

Chapter 159

Cedric knew that he was lying to himself and pretending, but he deemed it necessary to sever his connection with Marisol.

He convinced himself that he was doing it for her. Ever since Marisol had arrived at Redwood, she'd had every and all of her decisions made for her and Cedric did not want to be a part of that any more than he already was.

He'd heard the longing and desperation in her voice when she told him that she wanted to go home more than anything. He couldn't be so selfish as to take the possibility of that away from her entirely. If they mated, Marisol would have to remain in Redwood with him. She would set him free but remain trapped. He couldn't do that to her.

So far, he had lost everything he loved to Guinevere, and he couldn't stand to lose Marisol too. Deep inside, he was scared that the moment he claimed her, he would lose her too.

Despite knowing all this, and being convinced that he was doing a good job keeping her away, Cedric was going crazy without her. When she stopped coming to the hidden castle, Cedric almost felt the last threads of his sanity snap and, on impulse, he'd demanded that Caleb ready the room next to hers for him, saying that would guarantee her better security, seeing as Caleb hadn't done anything right and couldn't be trusted with Marisol's safety.

He tried to tell himself that he was doing it because Marisol was an instrument in breaking his curse and deserved to be protected.

Cedric is ashamed to admit the fact that he began following her everywhere, trailing behind her despite having told her just a while ago that he wouldn't deprive her of her privacy and freedom. Fortunately, she spent most of her time indoors, sulking, if her sour scent was anything to go by, so he didn't have to worry about her safety much.

However, that afternoon, he'd returned from a meeting with the council to find Marisol missing. He hadn't noticed it immediately because he'd been worn out from hours of arguing with the council members. They were increasingly dogged in their bid to reinstate him as Alpha, cemented in their ridiculous belief that he'd been set free from the curse because he'd been in human form for a while now. They deemed him stable enough.

What they didn't know and refused to believe was that anytime he was away from Marisol for too long, he could hear the darkness calling to him. Marisol was like the light to his darkness. An anchor that kept him grounded, and without it, chaos and destruction was all he knew.

So, when he lay on the bed after a long relaxing shower and took a deep whiff of the air, hoping to find solace in the hints of her scent in the air, he found it odd that it felt fleeting.... Out of reach.

Startled, Cedric sprang to his feet and walked to the wall that separated their rooms, taking a sniff there too. When he found it to be the same, his heart rate spiked. Not wanting to panic immediately, a part of Cedric told him that she might've been asleep, causing her scent to dull, but the other argued that she wasn't there at all.

He pondered going to her room to ensure that she was there but realized that if she was truly there and had just been napping, he would expose himself, but after a few more minutes of pacing aimlessly around the room with Marisol's scent thin in the air, Cedric decided that he did not care anymore.

He was tired of pretending like she wasn't the only thing keeping him sane. He stomped out of the room and ever so gently, he knocked at her door. There was no reply and as the seconds passed, Cedric felt his patience waning. After knocking for a while and getting no response, Cedric considered just breaking down the door, now more agitated than anything, but just then, Sophia passed by, giving him a knowing look.

"Where's she?" He growled a fleeting thought that his brother and his mate might've had a hand in her disappearance passing his mind.

Sophia flinched slightly before replying, "Last time I saw her, she was heading to the training ground."

Cedric doesn't wait for her to complete her sentence before bolting off in the direction of the training ground.

He let out a relieved sigh when he got there just in time to see Marisol bidding farewell to Lily and her friends. She looked fine and well, fortunately, and it looked like he'd worried for no reason. She was safe. Now in a more relaxed headspace, he studied his surroundings a little better and found irritation bubbling beneath his skin on sighting Ryan. His wolf did not like the male at all because it noticed a flicker of interest in his eyes. However, he dismissed the feelings in favor of keeping his full attention on Marisol.

As they parted ways, he expected Marisol to head back to the pack house, but to his utter surprise, she headed towards the forest. Alone. A growl rumbled within him as he resumed trailing her.

As she walked deeper and deeper into the woods, his annoyance multiplied. In the shadowy depths of the forest, Cedric moved with the stealth of a predator, his senses honed to the slightest disturbance in the air. He trailed Marisol from a safe distance, his gaze never wavering from her form as she moved gracefully through the underbrush. It was a familiar routine, one he had grown accustomed to in recent days, as he silently shadowed her every step.

