

Chapter 157

In the next few days, Marisol discovered her resolve to be so much weaker than she might've expected, although, at this point, she should've expected it to be so, because nothing ever seemed to go the logical way when it came to Cedric.

For what felt like the nth time since their first encounter, Marisol had resolved to keep her distance from Cedric, believing it to be the best course of action to maintain her sanity.

Yet, to her dismay, she soon realized that the mere thought of his continuous absence left her feeling hollow and incomplete. Despite her best efforts to avoid him, Marisol found herself inexplicably drawn to him, seeking solace in his company even amidst the chaos that surrounded them.

There was a sense of comfort in the moments they spent together, even if they were often marked by silence. Whether they were sitting side by side or simply sharing the same space, Marisol found herself feeling at ease in Cedric's company.

Another thing she couldn't ignore was the once subtle changes in Cedric's behavior that started growing apparent with time. He had become increasingly restless, his demeanor shifting from calm and collected to agitated and volatile. There was a palpable tension in the air whenever he was around, a sense of unease that seemed to permeate every interaction.

Cedric's possessiveness and protectiveness began to border on obsession. He seemed to constantly hover around her, refusing to let her out of his sight even for a moment.

At first, Marisol had found his attentiveness endearing, but as time went on, she couldn't shake the feeling that something was amiss, that Cedric's behavior was driven by something far more sinister than mere affection. It was as if he was teetering on the edge of losing control, and Marisol feared what that could mean for both of them.

In the past few weeks, since they'd started staying together, it was quite noticeable that he had been able to maintain control over his wolf form. He hardly transformed anymore, and even when he did, he was in control.

But now, Cedric's transformations have become more frequent and unpredictable. Now, even the slightest provocation could trigger a shift. It was as if his curse was tightening its grip on him, pulling him further into the depths of his primal instincts.

Marisol grew extremely worried about Cedric's well-being, and it was during that time that she noticed the increasing jumpiness of her own wolf, along with a noticeable shift in the atmosphere within the pack.

It belatedly occurred to her that a full moon was around the corner. Rumors began to spread within the pack. Pack members had witnessed firsthand the devastation Cedric could unleash when his wolf took control, and they were rightfully wary of what was to come.

While the full moon reduced every single werewolf to their savage form, Marisol realized that it would be much worse for Cedric. If it amplified the darkness that already lurked within him, that would be the same as driving him to the brink of madness.

As much as the realization filled Marisol with a sense of dread, a part of her relaxed at the explanation it provided for his sudden possessiveness.

As the days drew nearer, the apprehension and concern from those closer to Marisol increased, every one of them warning her to stay away from Cedric. Sophia and Lily especially tried to pry her away from him because they didn't think anyone would survive it.

Sophia was more concerned about the fact that if anything happened to her, the prophecy would be lost. Lily, on the other hand, begged her to stay away for Cedric's sake. She believed that if he lost control and harmed Marisol, he wouldn't forgive him, and that would make things worse for everyone.

Naturally, Marisol felt anxiety and fear settle heavily in her guts, but no matter how much she thought about it, she couldn't bring herself to abandon Cedric, especially at such a crucial time. The connection she had with him was a deep-seated one, after all, one that transcended logic and reason. No matter the danger or uncertainty that lay ahead, Marisol was determined to stick by his side. So far, he had displayed a level of self-control that would make it unfair to judge him so quickly.

The day of the full moon finally descended upon Redwood, casting an eerie glow over the landscape as the sun dipped below the horizon. While the rest of the pack sought refuge within the safety of their homes, Marisol remained in the hidden castle, stubbornly following Cedric everywhere he went.

As evening descended, Cedric's restlessness intensified, his movements becoming erratic as he started to pace back and forth, seeking some sort of relief from the violent energy that had no doubt begun to take form in his veins.

Marisol watched him from the distance he'd put between them, apprehensive. The moon called to her too, but not in the same way it called Cedric. Seeing him like this made her heartache.

The darker it got, the worse Cedric became. His agitation finally reached a fever pitch, and he turned to Marisol with a wild look in his eyes. The moon had begun to travel across the sky, and just before it reached its peak, he shouted at Marisol.

