

THE REJECTED WEREWOLF PRINCESS

Chapter 211



RYKER'S P.O.V

We were knocked out right after. I wasn't sure if it was the intensity of it all or the blinding emotions but we fell right asleep. It felt good to not have her running away from me and to not feel like I was struggling to hold onto her. Everything about falling asleep with her felt familiar, the softness of her skin, how she felt against me and the warmth of her pressed into me. I slept better than I had in a long time.

I woke up feeling refreshed and better than I had in a while until I realized that Camilla wasn't in bed with me. I sat up straight and looked around the room hoping she had just walked out of bed and into the bathroom but her scent was stale meaning she had been gone for a while. I didn't want to panic, but I almost couldn't help myself. This was the woman that I loved and she just left after having sex, there was a lot to panic over.

I forced my emotions into a tightly concealed container as I got dressed and left the room in search of her. The sun was set and I could tell that it was sometime around eight. I checked her office first but she wasn't there. I started making my way outside to check the garden when I was interrupted by Juan.

"There

you are,” he exhaled in relief as he rushed up to me. I was a bit annoyed that he had interrupted me but I forced myself not to react. “Audrey refuses to go to sleep until you come to tuck her in and she is keeping Aurora up as leverage. You need to handle your girls.’

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“I’m,” I hesitated before cursing. I couldn’t just leave the girls.

Juan was watching me with concern in his eyes. “Are you alright? Do you need me to do something for you? Is this about Camilla?”

“I think she might be in the garden,” I said simply not wanting to talk about whatever happened. “Can you go and get her? Audrey might want her there as well.”

I could tell that he wanted to know more but somehow, he knew better than to argue so he simply nodded and turned on his heels. I watched him walk away and it wasn’t until I was completely certain that he was going to find her that I finally made my way towards Audrey’s room, I was greeted by noise the moment I walked in but it immediately quieted down as soon as Audrey noticed me.

“There you are daddy,” she leaped to her feet in bed. She was wearing her favorite pink night dress. “Where is mummy? I thought she would come with you.”

“You should be asleep,” I chided ignoring her earlier question. “Why are you still up and why are you keeping Aurora up?”

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I turned to Christine who was holding Aurora. I could tell my youngest was tired and so was Christine. She looked like she was half a second away from losing her sanity so I mouthed the word thank you to her and slowly took my

daughter out of her arms. As soon as her arms were free, she walked out of the room without looking back.

“Lie down, Audrey, let me tuck you in,” I told her and although she pouted, she obliged and did as I asked. “Why did you want me to be here? Did you want me to tell you a story?”

She shook her head. “I just wanted to see you and mummy. Where is she?”

Before I could respond, the door opened and at first, I breathed a sigh of relief thinking that it was Camilla but instead, Juan poked his head inside. He gave me a small shake of his head and I saw the sad look in his eyes. I bit back a curse and just gave him a nod of acknowledgment. I turned back to Audrey who was looking at me hopefully and waiting for a response. I couldn't tell her that I didn't know where her mother was.

“Your mum is asleep, like you should be right now,” I lied as I placed a soft kiss on her head. “If you go to sleep right now then she will be here when you wake up. What do you think about that?”

“Do you promise?”

I never liked to make promises, I hated the feeling whenever I couldn't fulfill them. It would have been stupid to make that kind of promise considering I didn't know where Camilla was but I trusted that she wouldn't run, my wolf knew she was somewhere within the palace and the truth was, I wasn't going to let her get away from me again. I hooked my pinkie finger with Audrey's and nodded.

“I promise,” I assured her and that was all she needed. She smiled wide and pulled her covers up to her chin. “Goodnight princess.”

“Goodnight daddy.”

I turned out the lights and carried a sleeping Aurora back to her room. Once I was sure that both my girls were asleep, I made my way back to Juan who had never left the hallway.

“She wasn’t there?” I asked and he shook his head. “Did you ask the guards? Perhaps one of them saw her or she was in a corner of the garden that you didn’t check. That is the only part of the palace that she knows.”

“She could be with Peggy or Marie,” he offered but somehow I knew she wasn’t there. Still, I couldn’t take it off

the list until I was absolutely sure. “I will go to their rooms and ask.”

“Don’t tell them you are looking for Camilla,” I wasn’t sure why I wanted to hide it- I just did. “Just tell them you wanted to check if everything is okay. I don’t want anyone knowing that I cannot find Camilla.”

He raised both brows in suspicion. “Did something happen? Do you think that maybe she could have run away? if that is possible then we should contact the border patrol and talk to the guards who are at the entrance to the-”
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“No one should know,” I cut him off and he must have heard the urgency in my voice because he nodded. “If you don’t find her, just mind link me. You don’t have to come find me.”

He went to do as I had asked while I tried searching everywhere else I could think of but I couldn’t find her. A few minutes after departing, Juan told me she wasn’t with either Peggy or Marie and that was when I started to panic. I couldn’t find her and her wall was up so I couldn’t reach her either. I was just about to give up when my wolf perked up.

“I can feel her,” he explained to me. “I don’t know if it will work but I can try to track her through it.”

“It’s worth a shot,” I mumbled after a moment of hesitation.

I allowed him lead me through the palace and up the steps until I was standing by a familiar pair of double doors. They were unlocked and for the life of me, I couldn't understand who would be in Leonor's room or why Camilla would be there. I pushed it open and found her seated at the edge of the bed. Her eyes were watery and she tried to hide her tears but I had seen them.

"Are you alright?" I asked but she simply shrugged in response. "I have been searching for you. The girls wanted you to tuck them into bed but-

"I could do it right now," she rushed to her feet and tried to side step me but I grabbed her upper arm.

It was clear that she was looking for any excuse to avoid having the conversation but I wasn't going to let her leave with tears in her eyes. I needed to know why she wa

crying and if I had somehow caused it. I also needed

I to know what possessed her to come to Leonor's room and how she got the key because as far as I knew, the door was locked tight.

She wouldn't look at me and I knew nothing I said or did would change that so I simply led her by the arm until we were seated on the bed. I didn't let go of her despite knowing that I probably should have and instead sat in silence with her. I wasn't going to push, I didn't care if we had to stay silent for the entire night until she felt

comfortable enough to tell me what the problem was. It only took two minutes before she spoke.

"It wasn't about you or because of you, I know that's what you're thinking," she whispered. "I just needed a few minutes to myself. Everything tends to be overbearing sometimes and I just needed to be alone."

“Why here?” I asked and she stilled. “How did you get the key?”

“You would be surprised how much the maids are willing to do for me simply because I am queen,” I snorted. “I simply said I wanted to see my mother’s room and was directed to where all the keys are kept.. They looked at me like I was crazy for not knowing but it worked.”

She was lying. There was some truth to her statement but it wasn’t the complete truth and I needed to know exactly what it was. I had no idea why she would want to lie to me but she had been doing it so much more often and I needed her to be honest with me. I cupped her cheeks and forced her to look me square in the eye.

“Why were you crying?” I asked and she tried to turn away but I wouldn’t let her. “Tell me, Camilla. What was wrong?”

“Nothing, I just- I just needed to get myself together. I needed to be alone.”

“What color is my shirt?”

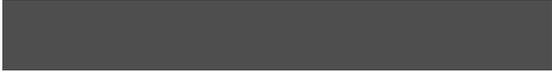
She looked taken aback by my question. “It is grey, what does that have to do with anything. You can look at your own shirt and-”

“Why were you crying?” I cut in sharply and this time she didn’t even hesitate as she spoke:

“I didn’t realize it would hurt so much being in her room. I haven’t been here since she died and-” she slapped her hand over her mouth when she realized exactly what she had said.

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CAMILLA'S POV

A part of me hoped that he hadn't heard my slip up or that it flew over his head but I knew that was wishful thinking. We were talking about Ryker and he was quite possibly the most attentive man I knew. There was no way he missed I judging by his expression and the fact that he took a slow step away from me. I opened my mouth to defend myself but he held up a hand to stop me.

“How do you know that you haven't been here since she died?” he asked and I hesitated before responding.

“You told me,” I lied but he shook his head. “Come on, Ryker, don't you remember? When I asked you to explain everything to me, you told me that I didn't take my mother's death well and that I-”

“Don't lie to me,” he cut me off harshly. “I can take just about anything from you right now but do not lie to me. It seems like you have been doing enough of it already. I want the truth, Camilla and I want it now or so help me, I will walk out of this room and that will be it.”

Ryker had never given me an ultimatum before and that was how I knew that he was being serious. Despite the fact that he wasn't yelling, I could tell that he was pissed and I knew that what I was going to say next could possibly make it even worse but I had to. I swallowed deeply and made my way over to the door that had been left slightly ajar.

I made sure to look around to be sure that no one was watching before slowly closing it. Ryker was watching me the entire time but he didn't say a word. I tried to ignore the look in his eyes, the one that said he didn't trust me anymore and tapped the side of the bed next to me. In his anger, he had rushed to his feet and I needed him seated for the conversation.