He was seconds from revealing himself and barking some sense into her when she didn't seem to be stopping despite being well away from the pack grounds now when he noticed movements from a corner of his eyes.

He paused. His senses sharpened at the realization that danger was lurking under the cover of the night. Rogues. They'd somehow managed to slither their way into Redwood, and they were all under Guinevere's influence.

Marisol seemed to have noticed the danger after Cedric had zoned out too and looked to have been retracing her steps when they began to filter out of their hiding spaces, surrounding her.

He tensed instinctively, his muscles coiling with anticipation as he prepared for whatever threat might lie ahead. And then, without warning, they attacked.

A group of rogue wolves, aligned with Guinevere and her coven, emerged from the shadows, their snarls echoing through the night as they lunged at Marisol. Cedric only watched for no less than a second before he sprang into action, launching himself into the fray to protect her.

Marisol, however, was no damsel in distress. She met the attackers head-on, her movements fluid and precise as she danced through the chaos with a deadly grace. Cedric couldn't help but be impressed by her skill and prowess in combat.

She fought with a ferocity and determination that left him in an almost distracting awe, each strike delivered with unerring accuracy as she defended herself against the onslaught of foes.

She proved to be a formidable adversary in her own right. Despite being outnumbered and outmatched, she refused to back down, her eyes blazing with a fiery resolve that matched Cedric's own. With every strike and parry, she demonstrated a mastery of the martial arts that left Cedric more in awe.

Together, they were a formidable team, their movements synchronized as they battled the rogue wolves with unmatched efficiency. Cedric tore through their ranks with brute force, his muscles rippling with power as he dispatched one adversary after another. Meanwhile, Marisol moved with a finesse and agility that belied her strength, her blows landing with devastating precision as she struck down her foes with ruthless efficiency.

Cedric's claws went through flesh and bone with savage ferocity, while Marisol's fists flew like lightning, delivering punishing blows that left their foes reeling in agony.

Despite the chaos and carnage that surrounded them, Cedric couldn't help but feel a sense of exhilaration coursing through his veins. There was something primal and intoxicating about the heat of battle, a raw intensity that bonded them together in ways words could never express.

As the last of the rogue wolves fell beneath their combined onslaught, Cedric and Marisol stood victorious amidst the wreckage, their chests heaving with exertion and adrenaline coursing through their veins. For a moment, they simply stared at each other, the unspoken connection between them pulsating with undeniable intensity.

At that moment, Cedric knew that he would do anything to protect Marisol, to keep her safe from harm for as long as he drew breath. He silently vowed to never let her go, to stand by her side through whatever trials and tribulations lay ahead.

And then, without a word, Cedric reached out to her, his hand extended in silent invitation. Marisol looked hesitant for a moment, her gaze locked with his in a silent exchange of understanding and acceptance. And then, with a nod of her head, she took his hand, allowing him to pull her close in a fierce embrace.

He pulled away just a little to look at her, his beautiful mate with her hazel blue eyes and unmatched strength. She'd fought better than any wolf in the whole of Redwood. And he knew that skills like that could only come from years of training.

As Cedric gazed at Marisol, his eyes alight with pride and admiration, he couldn't help but let his feelings spill forth. "Marisol," he began, still a little breathless, "I've never seen anyone fight like that before. You were incredible out there. Like a true queen."

Marisol scowled at him and then, as if a switch had been flipped in her brain, she leaped away from his grasp.

"I don't need your patronage, Cedric," she retorted sharply, her tone cutting through the air like a knife. "I'd told you time and again that I can take care of myself just fine."

Cedric could not bring himself to be anything but amused, his smirk growing as he watched her bristle with indignation, "Oh, but you were magnificent out there, my Queen," he teased, watching as she rolled her eyes, scowl deepening as she turned around and started to walk away. But Cedric was relentless in his pursuit, his footsteps echoing hers as he trailed her through the forest.

"Stop following me, Cedric," she snapped, her patience wearing thin as she glanced back at him over her shoulder. "I don't need you hovering over me like some unpaid bodyguard."

But Cedric paid no heed to her, only chuckling, the sound rich and melodious as it washed over her. "Can't help it, love," he quipped, his voice low and teasing. "You look positively radiant when you're angry."

"I said stop following me! Go away!"

Cedric does the exact opposite, unfazed. He matched her stride for stride, unwilling to let her slip away so easily. "I'm not going anywhere, Marisol."

