

The Rejected Werewolf Princess by Didiadeyemi Chapter 174

Emergency calls only

I healed as many as I could until I felt drained and dizzy. With each person I tunneled power into, I could feel something leave me, I could feel a part of my essence being stripped away but I couldn't stop. I knew that I was meant to heal them, it was my fault they were in this position anyway. Whoever this witch was, it was me they had a problem with and not the innocent pack members. The least I could do was to ensure that no one died because of me.

I wasn't sure how I managed to ride back to the palace and not slip off my horse. I could barely hold on and I had to lie flat against it. By the time I arrived, I noticed Kevin pacing around the stables. He saw me and rushed over almost as if he had been searching for me.

"Your majesty," he whispered. "Where did you go? I have been looking for you for an hour now. Are you alright?"

He helped me off my horse and I nearly slumped to the ground. If not for him grabbing onto me to hold me up, I would've fallen. He was clearly concerned, I knew that much as he looked me over for any obvious signs of injury.

"What do you want me to do, your majesty?" he asked. "Do I take you to the prince?"

"No," I ground out immediately. If Ryker saw me like this, he was going to be pissed. I had at least until later this morning to keep my secret. "Can you help me to my room please? I don't want anyone finding out about what happened here tonight."

He pursed his lips but nodded and led me into the palace. He made sure to take the lesser traveled halls which meant a longer walk but I didn't mind. It was a battle to keep my eyes open but I somehow managed to do it. Once we got to the room, I almost moaned in relief. My bones hurt and there was something in the center of my chest- a burning feeling that I could not get rid of. Kevin didn't want to walk into the room but it was obvious that I couldn't go in on my own. He led me to the bed and gently helped me into a sitting position but I couldn't even hold that for long before I flopped backwards.

"Thank you," I whispered and he nodded. He didn't leave immediately though, he stood there in the center of the room watching me carefully.

"Are you sure that you are alright? It would not take long to get the prince here."

"I am fine, leave Ryker to whatever he is doing," I mumbled trying to hide my hurt at the fact that he didn't even try to return to the room.

Kevin obviously didn't agree with me but he nodded and turned on his heels then walked off. I heard the door click shut and I let go of the facade I was holding onto and groaned. Exhaustion burned through me and for the first time in my life, I felt like I couldn't move. My head was spinning, my limbs felt like lead and my mouth tasted metallic with a tinge of ash. I closed my eyes hoping to just take a deep breath but I didn't end up re-opening them.

When I finally managed to open my eyes, I found myself in front of that same eerie mirror as before. It was a bit larger this time with intricate designs in the metal stand. I tried to make them out knowing they told a story but my head hurt too much and my focus was on the reflection.

I was bleeding but instead of leaking red blood, something white and clear was oozing out. It wasn't just coming out of one hole, there were many all over my body. I watched as some of those holes closed up but a few never did. It was a clear warning, I was risking too much, doing too much and I let out an exasperated sigh. I didn't want this, I just wanted my pack to be happy. I turned away from the mirror, lay flat on my back and closed my eyes. I couldn't stop what I had already done. The past was in the past. I only hoped that Ryker would be able to find who was responsible before I completely destroyed myself.

I felt the brightness of the sun against my skin and soft murmuring by my ears. There was warmth all over my body, as if I were lying in the middle of a lake. I managed to peel my eyes open only to find Ryker and Lyla standing there. Lyla looked relieved but Ryker on the other hand was nothing short of pissed. His lips were turned down in a frown and he had his hands crossed over his chest. I knew what this was about but I decided to feign ignorance.

"Hello," I began with a yawn and a long stretch. "Is something wrong? Why are you hovering around my bed?"

"You were healing again," Lyla's voice was soft. "I tried to speed it up using a potion so you would wake up. How do you feel? Are you hurt anywhere?"

"No," not physically at least. The only hurt I could feel was on the inside and it was never going to be fixed, not until I died. "Thank you, Lyla, but I am fine now, you don't have to come to me whenever I am asleep. I'll definitely wake up on my own."

"You will, but it might take days and unfortunately days are—"

"Get out," Ryker said calmly and we both turned to him. I hadn't expected him

to be so direct but he wasn't even looking at Lyla, he was looking at me. When no one moved for a minute, he spoke again. "Thank you for your

help, Lyla but I need you to leave so that I can converse with my mate about making irresponsible and stupid decisions."

Lyla shot me a small smile of encouragement before walking out of the room. She had barely shut the door behind her when Ryker exploded. To say that he was pissed would have been an understatement, the tips of his ears had turned red and he was yelling- he almost never yelled at me. No matter what I did, he spoke quietly and calmly but this time was different.

"Are you insane?" he exclaimed. "What were you thinking by healing them all? Didn't you listen when Lyla told you the first time that you were taking parts of yourself? Do you care so little about your own life that you feel the need to put it in danger all the time."