“Camilla-”

“Please, just do this for me,” I whispered and he sighed before obliging. I took a deep breath before finally speaking the words that I knew could potentially wreck us. “I remember.”

His breath caught in his throat but there was no surprise, he had already made it out with my slip up. I never planned for him to find out this way, I never planned for him to find out at all. I just needed a little time and I wasn’t sure if my admission was going to make things worse. His eyes held betrayal and anger and I wished I could take it all away but the truth was that I had betrayed him- I had lied to him.

“How long?” was his only question after a moment of silence. “I can understand if it was yesterday or a few days ago. “I got my memory back the night I returned,” I admitted and he stilled. “It started to come back after I used my powers for the first time but it didn't completely come back until after”

Ryker remained silent. He just sat next to me staring at me like I was a stranger. No words were spoken and there were so many things I wanted to say but I couldn't bring myself to utter the first words. I had already done so much damage, I needed him to make the first move but he was taking so long to do so.

“Why did you pretend? Why did you lie to each and every one of us?” he asked. I opened my mouth to respond but he cut me off. “Was it for attention? Was there something you wanted that I couldn't give you? I don’t understand wh you would put all of us through hell for nothing.”

“Please stop yelling,” I implored looking around in a panic.

“Il will yell if I goddamn want to because you have been lying to me!” he exclaimed. “If for whatsoever fucking reason you didn’t want to tell the others, then you should have told me. I am your mate for f***s sake and you always

do this. What will it take to get you to f*****g trust me and realize that we are a team?”

“I know we are a team but you need to please calm down. I will explain everything. Hell, I was going to explain everything when you woke up. I didn’t plan for it to happen like this, I needed to be sure but I wasn't sure, I'm still not sure.”

“Not sure of what?”

“Marie and Peggy,” I whispered and he turned to me with a confused look. NôvelDrama.Org owns this text.

“What are you talking about? Did they do anything to you? Did they say anything?”

It was endearing how quickly he could switch from upset to concerned. He was still pissed at me, that much was certain but his concern outweighed the anger and that was how I knew I made the right decision and was mated to the right man.

“Since I got my memory, I noticed something weird. I found it unusual that they wanted me to move here so badly, especially Marie. She wanted it too much. At first I thought it could be something else but it's more- there is more. I don’t know but there is something off about her, and Peggy too because she just agrees with whatever Marie says or does, almost like Marie is pulling the strings.”

“So what, you planned to fake your memory loss until you were sure about them?” he asked. “You could have told me. I would have helped you, I would have supported your decision. I have supported every crazy fucking decision that you have made, even the one that almost cost me you. What do I have to do to let you know that you can trust me?”

"I do trust you," I reached out to him but he brushed off my touch. "Ryker, I know you're upset but you have to understand. This was the only way I could keep you all out of it. I could be wrong but I also could be right and if I am right then they could be dangerous. I didn't want to put anyone else in the firing line."

"So once again you took the heat of it," he scoffed and stood to his feet. "I had hoped that after what happened, you wouldn't be so keen on putting your life on the line for others. You did it and it cost you a part of your soul. You almost died on that cliff. How are you even still alive? I saw the life leave you."

"I don't know. If I did, I would tell you, I swear."

"Somehow, I don't think that's true," he brushed invisible lint off his clothes. "I'm done playing your game, Camilla. I cannot keep chasing after someone who does not want to be caught. I cannot keep up with all of this. I love you but cannot keep doing this if you don't trust me."

He started to leave and in that moment, I panicked. I grabbed his arm and I knew if he wanted to leave, it wouldn't have taken him any ounce of energy to brush me off but for some reason, he stilled. He turned to me and I could see just how tired he was. The truth was, if I were in his shoes, I would have felt the same way. I understood where he was coming from but I needed him to understand me.

"I put other's lives above yours and the girls," I began. "I know that now and looking back, I probably would not have done it but I will always put your life over mine because that is what a good mate does. I wanted to keep you and the girls safe and I will not apologize for that. It killed me having to do what I did. It killed me having to pretend I didn't know you when all I wanted was you but they were always there. I couldn't have told you if I wanted to."

“What about the lake? I kissed you and you kissed me back. You could have told me.”

“I could, I wanted to but I saw Marie.”

Thinking about it alone had shivers washing over me. I was prepared to tell Ryker everything when I smelled her. I had gotten used to Marie's scent and Ryker must have been so fixated on me that he didn't notice. I saw her hiding behind a tree watching Ryker and I. She didn't notice that I saw her and I needed to pretend so that she wouldn't grow suspicious and that was the only reason I pushed him away.

I explained it all to him and by the time I was done, he was staring at me in deliberation. I could tell there was a war going on in his mind. He believed me, I could always count on him for that but there was obviously something else bothering him.

“That isn't enough,” he said finally. “That was one time. There were plenty other opportunities.”

“I promise you, there were not. I have felt her everywhere. I am risking everything by telling you this but I know that she isn't aware of this room which is why I came here. I just needed to think. I swear, I never planned to hurt you, I love you.”

“I know you do,” he whispered before placing a soft kiss on my temple. “I love you too which is why I am doing this. You need to learn to trust people and until you do that, I am not playing this game with you.”

“Ryker please,” I begged but he held out a hand to stop me.

“I will pretend with you. I will keep up with this simply because I don't want to be the reason something happens to the girls if you are right. I will look into Marie and Peggy and I will try to find out what I can about their life but it ends

there. You need to prove that you aren't just going to run away again and act out when things get hard.”

“How do I do that? How do I prove that to you? Tell me what to do and I will do it”

There was an almost sad expression on his face. He ran his hands up and down my arms in a comforting manner before resting his forehead against mine. He stayed like that for a full minute before taking a step back.

“That is something you have to learn for yourself,” he whispered. “I will see you in the room, Camilla”

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CAMILLA'S POV

For the rest of the day, it was like living with a stranger. He wouldn't look at me for longer than a few seconds and the tension between us was so thick that it could have been cut with a butter knife. I had hoped that before the day would be over, he would forgive me but nothing changed. When we went to tuck the girls in, he pretended to be his usual self but the moment we walked out, he was back to pretending like I didn't exist. The honest truth was that I couldn't even blame him, it was my fault after all.

When we got to the room, he lay on the lounge with his back turned to me. His breathing was even to mimic sleeping but I knew he was wide awake. I couldn't sleep either. I just lay in bed staring at his resting figure wondering how different things would have been if I had just told him. I honestly thought I

was doing what was best for us all and now that he knew, I was on edge hoping that neither Marie nor Peggy figured out that something was up.

“I can feel you staring at me,” he drawled and my cheeks heated as I looked away. The air was thick with silence for a full minute before I heard him shuffling on the couch. “I don’t hate you, Camilla, I’m not even upset with you.”

“It seems like you are. You barely even look at me.”

“I know, and it isn’t for the reason that you think. I need you to trust me and if that means letting you come to me or your own then that is what I will do. I need you to realize that you don’t have to do this yourself. You could have just told me.”

“I couldn’t,” I whispered. “I told you, they are always there. I can feel someone watching me the entire time. I cannot see them, but I know someone is there. I don’t know how else to explain this. I didn’t want to do this. If I had my way I would have told you from the beginning but I couldn’t. I know you don’t believe me but it’s the truth.”

“I have to believe you, Camilla, you’re my mate, I am obligated to believe that you won’t lie to me but that doesn’t change the fact that you didn’t try. You could have dropped hints, you could have said something but you didn’t meaning you didn’t mind doing this alone. What happens if you were right and someone had hurt you? I would never have known that you remembered us.”

I sighed. “I’m sorry, Ryker. I know that isn’t enough but that’s all that I can offer right now.”

I wanted him by my side. I felt grossly overwhelmed and I just wanted my mate by my side and it dawned on me that my actions had brought me to this place. Visit Jobnib.com to read the complete chapters for free. He wasn’t going to come to me, he had made that much clear but I couldn’t help but wonder if he would stop me from going to him. I hesitated for a minute before

slowly sliding out of bed. I saw him tense, he was lying on his back but when I got close enough, his eyes settled on me.

“Can you just hold me, please?” I whispered scared that he was going to say no. “You can go back to ignoring me tomorrow, I just-”

My words trailed off because the honest truth was that I had no idea what to say. He watched me for a few seconds and it felt like minutes ticking by. Just when I had come to the conclusion that my demand was ludicrous and I was about to apologize, he stood to his feet. He placed his hands on my shoulders before stepping closer to place a kiss on my forehead. It was soft and I honestly felt like I could cry.

“I just wanted you to ask,” he whispered against my skin before walking me over to the bed. As soon as he was settled in, I wasted no time in curling up into his side. He wrapped his arms around me and for a second, all the tension was gone and it was just me and my mate. “Ask me, Camilla, that's all I want from you.”