"Leave now. You have to go!" There was a sense of urgency in his words, the veins in his neck growing more prominent as he struggled to stay in control.

Marisol felt another pang in her heart, but she did not let it show. Instead, she scoffed, rolling her eyes dismissively. "The last time I checked, I spent my nights here. I'm not going anywhere."

Cedric growled in frustration, his eyes flashing with a mixture of anger and desperation. "You don't understand!" he snarled before his voice softened, his next words almost a please, "I can't control it. I don't want to hurt you."

Marisol felt another tug at her heart, but she simply shrugged and sank even further into her seat. She was going to make sure they got through this together.

"Are you deaf!" He bellowed, following her lack of a reaction, "I can't control myself when I'm like this. I don't want to do something I'll regret, you cannot stop what's coming. Forget the prophecy and our mate bond for now. Just..... get to safety for Goddess's sake!"

"I trust you, Cedric," Marisol answered this time, her voice soft yet resolute. "I know that you would never intentionally harm me. I promised to stay by your side and help set you free. I intend to keep that promise." As she took a step closer at the end of her words, Cedric seemed to lose it. Stretching a hand forward as if to keep her away, he let out a painful cry, both hands holding onto his head as he doubled over.

"STOP MARISOL, STAY BACK!" He yelled just as he began to transform. His agonized yell as his features began to contort and twist had Marisol's own features down-turned, his pain so palpable it forced her to remain rooted in place.

"Get out!" Those were the last words he managed to utter before his transformation was complete.

Marisol watched in awe and trepidation as Cedric's human form gave way to that of the beast, his muscles rippling beneath his fur as he let out a primal roar that echoed through the walls of the hidden castle.

His enormous red wolf emerged and let out an earth-shattering howl, causing Marisol's heart to thunder in her chest as she faced the beast before her, her gaze unwavering. She remembered the subtle warnings Cedric had given her. His wolf hated weaklings.

"Don't be afraid." She muttered to herself, a shaky breath leaving her lips as she stood firm in its presence.

Everything about that moment reminded her of her nightmares, and Marisol searched herself for the onslaught, ready to face whatever trials awaited her. But to her surprise, instead of lashing out in a frenzied rage, Cedric's wolf seemed almost... hesitant as it stared back at her, red eyes narrowed as it seemed to study the figure before it.

After a while of prolonged silence, with the exception of its ragged breathing filling the space, it cocked its head as if pondering. And then slowly, with steps that seemed almost tentative, it approached Marisol and let out a snarl when it stopped in front of her.

"Hi, nice to meet you again," Marisol answered, a wave of relief washing over her as she tried to suppress her mirth.

For a moment, there was hesitation until a flicker of recognition flashed in its eyes, a spark of humanity that shone through the primal instincts that drove him. And at that moment, Marisol knew that she had made the right choice in staying by his side.

With a loud huff, it took a step away, looking from her to the door that led to the hallways and outside the hidden castle.

"Nope." Marisol refused, popping the wolf to stare at her. "We're staying indoors today," she said, gaining its attention.

It let out a snort and began prowling around the room.

Marisol took the chance to try to shut the door. However, Cedric's wolf seemed to have interpreted it differently as it growled and lunged at her.

She barely escaped its heavy weight, and immediately, Marisol sprang into action, her instincts kicking in as she danced gracefully out of reach. She led it on a wild chase, dodging and weaving through the corridors of the hidden castle as she led the wild wolf through its labyrinthine halls.

Despite the danger that lurked at every turn, Marisol found herself laughing in exhilaration as Cedric's wolf pursued her with relentless determination, its primal instincts driving him to pursue her with a single-minded focus.

As she danced and dodged around Cedric's wolf form with the grace and agility of a seasoned hunter, Marisol found herself filled with a sense of exhilaration and freedom, her laughter ringing through the halls of the hidden castle. It felt so good as she evaded his every move and matched her wits with the fearsome beast after her.

And as the night wore on and the moon began to wane, Marisol knew that she had succeeded in her mission.

The haze cleared out, and suddenly the wolf pulled to a halt, shaking its head once, twice, until the movements grew frantic and then, the snapping of bones filled the air as Cedric began to shift back to his human form.

