

## Chapter 166

The atmosphere in Leticia's room was heavy with tension as Marisol, Nicole, and Leticia sat in a circle, each lost in their own thoughts. The recent attack by Dark Moon had shaken Leticia up and even briefly had her questioning her alliance with the werewolves.

She'd barely survived that day; Nicole had been so angry that she'd almost snapped her neck in half and there was nothing she could do about it. Her powers were nothing compared to the witch bane's.

It'd been so surreal, the thought of her life flashing right in front of her eyes despite having spent most of it mastering protective spells, still sent shivers down her spine. Now, sitting in a circle with a witch bane and an all-powerful hybrid, Leticia couldn't help the apprehension she felt. They could end her life here and now if they wanted after all.

Yet, she forced her nerves down, steeling herself. She'd offered to help the hybrid witch better understand her own powers, and she wouldn't back down now.

Marisol shifted uncomfortably, a sense of responsibility weighing heavy on her shoulders. She knew that she needed to learn more about her powers if she was going to stand a chance against Guinevere and her forces, but the thought of delving deeper into the world of witchcraft filled her with a whirlpool of emotions, excitement and apprehension, taking the most of it.

"Leticia. I promise, I'm in a better headspace now, and I won't try to attack you. I was furious back then and rightfully so, but I understand now." Nicole finally broke the tense silence, and Leticia responded with a shrug.

She could not let them sense her fear, although it was with a sense of dread that Leticia realised that they could probably read her like an open book, owing to their powers.

"I understand, I would do worse if I were in your shoes."

Marisol glanced between both women. It was obvious that neither of them trusted the other, atleast not yet. Leticia was doing a good job at hiding her fear and the embarrassment she'd felt at being unable to save herself during the attack. And Nicole, well, she was trying, but Marisol was sure it wouldn't come so easy given their history.

"Good to know, so where do we start from." Nicole quipped, clapping her hands together, and Leticia finally seemed to loosen up a little.

"She needs to start with the basics," she answered, keeping her voice calm and steady. "We'll begin with practicing simple spells to gauge her abilities and understand how much she can handle."

Marisol nodded eagerly, grateful for Leticia's guidance. She knew that she had a long way to go before she could fully harness her powers, but she was thankful for Leticia's help and determined to learn as much as she could.

Nicole also nodded in understanding, her brows furrowed in concentration. "Is there anything I can do to help?" she asks, her voice betraying the slightest hint of anxiety.

Leticia looked to consider it for a moment before she shook her head. "I'm afraid not, Nicole," she answered quietly, "In fact, if we want Marisol to progress quickly, it would be best if you left her alone to focus on her training."

Nicole's face fell at that, disappointment evident in her features.

Leticia chuckled, visibly relaxed at the fact that this was a topic where she was the most knowledgeable. "Oh, don't worry." She dismissed with a wave of her hand, "I would even have to let her be at a point. She can only get to her peak alone."

Nicole nodded in agreement. She had always been fiercely protective of her daughter, and the thought of leaving her alone in such precarious times filled her with unease. But she knew that Leticia was right, Marisol needed space to grow and learn at her own pace.

With a heavy sigh, Nicole rose from her seat, leaving a reassuring pat on Marisol's back. "I'll be waiting for you outside," she said softly, a hint of sadness in her voice, "Don't hesitate to call if you need anything."

Marisol hummed, offering her mother a grateful smile. Despite the uncertainty that lingered in the air, she knew that Nicole's love and support would always be a constant and her guiding light.

When the door finally shut behind Nicole, Marisol turned her attention back to Leticia, a newfound determination burning in her eyes. She was ready to embrace her destiny, whatever it may hold.

She raised a questioning brow when she found Leticia regarding her with a thoughtful expression.

"So, where do we start?" Marisol asked, her voice tinged with anticipation.

Leticia's expression switched immediately, a wide smile brightening her features at Marisol's eagerness. "We'll start with something simple," she said, reaching for a small, intricately carved wooden box on the table beside her. With a flick of her wrist, the lid creaked open to reveal an assortment of herbs, crystals, and other mystical objects.

