

Chapter 156

By the time Marisol parted ways with Sophia, it was well into the evening. Although she itched to go find Lily and share everything that had happened whilst seeking her input, Marisol headed for the hidden castle instead.

She walked into the hidden castle with a pep in her step, her mind still buzzing from her conversation with Sophia. She was so engrossed in her thoughts that she almost missed the sight of Cedric pacing back and forth in the dimly lit hallway, the man halting his pacing as he caught sight of her.

He turned to regard her with a scowl etched deeply into his features. "Where have you been?" he demanded.

Marisol's smile only grew as she watched Cedric try and fail to contain his agitation. She knew staying silent would only work to annoy him further, but at the same time, she had to admit there was something so thrilling about riling him up. "I've been out." She finally replied, her tone casual, "Out and about, trying to keep up my end of the bargain."

Cedric's jaw clenched visibly, his frustration evident in the tight set of his shoulders. "And you couldn't be bothered to inform me?"

Marisol shrugged nonchalantly, her eyes dancing with mischief. "I didn't realize I needed your permission to do that." she heard Cedric suck in a sharp breath, his eyes shut in an effort to rein in his temper.

"You know damn well that's not what I meant," he growled, his voice low and dangerous.

Marisol's smile only widened at his reaction. She hadn't expected it to be so amusing to push his buttons. Taking a step closer with a teasing glint in her eyes, she muttered, "Well, maybe next time you should try being more specific."

"Are you deaf, or do you simply lack comprehension?"

Marisol pressed her lips together, fighting back a grin as she replied in a lazy drawl. "Again..... no idea what you're talking about."

Cedric's eyes swirled with a hint of gold, locking onto hers with a heated intensity that sends a shiver down her spine. "Do you have any idea how dangerous it is out there?" he snapped, his grip tightening on her arm as he yanked her closer to him "Do you have a death wish?"

Marisol's breath caught in her throat at the sudden proximity, her heart pounding in her chest as she met his intense gaze with her own determined one, "I can take care of myself," she replied defiantly, though the heat radiating from his body was starting to make it difficult to think straight.

Cedric's nostrils flared as his eyes narrowed into deeper slits, his threatening gaze never leaving hers as he looked to search for something in her eyes. "You're playing with fire, Marisol," he warned, his voice low and husky.

A surge of desire shoots through Marisol at the depth of his words, her body responding instinctively to his proximity. She could feel the heat of his breath on her skin, rendering her weak in his hold as she fought to maintain her composure, her knees threatening to give out from beneath her.

But just as quickly as he had pulled her close, Marisol found herself missing his warmth as Cedric let go, stepping back abruptly and putting some distance between them. "Let's go," he muttered gruffly, his tone curt as he turned away and began to walk towards the dining area.

Marisol stood there for a while longer, her heart still racing as she tried to control her breathing. It was at this point that she realized she could no longer escape it. She couldn't deny the effect Cedric had on her, the way he made her pulse race, and her body tingle with desire.

With a shaky breath, she finally followed him to the dining area, her mind still reeling from the intensity of their encounter. The tension between them was too thick to ignore as she took her seat right across from Cedric, reaching for the glass of water beside her and gulping everything down in one go.

When she glanced up, she caught Cedric's eye from across the table, his gaze heavy on her, and she knew one thing was certain now; whatever this was for them, it was only the beginning.

Keeping her eyes glued to the table now, Marisol tried to focus on her food, finding it hard to do so with Cedric's eyes almost boring a hole into her face, making it impossible to concentrate. She shifted uncomfortably in her seat, feeling the weight of his eyes on her like a physical presence, burning into her skin like a branding iron. Each movement she made only seemed to draw his attention, and she found herself growing increasingly flustered under his scrutiny.

As she continued to struggle to eat, Marisol found herself cursing at everything and anything internally, her throat dry and her stomach churning with nerves. Instead of enjoying the taste of the truly delicious-looking food, she ended up downing glass after glass of water instead, in an attempt to quell the rising tension within her. But it all proves futile. Cedric's presence was like a storm brewing, dark and powerful, and she could feel the electricity crackling in the air between them.