“I'll try,” it was the best I could offer at that moment and he knew it too because he didn't push, he just traced small circles across my back until the sleep finally took me.

When I woke up, Ryker was out of bed and his side was cold. I tried to hide the disappointment on my face but I clearly wasn't doing a good job at it. It was still very early and I found myself going out into the gardens. I didn't expect Loris to be seated there in front of the fountain. I hadn't mentioned anything about wanting to start training. “I figured it was only a matter of time before you showed up,” he mused. “Have you been practicing or are we going to have to start over? Because from what I heard, you had a great display of power up on that cliff”

I turned my face down into a confused expression. “I guess so.”

“Don’t be modest,” he waved me over and I took a few steps towards him.

“We can work on attack patterns, I am so excited to move forward with this.”

“Wouldn't it be better if she showed you what she could do, just to be sure that she can?” I stilled when I heard Marie's voice from behind me.

I had sensed her around, I just didn’t know when she was going to show up. I turned to her and gave her what I hoped was my best relieved expression.

She came to stand next to me and thread her hand through my elbow. Loris was looking at her with confusion and I could tell that for some reason, it slightly annoyed her. Content belongs to Nôvel(D)r/a/ma.Org.

“I am sorry, but who might you be? I don’t think we have ever met before.”

“I'm Marie,” she held out a hand to him and he shook it. “Camilla asked me to be here with her today. She wanted some company, right, Camilla?”

I nodded slowly. I couldn't tell her to leave or it would have raised suspicion. She smiled triumphantly at Loris who looked a little uneasy about the situation but seeing as I had agreed, there was little to nothing that he could do. Once she was sure that no one was going to send her off, she pulled away from me and went to sit by the bench close to the fountain. There was an eager look in her eye, as if she wanted to know just how far my powers went. “Why don’t you try pulling the water from underneath us?” Loris suggested. “I heard that you managed to bend the water at the bottom of the cliff from where you stood. It must have been an incredible feat”

“It was probably a spur of the moment thing,” I lied but he waved me off.

“You'll never know if you don't try.”

“He's right, Camilla,” Marie cut in making Loris frown. I could tell that he hated having her here. “You should try, you would be surprised at what you can do.”

I knew I could do it, I could feel the waves thrumming beneath my feet but I wasn’t going to. I made a show of kneeling and placing my palms flat on the

ground. I closed my eyes but did nothing, I didn't try to summon the water or pull on it, I just stayed still making sure to squeeze my eyes every few seconds so it looked like I was trying. Despite my eyes being closed, I could feel Marie's disappointment and when I finally opened my eyes to look at her, thought of the most embarrassing thing I could think of so that my cheeks would tinge pink.

"It's alright," Loris broke the silence first. "Your adrenaline was probably working overtime that evening. I am sure we will get back to there in no time. Today, we can focus on the basics just to be sure we are all caught up on it."

I went through the basics of training trying to avoid Marie's piercing gaze but there was nothing I could do about it. As soon as Loris announced that it was over, she grabbed my upper arm and began to pull me towards the palace. I tried to ignore the fact that her grip was tighter than usual and that she looked a bit disappointed.

"I thought you would be better with your powers," she drawled. "The way he spoke, it sounded like you were some master at it. What did he mean by what you did on the cliff? I didn't quite understand it."

I shrugged. "I don't know. Ryker said that there was some kind of battle but he didn't go into specifics. I could ask him if you really wanted to know."

She shook her head. "If that is part of what caused your memory loss, I think it is best if we leave it be for now. We don't want to bring up any adverse memories instead. Speaking of Ryker, how is he? I tried looking for you last night but I was told that you were with him."

She had a sly grin on her face and her eyes were alight with curiosity. I knew what she was expecting to hear but instead of answering, I just shrugged.

"Come on, Camilla, that man is head over heels for you. You should take advantage of it. You are Queen but imagine having a man like that in love with

you. It is something you should take hold of with both hands. If I had someone like that who wanted me-

She trailed off and I tried to clamp down on my irritation. She had said this exact phrase before and it wasn't any less irritating. He was my mate, not hers.

"I'm just saying, Camilla you might want to snatch that man up before someone else does. Men like him don't wait forever"

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RYKER'S POV

It was a wonder how Camilla could keep a secret of this magnitude. It had only been a few days and yet I badly needed someone to talk to about it but I couldn't. I had promised to keep her secret until we could find proof that put her fears to rest. I still didn't completely understand it but with Camilla, I barely understood. I had learned over the years to just go with it and hope that it made sense by the time we came out on the other side.

"You called for me." Christine announced as she walked into my office. I gestured for her to lock the door and her brows furrowed in confusion but she did as I asked. "Is everything alright with Camilla? Does she need something?" "It isn't about Camilla," although it was but I couldn't tell her that. "I need you to do a deep dive on Peggy and Marie. Find out whatever you can without them knowing. Send spies back to their village and get as much information on them as possible."

Her brows rose. "Is there a certain reason for this or is this an order that I cannot question."

In the months where Camilla was gone, I had grown closer to Christine than I would have imagined and in that moment, I wanted to damn everything to hell and tell her what was going on but I noticed something under my door it was a shadow, as if someone had situated themselves outside. It was barely noticeable and if I wasn't on edge, I probably would not have noticed. I held my hand to my lips and quietly walked over to the door.

Once I was there, I pulled it open quickly and I noticed Marie walking past my office. She turned to me and gave me: warm smile as if she hadn't just been snooping. I could feel Christine behind me as she came over to investigate. "Hello, Ryker," Marie curtsied slightly, her smile never dropping.

"Were you just passing by?" I asked and she nodded.

"I wanted to go out for some fresh air, the palace tends to be a bit overwhelming sometimes," she chuckled softly. "I wouldn't want to keep you, I should be going."

"Perhaps I should get a guard to go with you, so you don't get lost."

She shook her head almost too quickly. "I will be fine. I wouldn't want to bother anyone or have them babysitting me when there are more important things that they could do with their time."

"It would be an honor for any of the guards to watch over the Queen's own visitors," Christine cut in and Marie went silent when she realized we were not going to drop this. She nodded simply but I could tell that she wasn't pleased. "A guard will meet you at the front gate and they will make sure to watch over you safely."

"Thank you, Ryker, and you too, Christine," with one final curtsy, she turned on her heels and walked away.

I watched her walk away and it wasn't until her figure had completely retreated that Christine finally spoke. "I take it that it has something to do with that" I didn't bother denying, I just nodded. "Does Camilla know about this? She might not be pleased knowing that we are looking into the people that she considers family."

She spat the last word like it was a curse and I could tell that this entire situation was taking a toll on Christine. She deserved to know and it wasn't my place to tell her but I was going to do my best to convince Camilla to do so herself. The first rule of a family was "no lies" and it was about time that she started living by that.

"It was her idea actually," I said in response to her earlier question and her eyes widened considerably. "You have to be discreet about this. I don't want anyone figuring out what is happening. Also," I dropped my voice to a whisper. "be careful about what you say and where you say it. I may have caught her now but who knows how many times we haven't?"

A dark look crossed her features and she nodded. "I will get that information as quickly as possible. The spies will be out within the hour"

She walked away and before I could stop myself, I called out to her. She stopped and looked at me over the shoulder! but I couldn't bring myself to say the words. Camilla was still my mate and I owed her my loyalty. Instead, I cleared my throat.

"Thank you," I said instead and she gave me a sad smile as if she knew there was something else.

"You don't have to thank me, we are family."

I watched her walk away and once she was gone, I went in search of Camilla. I knew she was going to be in her office but that was not the place I wanted to have the conversation. She looked shocked to see me but I grabbed her arm

and pulled her out of her chair. She made a yelp of surprise but otherwise didn't try to fight me and allowed me pull her down the halls.

I could feel the maids looking at us with varying looks of amusement and curiosity but I couldn't care less about any of them as I led her up the stairs. Once we were at the door of the room, I pulled her inside and locked it behind us. Still, I didn't want to risk someone hearing us so I dragged her into the bathroom.

"Can you take one second to talk to me instead of pulling me around like a rag doll?" she asked once I let go of her arm. "I would have agreed to talk to you there"

"I didn't want to risk anyone overhearing and I am sorry if I hurt you by pulling you around," she waved me off and I hesitated before saying my next words. "You need to tell Christine."

I didnt need to elaborate, she knew exactly what I was talking about and she was very quick to shake her head. I reached out for her but she took a step back holding her hand out to stop me. I knew I was going to get this kind of reaction but that didn't mean I was prepared for it.

"Camilla-"

"No," she cut me off. "I already put this entire thing at risk by telling you, I cannot tell her too. I don't want to, Ryker and please do not make me look like the bad guy by refusing to say something."