"That isn't what I'm doing," I mumbled but he simply shot me a disbelieving look and crossed his arms over his chest. "I couldn't just let them die. It was my fault that she attacked them in the first place. Besides, you said you were close to finding out who she is, what is a few more people when we will soon have her?"

He ran his hands through his hair. "I never said we were close, Camilla, and even if we find out who she is, we don't know where she is or how to defeat her. You are putting yourself in unnecessary danger. I should have known that Kevin would do a s hit job."

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My brows furrowed. "What does this have to do with Kevin?" he didn't respond but I knew he had heard me so I repeated my question again. "Don't lie to me, Ryker."

"I asked him to watch you after receiving the letter but clearly I should have known better. Would it help if I actually locked you in the f ucking room? Would you sit still if I did that? For f ucks sake, Camilla."

"I was just helping."

"It's not about that!" he all but screamed. "You went out there alone and used your powers. I have seen how weak and exhausted that makes you. Did you ever stop to consider that maybe she was banking on that? What would have happened if you used your powers and you couldn't make it back home? What would have happened if she took you?"

I stayed silent because I hadn't thought about that. I was so concerned with helping them that I never once stopped to consider the threat to my own life. I couldn't help but feel stupid for the first time today. I couldn't

even meet Ryker's eye anymore.

He let out a deep breath before taking a seat next to me. "I just need you to be honest with me, Camilla. We cannot do this if you are not honest with me. I cannot spend every waking hour of my day worrying about your

and if you are off doing something that could endanger you."

"You're right and I am sorry, I just felt bad because they were hurt because of me. They were hurt because I wouldn't give myself up," I mumbled. "Maybe I should just surrender. We could possibly try to ambush her with a surrender, don't you agree? It might work."

"No, we are not bargaining your life," his voice held no room for discussion.

"We don't know the extent of her powers. She isn't the kind of person that you just make a jump on. We have to carefully plan this. We can worry about that later, for now, you need to rest."

He didn't say anything else after that, just sat with me in the room for the rest of the day. I knew he was still pissed but he was saving the brunt of his anger for later. He made sure I was fed and rested and wouldn't even let me take a step out of the room. It was annoying to say the least but I figured it could have been worse and was just grateful that it wasn't.

Sometime around evening, I was getting annoyed with being in the same place for the entire day but I was trying my best not to argue. Ryker placed a soft kiss on my forehead and muttered something about going to get some water. I couldn't help but wonder how long that gave me to leave the room and get some fresh air. He had just gotten to the door when it flew open revealing Christine.

"Is everything okay?" he asked and she nodded.

"Caius and Lyla- I never thought I would ever say that- they need to see you. They say it is urgent."

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It didn't take much convincing to get Ryker to let me go with him. It was a relief to finally be out of the room, but I couldn't help but wonder if the reasons were good at all. We were led to the council room and needless to say, it was a weird pairing to see Caius and Lyla whispering together in hushed tones. When we arrived, they immediately jumped apart.

"We found it," they said together and my brows furrowed. I was confused as to what they were talking about but Ryker seemed to understand because his

eyes widened in shock and relief. "It took a shi t ton of time but we did it." Ryker took the seat opposite them and I followed suit. "Tell me everything." Caius brought out a single piece of parchment and on it was what looked like a sigil. It was hard to distinguish at first because it just looked like a badly drawn circle but on closer inspection, I saw that it was a snake eating itself. I had never seen something like that in my life and I couldn't help but wonder why they would be looking for it.

"I knew it had something to do with the witches so I reached out to a few of my friends but none of them know," Lyla began. "I thought we were simply too young to know of it so I asked Caius and he happened to know some friends who are a bit older and have ties to the witch world. One of them was able to identify this."

"it is the seal of a long forgotten witch coven," Caius continued. "They used to be so powerful in the days of my youth. They were considered ser vants of the goddess. They would offer sacrifices to her and speak directly to her. It was believed then that the goddess used to walk amongst them. They were favored and blessed until one day, things started to go wrong. They started hearing strange things from the goddess- things she would never have said on a normal day,"

"They weren't smart enough to realize that they had been compromised. Instead, they kept sacrificing, kept praying," Lyla cut in. "A few of them started to realize that things were not as they used to. Their crops were dying, they were not getting older, they started to investigate and they found that their coven leader had diverted from praying to the goddess. She started to dabble in dark magic, she fed off the life force of their land which was connected to the goddess- she was powerful. They tried to stand against her but there was a battle. It was long and it is was blo ody and by the end of it, their cover was razed to the ground."

I felt goose bumps on my skin as her words settled in the air. She had a faraway and sad look in her eye. I figured the story hurt her more seeing as she was a witch.

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"What happened to the leader? Did she die?" I asked but she shrugged.

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"No one knows. By the time the battle was over, no one was recognizable.