After a few moments of tense silence, Marisol decided she couldn't take it anymore. "Are you going to eat, or do you plan to just stare at me through the night?" She deadpans.

Cedric blinked at that, as if snapping out of a trance, and quickly averted his gaze. "Sorry," he mutters, eyes now on his food as he blindly reaches for his cutlery and awkwardly starts poking at his food.

Marisol let out a breath she didn't realize she'd been holding and tried to go back to her food. But awkwardness lingers between them now, filling the air with palpable tension.

Marisol tried to ignore it, but it became so suffocating that she breathed out a heavy sigh, glancing up to find Cedric still poking at his food, his brows furrowed as if deep in thought. "Is something wrong with your food?" she finally gets out, unable to bear the stiff silence for a second longer.

Cedric's eyes snapped up at that, his expression caught somewhere between surprise and irritation. "No, it's fine," he replied curtly, before pushing his plate away with a sigh, looking towards the door and back at the table as if contemplating.

Marisol frowned, now convinced that there was something more going on beneath the surface. She wanted to push him for answers, to break through the walls he had erected around him, but she held back, not wanting to push him too far.

Instead, she changed her approach, deciding to engage him in conversation. "So, where did you disappear during the day?" she asked, making a show of being engrossed in her food even though she desperately prayed and hoped he would take the bait and not go ahead with his obvious plans of leaving.

Cedric looked surprised by her question, his posture relaxing slightly as he crossed his arms over his chest, chin raising as he asked, "Did you come looking for me?"

Marisol's lips pulled into a smirk, "What do you think?" she replied coyly.

Cedric shrugged, a small smile tugging at the corners of his own lips. "I was at a meeting with the council," he admitted, his expression growing more serious as he continued, "They're considering reinstating me as Alpha, but I declined. I know I'm not stable enough to go back to that yet, and I suspect there are spies among the Council members."

Marisol nodded in understanding, absorbing his words. It made sense that there would be those who sought to undermine him, especially given the recent turmoil within the pack. "It's probably for the best," she remarks "We need time to figure you out."

Cedric nodded in agreement and picked up his fork again, Marisol did a small victory dance on her head before Cedric's ears perked up in realization, and he raised his eyes to meet hers before asking quietly. "We?"

Marisol resisted the urge to roll her eyes, "Yes, we. I just told you I was out and about, didn't I? You've been going on and on about keeping our end of the bargain. Are you backing out now?" Marisol watched as his nose scrunched up as he smiled, shaking his head in reply to her words.

She knew she had accepted the offer to help each other out on a whim, but she'd never expected it would mean watching Cedric let out a genuine smile, albeit hidden. She also hadn't expected him to be so candid about his dealings with the council.

So, ignoring the way the tug of his lips tugged at her heart, Marisol swung back into conversation mode. "And spies?" she asked, "What about that?"

Cedric nodded, humming. "Yes, spies. They're everywhere, watching our every move and relating it back to Guinevere."

Marisol made a small noise of understanding, but it looked like Cedric missed that as he took a mouthful of food, causing her mouth to water, her body attuned to him. For some reason, Marisol finds herself staring at his plate, wanting a taste of that instead, and maybe him. And did he do something with his hair, or had it always looked this good?

Cedric ended up catching her staring, an amused laughter bubbling out of his throat, "Do you get it now?"

Marisol felt her heart lurch, heat creeping up her cheek as she averted her gaze, stuttering out a small "What?"

"Do you still doubt the authenticity of our bond?" He teased, tone light. "I mean, if this wasn't real, wouldn't it have worn out by now?"

Immediately, Marisol jumped to her feet. Her cheeks flamed hot. "I should get going," she said, not waiting for a reply as she hurried away.

She heard boisterous laughter from behind her as Cedric called, "You're not even done eating!"

Marisol does not reply. All she knew was that she needed to be far from him before she did something stupid.

In the next few days, the dynamic between Marisol and Cedric undergoes a dramatic shift, one that Marisol finds increasingly difficult to ignore.