"She is your family and all of this is hurting her badly. She misses you and she cannot be with you because she thinks you don't remember her. You know how she is, she doesn't know how to start over. She is trying but she is hurting, Camilla and that isn't fair on her"

"This entire situation isn't fair," she exclaimed and she must have realized how loud she was because she expelled a heavy breath of air. "I want to tell her, I

swear, I do but I can't. Do I just go up to her and say that I remember her and I have been pretending?"

"You said it to me."

"You can't hate me, Ryker and despite that, you have been avoiding me. Christine will never forgive me if I do that" "She will never forgive you if she finds out later. I will not force you to do anything but you know what you have to do. It is not an easy choice but it is the right one and you know it. We need all hands on deck for this and no one can keep a secret like she can."

She knew I was right, I could tell from her expression, all she needed was a little push. I closed the gap between us and wrapped my arms around her shoulders as I pulled her into my chest. I felt all the tension bleed out of her as she just smoothed herself against me. She felt like bliss and I couldn't help but wonder why I ever thought I could stay away from her.

"I wasn't avoiding you because I was pissed at you," I whispered. "I was avoiding you because I couldn't believe that didn't notice. I was avoiding you because I should have known better. Christine might be angry for a while but she will get it and she will forgive you. You just have to tell her"

She was silent for a second before nodding. "Okay, I will tell her" I made to move back but she held me tighter. "Can just have this for a few minutes more, please? I just- I can't have this in public anymore and I just wanted to-"

"You don't have to explain yourself to me," I whispered placing a soft kiss on her forehead. "We can stay here for as long as you want."Property © 2024 N0(v)eIDrama.Org.

We ended up standing there for what felt like twenty minutes before I heard a faint knock on our door. I gently pulled away from her much to my displeasure so that I could answer it and I found a guard standing there with his eyes cast to the ground.

“Is there a problem?” I asked and he shook his head. “Well, then you better have a good reason for coming to bother me.” “There is someone waiting for you at the doors of the palace, your majesty, I think it best if you come and see for yourself” I glanced back at Camilla who had come out of the bathroom and was watching the scene with apprehension. We followed the guard and all the while I tried to think of all the possible people who could be there but my mind kept drawing up blanks. I heard laughter and squealing before I saw any faces and I knew who it was. My first thought was Camilla and I turned to her.

“Will you be able to-” I began but was cut off by someone clearing their throat in front of me. I looked forward to see my sister with her arms crossed over her chest.

“Since you wouldn't invite me,” Riley began, “I thought it would be best if I invited myself.”

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Riley stood there with a wide smile on her face embracing her brother and I stilled. I wasn't prepared for this and I had no idea how we were going to navigate the now very tricky situation. I caught Christine's eye over Riley's body and she immediately rushed over to my side while Ryker attended to his sister and best friend.

“Riley is Ryker's younger sister, Damien is her mate although I'm not sure if they are mated as of now,” she explained “The last time we saw them, they had a huge fight of sorts. I don't know if it has been resolved.”

The fact that she still took time out to explain to me had me feeling guilty and I remembered Ryker's earlier words. "Christine, I need to-

"Whatever you want to say, you can talk about it later. For now, just focus on not letting them know that you don't remember," she took a step back from me as Riley's eyes finally found mine.

She rushed over to me and I allowed myself to bask in her embrace. I was aware that I was meant to be putting on a show but Riley was like my sister and I wasn't sure how long I could pretend. I remembered how things ended the last time and I was just grateful that she was here and not pissed off at us.

She pulled back from me with a smile before turning to Ryker. "I am still pissed that you sent me away the last time. What were you even thinking?"

"I was keeping you safe," he said simply and when she opened her mouth to protest, he cut her off. "Let's take you inside, okay? We have a lot that we need to talk about." He turned to Christine and Juan. "Do you think you can take the girls inside? There are a few things we have to discuss."

Christine nodded and I watched as they ushered my children inside. Ryker and Riley walked ahead and I let them have their moment. I never had siblings so I couldn't tell how hard it was for them to be apart but I was willing to give them their space. Visit Jobnib.com to read the complete chapters for free. It also gave me the chance to think about how we were going to navigate this mess we found ourselves in. Were we going to tell them I had lost my memory or were we just going to watch things play out?"

"Are you alright?" o nearly jumped when I heard Damien's voice by my ears. He was standing next to me with a concerned look on his face. "I didn't mean to scare you. You just looked lost in your own mind right there. Is everything okay?"

I nodded and gave him the best smile I could muster at the moment. "I'm good, I am just thinking about a few things."

"Right," I could tell there was more that he wanted to say so I stayed quiet to give him the chance and opportunity to do so. It took two minutes for him to finally speak up again. "When Riley told me that you both sent her back, I knew something was wrong. I tried to reach out but I didn't get any answers back."

"We had a lot going on at the time," it was a simple and vague response. "I think you should talk to Ryker if you want any questions answered. We just didn't want Riley here while we tried to fix our shit. I think it worked out well seeing as you both came together"

At my words, a small smile graced his lips. "Yeah, I finally got my own head out of my a*s long enough to see that she was the only person I needed. I didn't want to come here in the first place, I don't know how she is going to react to me being here with Christine but I wanted to put an end to things officially."

"You came to reject her," I deduced and he nodded. "We aren't officially rejected yet but the bond is so strained that can barely feel her. I just want to make sure I have a clean slate when I start over with Riley."

"I think that's a beautiful thing," I gave him a small smile. "You are not the same person who came here the last time and that is a very good thing."

We arrived in front of the room and I took a step back so he would walk in after them. I made to leave but noticed that Ryker hadn't gone in yet. He gave some excuse to Riley about giving her time to relax and meeting up again at dinner then he made his way over to me. I looked around trying to see if Marie or Peggy was around. I couldn't see either of them but I couldn't shake the feeling that I was being watched.

“Are they here?” he asked and I shrugged. Content belongs to
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“I don't know, they might be.”

I hadn't realized how difficult it would be to do this until today. He sighed and turned me to face him. He reached out to tuck a strand of hair away from my face before suddenly pinning me against the wall. The breath was knocked out of my throat and he leaned down so that his lips were brushing mine.

“What are you doing?” I whispered. I couldn't concentrate, my mind was moving a mile a minute.

“No one can see us this way. They'll probably think I'm trying to seduce you or something,” he drawled. “Do you want me to tell her that you lost your memory or what?”

“No,” I decided and his brows furrowed. “If I had truly lost my memory, I wouldn't want anyone to know and that includes her”

“This is more complicated than it needs to be,” he sounded slightly annoyed and I couldn't blame him. If I were in his position, I would have been annoyed too. “We are in over our heads, Camilla, we need to find something and we need to find it soon or this entire thing is going to blow up.”

He pulled back from me before I could respond and walked away. It took me a full minute to regain my composure and get the redness out of my cheeks. I needed to get out of there as soon as possible and was rushing towards my room. I wasn't paying attention to where I was going and bumped into Christine. She was holding a glass of water that shattered on the ground and spilled all over both of us.

“I am so sorry,” I apologized but she waved me off. I bent down to retrieve the pieces but she grabbed my upper arm and gestured to one of the maids who was already rushing over.

While the maid was cleaning, she leaned in and whispered. "You are Queen, Camilla, you cannot be picking up pieces of glass." She turned back to the maid with a smile. "Thank you."

She pulled me away before I could say another word and I realized that we were well and truly alone. I could have told her but I couldn't help but be terrified of her response. Christine was a terrifying person even when she didn't want to be.

"I can feel you staring at me," she drawled. "What exactly is the problem? Do you need something?"

"No, actually, I wanted to tell you that-"

The words died on my lips when I noticed Peggy making her way over to us. She was chatting animatedly with a guard who seemed more than happy to keep her company. It didn't seem like she was eavesdropping but it was a weird coincidence that she managed to show up just as I was about to speak. I wasn't sure if it was the goddess' way of telling me to stay silent or if it was a mere happenstance and I was reading too much into it.

"Camilla," Peggy smiled when she saw me. She thanked the guard and waved him off. Once he was gone, she turned to me. "I heard there was a new visitor. Apparently she is related to you? I didn't know you had such a family."

"She is related to Ryker, actually," I corrected. "She is his little sister and she is here with her mate."

"Does she know about-" she trailed off and I knew what she wanted to ask.

I shook my head and Peggy gave me a sad smile. She reached out to place a warm hand on my shoulder and that was all Christine needed to make up some weird excuse and walk away. I wanted to ask her to stay but I couldn't find it in myself to form the words.

“Did I do something to upset her?” Peggy asked but I shook my head. “Oh, I see, you were having a moment and I interrupted it. I understand, she is your family and she is probably not used to having to share you with other people”

“I don’t know if that is it.”

She laughed. “She is family, Camilla, she is jealous and rightly so. We are intruders and she probably just wants her sister back. You should go find her, I am not going anywhere. We can talk later”

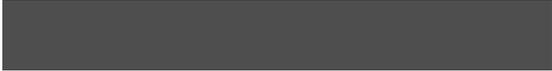
She gave my hand a warm squeeze and I watched her walk away. I waited until she was gone before I went in search of Christine. She wasn't in the offices or in the gardens. Her room was the last option and I knew that if I met her eyes, I was going to chicken out so I had it all worked out. Once I got to her door, I took in a deep breath and pulled I open. I shut the door behind me and blurted out the words.