Marisol shot him a withering glare over her shoulder, her frustration palpable in the set of her jaw. "Stop following me, Cedric," she repeated, "I can take care of myself."

Cedric chuckled softly, "You know, for someone who can take care of herself, you sure know how to get into trouble."

With an exasperated huff, Marisol decided to just ignore him, her steps quickening in an attempt to put some more distance between them. Her heart pounded in her chest as she felt Cedric's presence looming closer behind her. She was determined to put some distance between them, to assert her independence and prove that she didn't need him to watch over her every move.

She ended up breaking into a sprint, running deeper into the forest. In a flash, Cedric caught up to her, Marisol's breath was knocked out of her chest as strong arms wrapped around her waist and pinned her against the nearest tree, all in the blink of an eye. Marisol gasped in surprise at the suddenness of his actions, her heart pounding in her chest as she found herself trapped, unable to move even if she wanted to.

All her protests melted away in an instant. His touch was electrifying, sending shivers down her spine as she gazed up at him with wide eyes, Cedric's own eyes growing impossibly soft.

"I missed you," he murmured into the space between their faces, his breath hot against her skin as he leaned in closer, his lips hovering just inches from hers. "I missed youso much."

And in that moment, all her resolve crumbled, replaced by a fierce longing that consumed her from within.

Their eyes locked in a heated gaze, the tension between them crackling with an intensity that was impossible to ignore. And then, in one swift motion, Cedric closed the distance between them, his lips crashing down on hers in a fervent kiss.

The world around them seemed to fade away as they lost themselves in each other, their bodies pressed together in a desperate embrace. At that moment, nothing else mattered but the fiery passion that consumed them both, igniting a flame that burned brighter than any they had ever known.

As their lips moved hungrily against each other's, Cedric's hands grew bolder and began to roam, tracing the curves of her body with a reverence that bordered on worship. Marisol responded in kind, her fingers tangling in his hair as she pulled him closer, their desire spiraling out of control.

In no time, their kisses grew more urgent, more frenzied, as they gave in to the overwhelming need that consumed them both. Clothes were discarded in a flurry of movement, forgotten in their haste to be closer, to feel more, to lose themselves completely in the heat of the moment.

Cedric's hands roamed eagerly over Marisol's body, teasing her breasts. She was the most exquisite being he'd encountered. Marisol moaned softly against his lips, her body arching against his as she surrendered herself to the overwhelming desire that pulsed between them. Cedric's touch felt like fire against her skin, searing her with a delicious heat that left her breathless with longing.

With a swift movement, Cedric lifted Marisol off her feet, pressing her back against the rough bark of the tree as he ravished her with hungry kisses. Their bodies pressed together in a primal embrace, each touch setting their skin ablaze with aching need.

Marisol's hands tangled in Cedric's hair, pulling him closer as she urged him on with desperate whispers of longing. Cedric responded with equal fervor, his hands roaming boldly over her curves as he sought to possess every inch of her. Her legs wrapped around his waist and she grinded into him. Gasping as the cool night air caressed her exposed skin, her body hummed with anticipation as Cedric's lips trailed fiery kisses along her neck and shoulders.

With a low growl of longing, he pressed himself against her, his hips grinding against hers as they lost themselves in the throes of ecstasy.

"Oh Cedric," She cried, pressing herself against him such that not even air could pass between their bodies.

He moved them to the floor, his mouth abandoning hers for her breasts.

Marisol writhed beneath him in pleasure, crying out his name in careless abandon.

Grunting, he spread her thighs apart and teased her sex with his fingers. She shivered, her body threatening to curl in on itself, but Cedric held her down, the easy display of strength sending an even more violent shiver down her spine.

"So perfect," he purred, fingertips trailing down the length of her body, "so beautiful."

He fed his eyes for a while longer, wanting to take her in for as long as time would allow, but the need overwhelmed him. In a frenzy of need, he thrust into her, joining them together, their bodies moving as one in a primal rhythm of desire. Each thrust sent waves of pleasure crashing over them, their cries of passion echoing through the still night air as they soared to new heights of ecstasy.

At once, their wolves took over. Cedric stroked harder as he nipped her in several places, drawing blood as he marked her. In response, her claws dug into his flesh, automatically sealing their mate bond.

As they reached the pinnacle of their passion, Cedric and Marisol clung to each other with desperate fervor, their bodies trembling with the intensity of their release.