a tinge of frustration in her voice.

Lily looks into Marisol's eyes, a hint of vulnerability showing. "We were told to trust the Alpha's judgment. He's the only one who has seen the whole picture."

Marisol exhales shakily, realizing the complexity of the situation. "I just want to help, Lily. But how can I make a difference if I'm kept in the dark?"

Lily pats Marisol's shoulder, hoping to offer some comfort, albeit hesitant. She is quick to withdraw as she speaks. "I wish I had more answers for you. Maybe if you prove yourself, they'll reveal more. Until then, we'll have to navigate in the shadows."

As they continued to explore the library, Marisol couldn't shake the feeling that the answers she sought were hidden within the dusty pages surrounding her. The desire to uncover the truth intensified.

As the moon hung high in the sky, casting a soft glow through her window, Marisol retired to her room, her mind swirling with newfound information. The library had been a trove of knowledge, offering glimpses into the intricate history of Redwood Pack. Despite the secrecy, she felt a sense of accomplishment in unraveling a fraction of the mystery.

Slipping under the covers, exhaustion weighed heavily upon her. Thoughts raced through her mind, echoing Lily's words about the enigmatic mission bestowed upon her. She was determined to uncover the truth and make sense of her purpose in the pack.

With a sigh, Marisol closes her eyes, the events of the day playing in her mind like an unending reel. She felt fulfilled, sensing she was on the brink of unveiling something significant. Her heart beat with anticipation for the dawn of a new day, eager to continue her quest for understanding.

As sleep began to envelop her, she clung to the glimmer of hope that tomorrow would bring more clarity and answers, pushing her closer to the puzzle she was destined to solve.

Wrapped in the silence of the night, she surrendered to slumber, her dreams tinged with the desire for truth and the determination to fulfill her unforeseen role in the Redwood Pack.