Legend says that a few of them managed to escape and merged with the other covens, their powers were long forgotten and the goddess never walked the earth again. Other legends say that they all died and put an end to their lineage forever.”

“What do you say?” I asked and she went silent. It was clear she was not expecting that question from me. She opened and closed her mouth a few times before sighing.

“I don’t think I am qualified to speak on the subject. I wasn’t born when it happened and my mother would have been a child. Even she wouldn’t have known-”

“I didn’t ask what you know or what you are qualified on. I asked what you think,” I corrected. “Think about it and give an opinion.”

She sighed.

“If the coven leader was as powerful as history says she was, she wouldn’t have gone down that easily. She would have made contingency plans in case things went south. She couldn’t have assumed she would be able to lie to them forever. I think she lived past the battle and if she was able to continue her practice, she would be young forever. She could still be alive.”

“You think she is responsible for this,” I deduced and she nodded. “Does your history mention her name?”

“No, but it does mention where their coven used to be.”

“Where is that?”

She grimaced before speaking and when the words finally left her mouth, I was dumbstruck.

Against his wishes and better judgment, we ended up riding out of the palace that morning. Ryker was pissed about it to say the least but even he realized just how close we were to getting to the bottom of this. I could have sent a guard but I didn’t want to risk anyone else’s life. It was obvious that I was the one she wanted, she wasn’t going to risk killing me.

Ryker, Lyla and I set out to what used to be their old coven. If I had been given a chance to think about where it could have been, I never would have guessed. The ride was quiet, everyone was lost in their own minds but I could tell it all centered around the same thing. No one knew what they were walking into, none of us knew just how bad things could be.

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"I have a question," I asked suddenly making all eyes turn to me. "If she is alive, why doesn't she just take her old coven land back?"

"Well, there are a lot of stories about what happened after. Some say that after the war, the goddess cursed the land so that no witch can inhabit it anymore. Others say that the very essence of the land cries out against us. No one has ever thought to try it out since then. If it is true, then that would explain why she didn't go back for it."

I hummed as I mulled over those words. It gave me an answer but it wasn't enough, there were still so many questions that I wasn't sure I would ever get the answer to unless I asked her directly- whoever she was. I couldn't help but wonder if she was following us right now, tracking our every move and trying to figure out the best way to attack. I looked over my shoulder and at the trees lining the sides of the roads almost imagining her jumping out and putting a halt to our expenditure.

"Your majesty," Lyla's voice snapped me out of my thoughts and I turned to her. "I hope I am not crossing a line but if I might ask, what are you planning to do when you get there? Do you want to summon her?"

"Of course not," I said immediately and she let out a sigh of relief. "I want to leave her a little... message."

No words were exchanged again until we got to the massive house. It looked exactly the same as I had left it and I couldn't help but wonder why out of all the places available, my father chose this spot for his vacation home. I took in what now was and tried to imagine what it looked like when the coven was here. If I were to judge by what I had seen with Lyla, they would have been minimalistic and down to earth.

I got off my horse expecting to see Briggs but instead, I was met with someone else- another young maid I had seen in passing before. She gave me a warm but worried smile as she rushed over to us.

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"Your majesties," she bowed. "We were not expecting you. Would you like me to prepare your rooms for you?"

"Where is Briggs?" I asked. "I need to see him." Her answering grimace gave me cause for worry. I risked a glance over at Ryker who I could see was sporting the same look in his eyes. "What is going on?"

"Mr. Briggs has been ill for a while. We fear there is nothing to be done. I could take you to him if you would like," I was barely able to nod before she led me towards the servants building.

Most of them were in black, already mourning the loss of a man who was alive. His room was on the first floor at the far end of the corridor. She stopped at the door but I could tell she didn't want to go in. Ryker pushed the door

open and I could barely recognize the man in the bed. He looked like old age had crept up on him and drained the life right out of his bones. There was barely any flesh on his skin and every breath looked labored.

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“Hello Briggs,” I said softly as I took the seat next to him. He managed to peel his eyes open and when he saw me, he smiled as best he could. “How are you?”

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“Your majesty,” he managed out, his voice sounding hollow and breezy. “I never thought I would see you before I passed. I am afraid the illness snuck up on me faster than I would have liked. The doctors are trying their best but there is no hope for me.”

“Do you know anything about who this land used to belong to?” I asked and I saw awareness in his eyes. It was clear that he knew but he was too sick to talk. I turned to Ryker and dropped my voice to a whisper. “Let me heal him.”

“Are you mad?” he spat.

“He knows something that he might be able to tell us. This is our only chance. If I do this, I swear on the goddess that I will not use my powers again,”

Ryker’s frown didn’t move. “Please, this is the only way.”

“This is the last time, correct?” he asked and I nodded. “Fine, do what you must.”

I let out a sigh of relief and turned to Briggs. He had closed his eyes again but he was still breathing. I slowly took his frail hand into mine and with a large breath, I focused on pushing my powers into him.

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