“I remember everything. I have been pretending that I hadn't gotten my memory back but I cannot hide it from you and I know you're going to hate me and I am sorry.”

“What?”

My eyes flew open when I realized it was Juan's voice I heard. My cheeks flushed as I took in Christine with the covers pulled up to her chest. I didn't need to be a mind reader to know what exactly had been going on before I walked in. I wanted the ground to open up and swallow me. I had never been so mortified in my life.

“I think I'll just wait outside,” I mumbled before rushing out as quickly as I could.



CAMILLA'S POV

I ran my hands down my face trying to wash away the images that were now permanently etched into my brain. Seeing Christine like that was not on my bucket list of things to do and I couldn't help but wonder if somehow I had made everything worse by storming into the room when she was with her mate. I waited a full five minutes before the door opened and Juan stepped out.

I didn't want to meet his gaze for fear that there would be some kind of anger or betrayal in them but then he placed his hand on my shoulder in a warm and comforting manner and I couldn't stop myself from looking up. His eyes didn't hold any of those emotions, he just gave me a warm smile.

"She is waiting inside," he said softly and I made to move but he held me in place. "She can be a bit unreasonable and I don't know why you chose to do this but I believe it was for a good reason. She will come to understand it, sooner or later."

I didn't know how much I needed to hear those words until he had said them. I blinked back the moisture that had gathered in my eyes and with one last comforting smile, I watched him start to walk away when I changed my mind and called out to him.

"This will seem like an absurd statement but can you stay?" I asked and his brows furrowed. "Not inside, I just want to know if you can stay close by to make sure that no one is eavesdropping or listening in"

His brows furrowed. "Does someone always listen in on your conversations?"

"I don't know, sometimes I think so and I don't want anyone to overhear this. I know it sounds stupid but you have to trust me on this. I also don't want anyone knowing that Christine and I are speaking. It might prove to be-"

He waved me off. "I'll be here, don't worry and no one will know."

I silently thanked him before finally making my way into the room. Christine was seated on the bed but this time she was dressed in one of her night gowns. Her hands were crossed over her chest and her face was carefully blank and devoid of all emotion. I hated it because it meant I had to guess how she felt, I had to guess how hurt or not she was "Christine-" I began but she held up a hand to stop me.

"Let me get this straight, you have been lying to all of us the entire time," I wanted to refute her words but it was the truth and I wasn't going to put Ryker in trouble by saying I had told him earlier. "So this is why Ryker asked me to look into them. I thought he was just being worried but in truth, you had lied to us and he knew about it

"He didn't, I only told him a few days ago. It hasn't even been up to a week since I did, I swear," I wasn't sure if she believed me especially considering she just turned away from me. "I wanted to tell you, I hated hiding it from you but-"

"But why and you better have a fucking good explanation for this because Camilla, I am five seconds away from asking you to get the hell out of my room and never looking at you again. I have mourned your loss every single day since you walked into this palace wondering if I would ever get you back and you were just pretending the entire time. How could I have been so stupid?"

"Something is up with Marie and Peggy."

She snorted. "Even I could have told you that"

“No, you don’t understand.”

I explained everything to her as best as I could and she was silent the entire time. I wanted Christine to understand me, I couldn't bear having both her and Ryker pissed off at me, I wasn't sure if I would be able to survive it. He was my mate but she was my best friend, she was my sister and I couldn't do this without her. It was one of the reasons I wanted to keep her safe, I didn't want to include her in whatever mess was forming. I didn't mince any words and explained as best as I could. By the time I was done speaking, she had her hands crossed over her chest and her lips were turned downward.

“I know it is a stupid excuse, Ryker told me as much when I told him but I truly do believe that something is wrong and I need to get to the bottom of it before I start making any obvious decisions. Please tell me that you understand.”

“As a member of the royal family, I understand,” I let out a sigh of relief but she stood to her feet and came to stand directly in front of me. “But as your sister, I am pissed off as hell that you wouldn't talk to me about this. I have kept all your secrets, I have fought all your battles, what made you think that I wouldn't be willing or able to fight this one.”

“Because you're pregnant,” I whispered and she stilled. She took a slow step back and glanced at the door but I shook my head. “It is like you said, you are my sister and I noticed. I knew you wanted to tell me and that was more of a reason why I wanted to hide it from you. I knew you would demand to be involved and Christine, what you need right now is to be happy and focused on yourself”

I had figured out about her pregnancy less than a week back into the palace. Her movements were subtle but I always caught her rubbing her hand over her belly softly and then glancing at me after as if she wanted to say something to me. I noticed that she was more tired than usual as well and I

just put the pieces together but I didn't want to say anything until I had confirmed it which I just did.

She ran her hands through her hair and sunk back into the bed. "You still should have told me. I can help without being involved. You did stupid as hell things while pregnant too."

"I did," I answered with a small laugh. "That is exactly why I know I don't want you doing the same. I want you and that child safe and I will not apologize for lying to you about it."

She opened her mouth to speak but a knock on the door cut her off. She turned to me in confusion but I held a hand to my lips as Juan started speaking. "Sweetheart, you really need to get dressed faster. I don't know why you won't let me be in there."

"What is he-" she began but I cut her off.

"Someone is close by and might be listening," I responded in a slow whisper. "Can you open the door and poke your head out so it doesn't seem like anything is going on in here?"

She nodded and did exactly as I had asked. Juan met my eye through the slightly open door and gave me a discreet nod. I knew he was going to handle everything and when she shut the door, Christine turned back to me.

"I guess you weren't really overreacting." This content © Nôv/eIDr(a)m/a.Org.

"Why do you say that?"

"Marie was outside," she explained. "Apparently she was looking for you."

Once Marie was gone, I snuck out of the room after Christine had promised to try and get as much information as possible as soon as she could. I should have gone looking for Marie after but I didn't want to be around her just yet. I needed a few minutes to myself to figure out what was going on so I made my

way into Audrey's room. She was seated cross legged in bed and when she saw me, her eyes widened to the point of saucers and she rushed over to me.

“Hey, sweetheart,” I whispered carrying her in a front piggy back as I made my way over to the chair overlooking the balcony. “I missed you.”

“I missed you too,” she whispered against my shoulder and without missing a beat, she started telling me everything she had done during the day.

I just sat there listening to her talk and it was amazing how much it did to calm me. I didn't realize just how much I had missed being able to just be with my daughters. It had been maids and work and I saw her every day but it didn't feel enough. We just sat there together on that chair for what felt like mere minutes but in reality was about two hours before the door creaked open revealing Ryker. He looked between Audrey and I and I saw his eyes soften considerably.

“Aurora is right next door, if she had waken up, I wouldn't know,” I explained but he didn't seem to need it. He just made his way over to me and placed both hands on my shoulders. “Are you still upset?”

“Why is daddy upset with you?” Audrey jumped in and Ryker laughed.

“I'm not upset with your mother. I just needed some time to clear her head because she was keeping secrets.” “Secrets are bad,” she frowned and Ryker hummed as he placed a soft kiss in the center of my head.

“Your mum knows that now and I am fairly certain that she won't do that again,” he reached around me to take Audrey from my arms. “Come, princess, we have dinner to get to and you haven't told me about your day yet.

“I told mummy.”

“Now you get to tell me.”

They were still talking when the door flew open and both Christine and Juan rushed in. Christine had an eager look on her face and Ryker must have seen it too because he handed Audrey over to Juan and promised to be there soon. "What is it?" I asked once Audrey was gone and she held out what looked like a sealed letter.

"I wrote to the mayor of the town about Marie and Peggy. I just heard back from them."

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CAMILLA'S POV

As much as I wanted to hear what Christine had to say, I couldn't do that immediately. We still had dinner to attend to and so I sat at that table anxiously waiting and tapping my feet wondering what the hell she could have figured out to make her excited like that. It was incredibly hard to keep up pretenses when my mind was anywhere but the dinner and I muttered a prayer to the goddess that I didn't slip up or do anything to jeopardize my carefully crafted plan.

After dinner, I picked up Aurora with the intention of going to put her in bed when I heard Marie calling out to me. I froze mid-step and muttered a small prayer under my breath before turning to her. She was running to catch up to me and when she finally got there, she had a hand on her chest to calm her breathing.

"Are you alright?" I asked and she nodded. "If you would like to sit down for a second then-"

“I have been looking for you all day, didn’t anyone tell you?” she asked and I shook my head. “I checked your room and your office, hell, I even went to Christine to check for you but something seems to be up with her and her mate. They have been acting a little weird.”

I feigned confusion. “What do you mean by weird?” This content ©
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“Are you sure that they are actual mates? He was outside while she was changing or some shit like that. It just seemed completely awkward. I think they might be hiding something.”