"These are the tools of our trade," Leticia explained, gesturing towards the contents of the box. "We'll use them to channel your innate energy and guide you in harnessing your powers."

Marisol nodded. The once dull thrum of excitement she felt humming louder now. With wide eyes, she leaned forward, eager to learn, "What's first then?"

With a smile that could almost be translated as fond, Leticia selected a small, glowing crystal from the box and held it out to Marisol. "This is a focusing crystal," she explained, "It will help you concentrate your energy and channel it into your spells."

Marisol took the crystal in her hand, marveling at its radiant glow. She closed her eyes and took a deep breath, focusing her thoughts on the crystal's energy.

"Now, I want you to try and conjure a small flame," Leticia instructed, her voice calm and reassuring.

Marisol nodded, visualizing a tiny flame behind her shut lids. She began to chant the incantation Leticia had taught her, her voice a soft whisper against the crystal held in front of her lips.

To her surprise and delight, a small flicker of flame appeared above the crystal, glowing softly in the dimly lit room. Marisol's eyes widened in astonishment as she realized she had successfully conjured her first spell.

Leticia beamed with pride, her eyes sparkling with approval. "Well done, Marisol," she praised her. "You have a natural talent for magic."

Marisol felt a surge of satisfaction and excitement coursing through her veins, now a little more confident in her own abilities. There's a childlike wonder in her eyes as she presses Leticia for more, the witch agreeing with a pleased smile.

As the hours passed, Marisol and Leticia delved deeper into the mysteries of magic, exploring spells and incantations that ranged from simple charms to more complex rituals. With each new discovery, Marisol's confidence grew, and she began to embrace her role as a witch with renewed vigor.

By the time their session came to an end, Marisol felt exhilarated and empowered, ready to face whatever challenges lay ahead. She thanked Leticia profusely for her guidance, knowing that she had found a mentor and friend in the wise witch.

There's a newfound certainty pulsing through Marisol's veins as she strides out of Leticia's quarters, feeling reborn. She was eager to put her newly acquired skills to the test and show her new tricks to Cedric. As she made her way through the bustling corridors of the pack house, her heart fluttered with anticipation.

To her surprise, she found Cedric and her father together, inspecting Redwood's warriors. They were engrossed in conversation, and Marisol couldn't help a smile that graced her features at the men getting along.

She approached the training grounds, feeling pride and admiration at the sight before her. They stood amidst a group of warriors, deep in conversation as they inspected their every move with a critical eye. They looked to be discussing tactics and strategies for the upcoming battle, their commentaries pausing and restarting the warrior's movements with newfound vigor. It was a sight that warmed Marisol's heart, seeing two of the most important people in her life working together for the good of their pack, and she decided then to leave them to it, not wanting to intrude.

'And where do you think you're going?' Cedric's voice echoed in her head just as she turned around to leave.

Marisol's cheeks flushed as she turned back around to face him, a shy smile decorating her lips. She felt a flutter of excitement at conversing like this. So intimately in such a public setting. 'I didn't want to distract you.'

His disapproving growl reverberated in her head, sending a pleasant shiver down her spine. 'You could never distract me.' He argued, his eyes locking with hers in a silent command as he added, 'In fact, I find your presence quite... captivating.'

Marisol couldn't help but giggle at his words, a euphoric feeling coursing through her veins as Cedric finally closed the distance between them in quick strides.

'Come here!' He growled.

In the blink of an eye, Marisol is lifted off the ground, her gleeful laughter filling the air as Cedric spins her around playfully. It was at that exact moment that Marisol noted the absence of her father. He had probably slipped away the second he noticed they were conversing.

Reveling in the warmth of his embrace, Marisol burrowed her face into his neck, her heart threatening to burst with just how happy she felt as he set her to the ground, arms still secured around her waist.

"I missed you," she murmured, burying her face in his chest.

Cedric's arms tightened around her, pulling her impossibly closer. "I missed you too," he confessed, pressing a tender kiss to the top of her head.