Back to his senses and now in human form, Cedric found Marisol sprawled across his throne, and a whirlwind of emotions stormed within him. Admiration warred with anger as he held her reckless actions. What had possessed her to risk her life in such a foolhardy manner?

How could she simply overlook the dangers surrounding the situation she placed herself in? It was a bold move, bordering more on reckless, and Cedric felt caught between getting upset and relaying his genuine appreciation. Marisol had saved him. She had saved Redwood.

"What were you thinking?" he demanded, as he approached. "Do you have any idea how dangerous that was? You could have been seriously hurt."

Marisol chuckled softly, exhaustion evident in the weary lines of her face. "I'm fine, Cedric," she assured him, her voice barely above a whisper. "Not a single scratch. And I told you, I wasn't just going to leave you alone."

Her words pierced through the haze of his anger, stirring something deep within him. Despite his frustration, he couldn't deny the warmth that flooded his chest at her simple declaration, and just like that, Cedric's feet began to move without so much as a thought.

Gently, he lifted Marisol from the throne, cradling her tired form against his chest. Marisol just lets him, even humming in content. The feel of her in his arms sent a jolt of electricity through him, igniting a fire that blazed to life with every beat of his heart.

"And I'm supposed to be the crazy one." He murmured against her neck.

She shivered in his arms as laughter bubbled out of her throat, "I'm glad to have proven everyone wrong." She retorted tiredly and unable to resist the pull of her presence any longer, Cedric finally threw caution out of the window as he leaned down and pressed his lips against hers in a tender kiss. The fire that'd ignited within him the second he regained consciousness to find Marisol in the throne room, raging wildly at the contact, the walls he'd convinced himself to have set up crumbling down to nothing.

He was hungry and hungry for her. The kiss deepened, igniting a passion that burned hot and fierce between them. Marisol's soft moans mingled with Cedric's low growls as they succumbed to the irresistible pull of desire, their bodies pressed together in a passionate embrace.

His wolf was on the edge. It needed her. It needed to make Marisol his. Her hands drove into his hair, fingers tugging desperately at the loose strands as she kissed him back with fervor. Before he could stop himself, Cedric pushed her onto the throne, pressing his arousal against her.

She gasped and writhed, fingers reaching until they found Cedric and pulled him until their lips met again. Marisol's lips were the sweetest thing he had ever tasted. Yet he wanted more. He wanted to make them one.

"Fuck," he growled as he felt his wolf taking over.

Fear clasped his breath. He knew that if he let his wolf win, there would be no going back. He was going to mark her tonight no matter what.

Cedric's mind was a jumbled up mess at this point and Marisol was definitely not being of any help, her sinful lips teasing as she ground against his bulge.

But just as the flames threatened to consume them both, Cedric forced himself to pull back, his chest heaving with the effort of restraint.

Marisol let out an annoyed growl and reached for him again, but Cedric was faster and avoided her seeking fingers. When she looked up to glare at him, her eyes were with the telltale signs of her wolf's presence.

Swallowing thickly, Cedric shook his head, "We can't." He croaked out, "Not like this."

Marisol's eyes widened in both sadness and confusion, her breath coming in short, ragged gasps. ".....What? Why?"

Cedric hesitated, his heart warring with his mind as he struggled to find the words to explain. "I... I can't," he whispered, his voice barely audible above the pounding of his heart. "I can't risk it."

"Risk what?" Marisol finally cried out in frustration.

Now, Cedric pulled away completely, the weight of the loss is evident in Marisol's eyes as they glosed over, not owing to the arousal, this time. "You can not change me, Marisol!" He growled stiffly, "Stop being delusional. We can never be. We are not mates."

With that, he turned around and Marisol watched him leave once again, his words weighing like a thousand rocks on her heart.

As Cedric disappeared into the shadows, Marisol's body drained of any fight as she sank to her knees, tears streaming down her cheeks as she grappled with the whirlwind of emotions raging within her. She had felt the intensity of their connection at that moment, the undeniable truth of their bond burning bright between them, and then he'd throw her words back at her.

It hurt so badly, and as she sat alone in the empty throne room, she couldn't help but wonder if their love was doomed to be nothing more than a fleeting dream.