“I can try to ask but I can’t remember if they are,” I forced my expression into one of sadness and confusion. Marie placed both hands on either side of my shoulder and smiled.

“It’s fine, we can figure it out later. It isn’t the most important thing right now,” she glanced over at Aurora in my arms. “I see you are getting used to the children. How does it feel being a mother?”

I shrugged. “I don’t know, I’m trying to get used to it. Ryker says that I used to tuck them in and now they don’t sleep unless I am the one doing it. I keep hoping it would spark some memories but I am getting nothing.”

It was almost scary how easy it was for me to lie and how easily she was eating it up. She reached out to touch Aurora and in that moment, I knew I was going to pull back. It was going to cause some suspicion on her part but the thought of her touching my daughter didn’t sit right with me. Thankfully, I didn’t have to because footsteps began making their way towards us and she pulled back of her own accord. I let out a sigh of relief but that was short lived when I saw Riley make her way over to me.

“If I didn’t know better, I would say that you were avoiding me,” she mused.
“Can we take a walk?”

I glanced over at Marie silently pleading with her to stay. I would have rather taken her over Riley because with her, I knew how to act. I wasn't sure how to put on a show for Riley but she gave me a sad smile before slowly slinking away. Riley was still watching me with a question in her eyes so I sighed and nodded.

“I have to meet with Ryker and Christine, we have a few things we need to talk about,” I explained and she frowned. “Did I do something wrong?” she asked and my brows furrowed in confusion. “If this is about the last time then I am so sorry. I know I said things I shouldn't have but I was just angry, I didn't know what was happening, I didn't want to see Damien and I thought I was being chased away by the people I considered family. Please, I just need you to stop avoiding me.”

“I'm not, Riley.”

She snorted. “I might be younger than everyone in this palace but I am not stupid. You haven't stopped to speak to me and right now it seems like you would rather be anywhere but with me. I know what I said before and I know that words can be difficult to forget but you are my sister, Camilla and I am sorry.”

I paused in my tracks and turned to her. “It isn't about you, I swear. A lot has happened since you left and-sometimes time takes its toll. I am not avoiding you, this is your home, and you can be here as much as you want.”

That seemed to get rid of whatever fears she had because her eyes watered and I saw her discreetly trying to wipe them away. She reached out for Aurora and this time, I didn't hesitate and handed her over. I trusted Riley with my life, I trusted Riley with my daughters, they knew her and they loved her.

“Do you want to tell me how you and Damien came back together?” I asked and her cheeks heated. “You don't have to tell me now, it is a story I would like to hear at some point in time.”

“I will tell you, I just-" she trailed off. “I want to talk to Ryker about it first. I was undeniably rude to him the last time and I think he deserves to know first.”

“That's fine, let's go put Aurora to sleep so I can find Christine before she kills me.”

We walked in silence and for the first time in a long time, things felt normal. I felt like myself again walking with Riley She didn't know any of the bad things that had happened and she was just a bundle of sunshine. She held Aurora all the way to her room where both Christine and Ryker were already waiting. They looked at us with varying levels of concern but I tried to tune them out. At least for the next few seconds, I still wanted peace.

“Perhaps we can talk tomorrow,” Riley suggested once Aurora was down for bed and I nodded.

“I'd like that, thank you.”

She gave me a warm smile before leaving and the moment she was gone, Ryker turned to me. “Is everything okay?” “Yeah, she doesn't know or suspect a thing,” I gave him my version of a smile. “Can we go somewhere more private to talk about this? I don't want anyone to overhear.”

“I have the perfect place,” Christine announced before leading us towards the secret library.

I had forgotten the place even existed. It looked untouched and it was a great place to speak because first of all, no one knew about it and second, it was well hidden that no one would overhear us. I wasn't sure if Ryker or Christine had called for Juan but he was seated on one of the armchairs just watching

me. I cocked a brow and he just smiled. "You really fooled us," he mused. "I thought you had seriously lost your memory."

"I did lose it, I just got it back and didn't tell anyone."

"Is there a specific reason? I don't want the bullshit you gave them about not knowing. Something made you apprehensive of them."

"It was the day I pulled Peggy out of the water. It just seemed too perfect, you know? She has lived in that place her whole life and she has never fallen in. How could she live there and not know how to swim? It just seemed perfectly set up. After I got my memory, that part stood out to me and I got suspicious for lack of better words."

He stared at me unblinking for a minute before humming. "That makes sense I guess. Don't worry, I'm not as pissed as the others that you lied to us."

"That's because you're an unfeeling robot," Christine shot at him before turning to me. "So, are we going to talk about this letter or not?" everyone immediately went silent and she handed it over to me. "We can read the letter or I can just summarize what I found out to make things easier"

I gestured for her to go on. I would have loved to read it myself but I wasn't sure I would be able to sit down long enough to make out any of the words. Neither men reached out for it either so she cleared her throat and began explaining.

"The spies went to them to ask about Peggy and Marie and they had enough to say about Peggy, but not enough about Marie," my brows furrowed in confusion but she continued. "Apparently, Peggy is a single mother that everyone loves but her daughter was not the brightest tool in the shed. I couldn't get specifics but there was an incident concerning Marie."

"I know about that," I cut in. "Peggy told me that Marie liked a boy and he along with her best friend took her into the woods and tried to attack her?"

“Tried?” she asked opening the envelope and pulling out a piece of paper. She slid it over to me. “They didn't try, they assaulted her. They cornered her and beat her within n inch of her life. They also fed her a very heavy dose of wolf's bane.”

The thought of them doing that to someone, it was enough to have me nearly throwing up. I couldn't hear any more, just wanted to know she got justice.

“What happened to them after that?”

“I don't know, there was no proof that they did it but speculation says so. All I know is that according to that letter, Marie was badly hurt and had been in the hospital for years until a few months ago when you happened to walk into that pack, she died”

I scoffed. “What are you talking about? Marie is right here in the palace with us. I just spoke to her a few minutes ago”

“Not according to their hospital reports. According to those reports, Marie is dead. I don't know who the hell is in thi palace with us but it is not her”

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RYKER'S POV

Of all the things I expected to hear, a dead or rather undead person would not have been my first few guesses. I stared at Christine wondering if she had misread but her expression didn't change. Juan and Camilla were asking questions but I took the envelope out of her hands and started reading through it expecting to see something different from what she had said but it was the same thing detailing the situations around Marie's death.

"If she has been dead this entire time," I began cutting everyone off and making them turn to me. "How did you not realize? The people should have been concerned seeing a dead person walking around the town, don't you think?" "Everything seemed normal," Camilla looked like she had just been thrown for a loop. "I swear it, if I felt anything was amiss, I would have said it a long time ago. Everyone spoke to her, it doesn't make sense that they would say this now. She was with us the entire time."

"She is right, I was there for a few hours but if someone saw a ghost, they would have mentioned it"

"So what are you saying?" I crossed my arms over my chest. "Either this report is false or something was going on while you were in that town. How else would an entire town be able to forget that someone is dead especially if they died in a way as brutal as this?"

I tossed the envelope on the table between us. No one dared to speak and as I ran my hands through my hair, I realized just how truly amusing the entire situation was. We had dealt with vampires, other werewolves and practically everything you could think to deal with. I wondered if the goddess was seated and watching us while laughing. I wondered if she had more in store or if she was finally going to look at us one day and decide that we had enough and it was time to give us a break.

"Magic," Camilla's voice was barely over a whisper and I would have not heard her if she wasn't seated next to me. "What happened to magic?" I had a feeling I knew where she was going but it wasn't something I wanted to consider. "You asked what could possibly make an entire town forget that someone died and there is only one answer- magic. That is the only thing powerful enough to make an entire town forget and I know one witch who is-

"NO! I cut her off.

She was taken aback by how vehemently I was against it. I hadn't meant to yell at her but the mere thought of Reina being back was not something I wanted to entertain. It had almost cost me everything the last time we had to face her. Besides, she was meant to be dead.

“Ryker, it is the only logical option at this point,” she whispered reaching out for me but I brushed off her hand. “What is logical is that Reina is dead,” I shut her down. “You stabbed her with the knife, it was meant to kill her, I saw her bleed, I saw her fall, I saw you-” I choked out on the last part. “You both fell, she should be dead.”

“I should be dead too but I am here and I am alive. She could be too. I don't want her to but-”

“I found her body,” I cut her off and she fell silent. “A few weeks after you went missing, I found her body downstream. It was in the opposite direction from where we ended up finding you. It was her body that made me centralize my search because I hoped that since I found her there, it also meant that I would find you there.”

I hadn't meant to be that blunt but I needed her to know that. I needed her to realize that this wasn't Reina and I was all the more happy for it because I couldn't imagine having to deal with Reina again. To avoid an incomplete reading experience, visit Jobn'i'b.com. I didn't want to deal with any witch but Reina was a special case. Just the thought of her was enough to have me breaking out in worry.