With a wave of his hand, Cedric dismissed the warriors, signaling the end of their inspection. Taking Marisol's hand in his, he led her away from the bustling courtyard and towards the quiet solitude of their castle.

As they walked, Cedric could not help stealing glances at Marisol, unable to shake the feeling of overwhelming affection that washed over him whenever she was near. He marveled at how much she had grown and changed since they first met, yet she still retained that same spark of fiery determination that had drawn him to her in the first place.

Marisol, too, couldn't help but bask in Cedric's presence, feeling a sense of peace and contentment wash over her as they walked side by side.

"Thank you for including my father in your training session," Marisol said, breaking the comfortable silence between them. "It meant a lot to see you both getting along."

Cedric laughed, the deep sound rumbling from his chest, "Your father is Liam Hallows, a wise and formidable warrior. Of course, I value his insights and guidance."

Marisol's cheeks were starting to hurt from how much she'd been smiling, her heart swelling with pride. "I've always looked up to him," she admitted softly.

Cedric squeezed her hand gently, his touch sending tingles of warmth down her spine. "You're lucky to have such a loving and supportive father," a small pause, where he lifted her fingers to his lips, "And I'm lucky to have you by my side."

Marisol blushed furiously at that, "I'm lucky to have you too," she said, her voice barely above a whisper.

They arrived at the entrance to the hidden castle, and Cedric suddenly turned to Marisol with a mischievous glint in his eye. "Race you to the throne room?" he cocked his head, a playful smile tugging at the corners of his lips.

Marisol chuckled haughtily, almost bouncing on her feet in excitement as she lightly smacked his shoulder, "You're on!" she exclaimed, before taking off at a sprint towards the castle doors.

Cedric followed closely behind, the sound of their laughter echoing through the deserted hallways as they raced towards their destination. As they burst through the doors of the throne room, Marisol stumbled and fell to the ground, almost breathless with laughter.

Cedric stretched a hand out, his eyes shining with adoration. "Looks like I won," he teased as he helped her to her feet.

Marisol playfully swatted his arm, her cheeks flushed in exertion, "You cheated!" succusses, unable to hide the smile that tugged at her lips.

Cedric laughed, pulling her into a warm embrace. "Maybe a little," he admitted, pressing another gentle kiss to her forehead. "But you'll always be a winner in my eyes."

"Oh, please!" Marisol cackled but melted into his embrace nonetheless.

"I couldn't stop thinking about you," he confessed, his voice low and husky.

Marisol's heart skipped a beat at his words, her pulse quickening with desire. "I feel the same way," she admitted, "You were all I could think of."

"Oh really? Did you think you'd be able to concentrate on anything but me?" He teased, holding her face tenderly.

She scoffed, "We both know that I can and would. I can not say the same for you, though." She retorted, raising a teasing brow, and Cedric dramatically clutched at his chest.

"I wished I could say you were wrong, but you're not. Atleast not entirely."

Without waiting for a response, he captured her lips in a demanding kiss, their bodies pressed tightly in a desperate embrace. Every touch, every caress sent shivers down Marisol's spine, igniting a fire within her that she couldn't ignore.

Their clothes were quickly discarded, forgotten in the heat of the moment as they surrendered to their desires. Cedric's hands roamed over Marisol's body, igniting sparks of pleasure with every touch.

Marisol moaned softly as Cedric trailed kisses down her neck, his lips leaving a trail of fire in their wake. She arched against him, her body aching for more as he worshiped her with his touch.

In a frenzy of passion, they came together as one, their bodies moving in perfect harmony as they lost themselves in each other. Time seemed to stand still as they soared to new heights of pleasure, their love consuming them completely.

They lay tangled in each other's arms, spent and sated. In Cedric's arms, Marisol had found her home, her sanctuary in a world filled with chaos and uncertainty.

With a contented sigh, Marisol snuggled closer to Cedric, her heart overflowing with love for the man who had captured her in every sense of the word. Mind, body, and soul.