The suppressed sexual tension that had always simmered beneath the surface between them now resurfaced with a vengeance. Every interaction, every glance, every touch, seemed charged with an intensity that left Marisol feeling breathless and unnerved. She struggled to conceal the turmoil raging within her, loathing herself for the way her body responded to Cedric's presence.

Lingering stares evolved into deliberate, lingering touches, each contact sending a jolt of electricity through Marisol's veins. It was as if every brush of his skin against hers ignited a fire within her, one that burned so deliciously, leaving her yearning for more.

It was in the library one evening that their newfound dynamic reached a breaking point. Marisol had been engrossed in a book, successfully finding something to distract her from the thought of Cedric even for a while, but Marisol should've known a moment of quiet without her every nerve ending and brain cell chanting Cedric's name was too good to be true.

As if summoned, Cedric strolled into the library just about half an hour later. As soon as he entered, Marisol's heart leaped in her chest, her body immediately thrumming with anticipation.

She shut her eyes and tried to ignore his presence, now glaring at the book in her hand as she tried to return her focus to it, but her body wanted the exact opposite of that. She cursed at Cedric internally for not understanding the effects of his actions on second thought. Maybe he did, that bastard.

Suddenly, Cedric was leaning over her, caging Marisol's body between the table and his as his warm breath ghosted over her neck, goosebumps breaking over the length of it as he peered down at the book in her hand, seemingly oblivious to Marisol's inner turmoil as he rumbled quietly in her ear, "What are you reading?"

A violent shiver ran down the length of Marisol's spine, her pulse quickening in tandem as her mind struggled to catch on. Brain fogged with desire, Marisol managed a reply, but all that came out was a jumble of syllables that Marisol herself could make no sense of.

Cedric chuckled softly at the reaction, the sound sending a thrill through Marisol's body, and seemed to take a whiff of her scent directly from her scent gland there before lowly, almost teasingly, he lifted a finger and began to trace patterns on her neck with his fingertips, sending shivers of pleasure coursing through her.

Marisol's breath hitched at his touch, sighing in contentment as her body instinctively relaxed into him. Her eyes fell shut, lost in the sensation of his gentle caresses.

Cedric leaned in closer, giving in to his own desire as he let his lips brush against her skin before leaving a single gentle kiss there. He heard Marisol sigh, the sound heavy and then her teeth sink into the plush flesh of her lower lip, the soft pressure of his lips against her flesh threatening to rip the most embarrassing sounds out of her throat.

She'd been doing a good job stifling any sounds as Cedric continued with his ministrations until she felt his teeth graze the skin lightly, a soft moan leaving her lips as he nipped her skin, a surge of arousal coursing through her veins and Cedric responded with a low growl of his own, the sound doubling Marisol's excitement as she leaned even further into him.

Marisol completely gave in, allowing herself to surrender to the overwhelming rush of sensation, her thoughts vanishing by the intoxicating allure of Cedric's touch. Her body trembled with desire as Cedric grew bolder and explored more and more of her skin, leaving his marks on them as he went and this time, a loud wanton moan was ripped out of Marisol's throat.

Like the sound of a bell ripping him out of a hypnosis, that seemed to bring Cedric back to his senses. He pulled away like he'd just been burned by a raging fire and, just like that, Marisol was left in a daze, watching him walk out of the library in hurried steps, all of her senses protesting at the loss.

She stared at his receding back until it disappeared completely, her heart beating erratically against her chest as she struggled to make sense of what had just transpired.

Her body was still thrumming with the echoes of their encounter. As she struggled to regain her composure, Marisol couldn't shake the overwhelming sense of longing that consumed her, leaving her yearning for more of Cedric's touch and contemplating running after him.

She found herself cursing at Cedric again, but this time for an entirely different reason, as she sat there frustrated and unable to do anything else. Why'd he start something he wasn't going to finish?

After about an hour of nothing, she angrily stomped out of the hidden castle. She needed to put some distance between them and clear her head. It was already annoying that her body willingly succumbed to him, but finding out that she wanted him just as much scared her.

With every step she took away from the hidden castle, Marisol reminded herself that she shouldn't want this. Maybe just maybe she would talk sense into him.