“How about we relax before jumping to conclusions about who she is?”

Christine cut in. “I can try to look into them more but I doubt I will find anything. Why don't we just confront her about it?”

“What do you want me to say? Do you want me to just walk up to her and say ‘hey, Marie, I know you are secretly dead and you are a witch?’ I am sure that will go over well,” Camilla snorted and Christine narrowed her eyes.

They rarely argued but I could feel this turning into one so I decided to interrupt. “What if you talk to Peggy? She might still be under the effects of the spell. If there is any way to break the spell, she might be able to tell us more.” “How do I do that?”

“Maybe try asking her about the situation in detail and keep pushing the fact that Marie died. It might spark a memory, you never know,” Camilla still didn't seem convinced so I grabbed both of her shoulders and turned her to face me. “I know this is an extremely sensitive thing to ask of you but I need you to do this. You are the one that has a relationship with them and you are the one that they will listen to.”

“I can try,” she said finally and that was all I needed from her. I placed a kiss on her forehead and I felt her melt into my hold. She stayed like that for a few minutes, no one spoke or even dared to breathe loud until she pulled back. “I should go, Marie might start looking for me anytime soon. She is already suspicious of me because she thinks I am avoiding her”

I wanted to ask her to stay but she walked out of the room without looking back and I knew it had more to do with avoiding me than it had to do with meeting Marie. Once she was gone, I turned back to Christine and Juan who were still standing in the quiet room.

“Do you think it is Reina?” I asked.

“Well, we found her body and-”

“That wasn't what I asked,” I cut Christine off and she sighed.

“I think there is so much we don't know and I don't want to jump to conclusions until we find out the truth. I am tired, Ryker and I don't know if I

can do this so please, I don't want to think about Reina or anyone else right now.”

I had never seen Christine look so fragile and worried. Juan reached out for her and for once, she didn't hesitate, she just sunk into her mate's hold. That was how I knew something was definitely wrong.

“What is it?” she opened her mouth to say something but I cut her off. “Don't lie, I don't want you to lie”

“I'm pregnant,” she whispered and I froze. There was a little guilt in her eyes meaning she had known for a while and she still chose to hide it from me. “I wanted to tell her first. I didn't want to hide it, I just wanted her to know first. She is my sister.”

“I know,” I gave her a small smile. “You will be an amazing mother, Christine. You should go rest.”

“Don't do that,” she frowned. “I know that look because Juan has that look. You are not going to cage me up and prevent me from helping just because I am having a baby.”

I was not going to admit or deny it. Instead, I cleared my throat and turned on my heels. It wasn't until I was by the exit that I spoke. “Goodnight, Christine, you should rest.”

I didn't need to look at her face to know that she was upset but I didn't care, she was going to rest whether she wanted to or not. She was pregnant and I didn't know. There was anger and frustration on my end for not even noticing. If I had dragged my head out of my a*s long enough, I would have seen it. I would have noticed the signs.

I was so wrapped up in my own guilt that I didn't notice someone yelling out my name until a hand touched my shoulder. I reacted so fast but the owner of said hand was equally as quick. This content © Nôv/eIDr(a)m/a.Org.

I frowned at Damien. "I'm sorry, I kept calling out for you but you didn't stop. I figured you didn't hear me."

I ran my hands down my face trying to hide the obvious frustration. "It is late, Damien, do you need something? Shouldn't you be with Riley?"

"I should, but I couldn't stay there, I needed some air," I just hummed knowing he was going to tell me what the problem was regardless of whether or not I asked. "Do you know where I can find Christine?"

I narrowed my eyes at him. "It is almost midnight. What the hell do you need Christine for?"

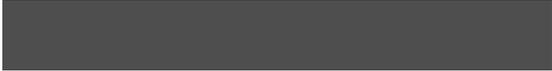
"I- I want to do it before I have to see Riley. I couldn't do it at dinner and I have been trying to find her"

"Did you consider the fact that she was with her mate like you should be right now?" he flinched like I had hit him. "Look, you are trying to be honorable but you need to go back to that room and be with her. You can see Christine tomorrow."

He frowned but he knew I was right. "Fine, but why aren't you with Camilla? Shouldn't we all be with our mates?" "Why don't you focus on your love triangle and leave me to worry about my mate, hm?" I tapped him on the shoulder in a slightly condescending way. "Go to bed, Damien and please, don't go looking for strange women in the middle of the night. It is weird."

He flipped me off and I couldn't hide my smile as he walked off. I watched him leave and was on my way back to the room when I heard a sound, something akin to footsteps.





CAMILLA'S POV

I checked Marie's room first and I found her lying face first on the large bed. She always slept like the dead which I found ironic knowing now that the real Marie was supposed to be... dead. I wanted to go in and check on her but at the same time didn't want to risk waking her. There was still a lot I didn't know and I wasn't sure if I would be able to control my emotions around her.

I took a step back and made to leave when I got a whiff of something so bad, it smelled almost rotten. The smell nearly knocked me off my feet and I was about to take a step in to investigate when someone cleared their throat next to me. I looked up and found Peggy. She had a warm smile on her face as she analyzed me.

"Is everything okay?" she asked and I nodded slowly. "If you want to see Marie I think you are better off coming tomorrow. You know how she can be once she falls asleep. I wouldn't want you to wake her up and have her go bat shit crazy on you."

I forced a small smile on my face. "Of course, just let her know that I came looking." I noticed she was still staring at me. "How long has this smell been in your room?"

"I don't know a few days maybe," she shrugged dismissively. "I was going to look into it but I lost track of time and I never seemed to be able to get to it."

"You don't have to do it," I placed a hand on her shoulder and gestured to the wideness of the hallway. "You are in a palace and you are lucky because apparently, I am Queen. I'll have someone look into it tomorrow. I don't even know how you manage with this, it is horrible."

"Thank you, Camilla, you are amazing."

I gave her a warm smile and a tight bear hug before finally walking away. I felt her eyes on me until I turned down the next hallway and I stopped the first maid I saw to give her the order. I knew they wouldn't be able to do it tonight, but at least I had done my part and delivered the instruction. To avoid an incomplete reading experience, visit Jobn'i'b.com. I was exhausted and just wanted to climb in bed and fall asleep. I was desperate for a few seconds of ignorant bliss where I could just forget about everything and be trapped in my own dream world.

I was making my way up the stairs when I noticed Ryker coming the same way I was. "I thought you would have gone to bed by now."

"I would have but I saw Peggy walking the halls. It seemed like she was looking for something but she told me she was looking for you," my brows furrowed. "I told her that you had probably gone up to sleep."

"That's weird because I saw Peggy. I went to Marie's room and Peggy met me there. She didn't say anything about looking for me. She even asked me to come back later to talk to Marie," I ran my hands down my face in frustration. "What the hell is going on?"

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"This is one of those times that I wished I had an answer for you. We just do our part and try our best to figure out what is happening."

I placed my fingers on either side of my temple and exhaled deeply. We were already at the door to our room but I felt so exhausted that I wasn't even sure if I could take the next steps by myself. Ryker didn't push, didn't say a single word, he just placed his hand on the small of my back and gently led me in. Once we were in, he helped me out of my clothes and put me into one of my most comfortable night gowns.

He pulled the pins out of my hair and carried me into bed. All I had to do was curl up into his side while he ran his fingers through my hair. The air was thick with silence and worry as both our thoughts swirled like dark clouds over us.

"I'm sorry that I didn't tell you I got my memory back," I whispered. "If I did, perhaps we could have gotten to the end of this sooner."

"It's okay," he pressed a kiss to my head. "What is done is done, all we can do is focus on what we have right now and we can make do with it"

"I love you."

"I love you too."

Ryker was out of bed by the time I woke up. I managed to drag myself out of bed and towards the field for training. Thankfully, Loris was the only one out there and I could finally train properly without having anyone asking a million different questions. It felt good to be able to let go of my powers and explore the true extent of it.

"I knew you were pretending the first day," Loris said after training and I raised a brow. "I know you, your majesty, and I have been training you for years now. I know what your powers look like, I know what you look like when you are trying. You were not trying that day at all. You didn't even look like you moved an inch."

I gave him a small smile and a shrug. "I didn't feel like showing off. I had no reason to do so."

"Is it really about showing off or you just didn't want her to see?" he asked but I stayed silent. We both knew the answer to that and I had no intentions of giving it to him verbally. "It doesn't matter anyway, what matters is that you were able to train today. Your powers have grown incredibly."

"Thank you, I have a very good teacher"

"You are a very good student," he dusted his clothes as he stood to his feet. "If you would agree, I would prefer if our training sessions remained private."

Your powers have grown inexplicably and I think we would need a bigger and more private place”

I knew part of it was because he knew I wanted to be alone during training. He was never going to answer if I had asked him directly but we both knew what it was. I gave him a small smile and gave a curt nod to show that I appreciated it. Without another word, he bowed and walked away leaving me alone in the garden.

Once he was gone, I made my way into the house fully prepared to throw myself into work when I saw Peggy walking down the halls. I realized it was a good enough time to catch her unawares and ask a few questions so I rushed over to her. I was aware that I was still in my training clothes but I didn't want to risk losing her.

“Hey, do you have a second?” I asked and she nearly jumped. She placed a hand on her chest as she tried to calm her breathing. “I am sorry, I didn't mean to scare you. It's just been a while since we sat down to have a conversation Do you think we could talk over breakfast?”

She had a small smile on her face and nodded without hesitation. We walked to the dining room and I was relieved when I found it empty. She took the seat next to me and all the maids were quick to place our food in front of us. “How have you been enjoying the palace?” I asked and she shrugged. “I know I have been really busy. I never realize just how hard it was to be Queen. I just wanted to check up on you... and Marie.”

Her brows furrowed and she stilled slightly. “We are good. Marie is getting used to the palace life. I keep telling her that we will have to return but she isn't very happy about that. You may have noticed but she doesn't exactly like the town.”

I was grateful for the opening and I jumped in before it passed. "Is it because of what happened to her?" she stilled. "I know you don't like talking about it but I am Queen now and I could get justice for her. If you told me what happened then maybe I could-"

"I don't think Marie would be happy if I told you. I already said too much before and we are lucky that she doesn't know about it"

I could see her already pulling back but I couldn't have that. I stood from my seat and grabbed both of her hands in mine as I squatted in front of her. If any maid were to see us like this, it would be the gossip of the century. I was the Queen, I knelt for no one but in this situation, I was willing to overlook it as long as I got what I wanted.

"Marie is your daughter and you want to protect her but she is my sister," the lies burned my throat but I needed to get them out. "I want what is best for her and she will be glad in the long run. They don't deserve to get away with what they did. They hurt her and I want to make sure that they pay. That is why I was given this position."

She sighed but I could see that I was winning her over.

"Let me help, Marie. Let me make it right for her"

"I already told you the summary of what happened. They took her into the woods and my girl was not the same. She was beaten within an inch of her life, she was-" her voice caught in her throat. "It was a miracle that she managed to run because of how badly she was hurt"

"I thought you said she was beaten," I cut in and Peggy froze. "if she was beaten then how did she run? Was she found instead? Did someone take her to the hospital?"

She seemed confused. "What are you saying? She wasn't found, she was-she was hurt. She was beaten, no, she was in the-you're confusing me."

“Peggy,” I reached out for her but she slapped my hand away hard and I hissed. “I just want to-”

“I cannot talk about this,” she stood to her feet abruptly, ignoring the food she left behind. “I am sorry, Camilla. Som things should be left to rest.”

The Rejected Werewolf Princess Chapter 220



CAMILLA'S POV

“She just walked out without saying anything else?” Christine asked after I had finished explaining everything that happened with Peggy and I nodded. “Was she confused or something? Maybe she didn’t understand what it was that you were trying to ask.”

“She understood,” I sighed deeply. “Her story didn’t align. At first she said that she managed to run away and get to the hospital then she said she was beaten within an inch of her life. I think that whatever made the people forget is making her mix up the stories. I don’t know if it is weaker or she was just remembering the truth but something is up.”

There were sighs all around. We were in the private library which has somewhat become our meeting point. Juan was sitting next to Christine and holding her hand, they were better at hiding their emotions on a good day but I could tell that they were worried about this. This wasn’t something we were experienced in and neither of us knew where or how to start.

“Perhaps you could try talking to her again,” Ryker suggested and I nodded. It was the only option we had. She was the only one who could tell us what was happening without us rousing suspicion. “In the meantime, I have guards

keeping an eye on Marie. She hasn't done anything suspicious yet, she just stays in her room."

I exhaled deeply before turning to Christine. "Did you find out anything about them from their town? Was there any suspicious news?"

She shook her head. "The answers are still the same. They don't even remember you. It is as if the last few months were wiped out of their brains. I have done everything save for going there myself. I don't know what else to do. If you want me to-"

"No," I cut her off. "You have done more than enough. We just have to put more pressure on Peggy. She definitely has something and she can tell us. I trust her, I just need to know how to get the information out of her. In the meantime we just do what Ryker said and just try to avoid suspicion. I don't want her knowing that we are aware. There is too much at stake here with the girls and-"

I trailed off not knowing if Christine had told Ryker yet about her pregnancy. She gave me a warm smile before nodding letting me know that it was alright.

"She is within the palace walls and has access to us and the kids. Riley is here too and I don't want anyone getting hurt when they don't have to," I said finally. "Let us try to keep this as discreet as possible, okay?"

There were nods all around and we finally stood to our feet. There was a lot of work to attend to and we couldn't be away from the palace for too long without rousing suspicion as to where we were.

"I have to meet with the guards," Ryker whispered to me. "Juan is coming with me and I don't want to get him worried but can you keep an eye on Christine? Damien wants to speak to her about the bond and I don't want her to be alone when that happens."

My eyes widened. "He told me he was going to do it and I believed him but I didn't think he would actually-"

He shook his head warning me to be silent and to say I was stunned would have been an understatement but I was also relieved. It was about time that he started acting like a man worthy of Riley. I couldn't stop my small smile. I would have liked for everyone to be with their mate just like Ryker and I but the truth was that I was happy because everyone else was happy. It worked out for everyone.

"She might not be happy to see him," I whispered back. "Remember how things ended the last time? He didn't accept her rejection. He is the reason they are still bonded."

"I know, let us just hope that he does the right thing now for everyone involved."

He kissed my forehead and I watched him disappear with Ryker. Once they were gone, Christine spoke. "Do you think he will be a good father?"

"Juan?" I asked and she nodded. "I do, actually, I know he is great with Audrey, I can only imagine how he will be with his own children."

"Do you think I will be a good mother?"

I scoffed. "Christine, sometimes I worry that you are more of a mother to Audrey than I am because how often I am incapacitated or busy. You will be amazing and you will love this child. You will fail sometimes but that's the thing about being a parent, you aren't perfect, you just have to try your best."

A weight seemed to disappear from her shoulders. I couldn't help but wonder how long she wanted to ask that question. It seemed like it had been plaguing her for a while and I was grateful and relieved that I was able to help her out so much. I couldn't help but think back on Ryker's words and a part of me knew that this was not the right time for Damien to speak to her. She had so

much on her mind already and yet there was not much that I could say or do as we walked out of the library. I prayed that we wouldn't bump into Damien and for a minute, it seemed like my prayers were being answered until I saw him turn the corner.

I tried to shake my head at him but his eyes were fixated on Christine. When she saw him, she stilled and turned to me with wide eyes. Her hand was clutching mine for dear life and all I could do was give her a small smile. She was not going to run, I knew her well enough to know that Christine never backed down from a fight. It didn't matter if that fight was going to ruin her, she was going to stay.

"Hey, I was wondering if maybe we could talk," he went straight to the point without missing a beat. I knew he wanted me to leave but I had zero intentions of doing that especially not after I had promised Ryker that I wouldn't. "I don't want to bother you much, I just, I have to do this."

"Camilla stays," I was surprised when she said that. I would have thought that she would have sent me away. Damien looked shocked by her words but he nodded and that was how we made our way into the nearest hallway. It was deserted. "Get to the point, Damien, I need to find my mate."

He sighed but said no words. I couldn't imagine how difficult it was for them to stand in front of each other knowing everything that had happened. I felt like a third wheel standing awkwardly to the side. I would have stepped back to give them privacy but Christine was holding my hand in a tight grip and she didn't seem to have any plans of letting go. When Damien didn't speak, she frowned.

"Did you call me here to stare at me?" she asked incredulously. "Does Riley even know that you are here? I am finally happy after everything and I do not want a repeat of what happened the last time. I don't want any trouble with you. I already-"

“I wanted to apologize,” he cut her off and I could see the surprise in her features. “What I did before- I was stupid. I didn’t realize that I was hurting two very amazing women and I am sorry for that, Christine. I had time to think and time to grow and I know now that you always deserved better, you both do. I just want to apologize.”

It was clear that she was taken off guard. “I accept your apology.”

“I also wanted to officially put this to an end. It was disrespectful of me to not accept your rejection in the first place You don't need that baggage holding you down and if I have any hope of a future with Riley, I don't need it either, so I accept your rejection Christine.”

I wasn't sure if it was because she was already mated to Juan but the pain didn't hit as hard as it should have, still, I saw the hurt flash in her eyes and she took a slow step back from him. I watched them carefully and the moment her hand slipped from mine, I took a step back to give them a semblance of privacy.

“Thank you for doing that,” she whispered softly and he gave her a curt nod. “I wish you nothing but the best with Riley. You both would be amazing together.”

“I could say the same about you and Juan. He makes you look relaxed, you don't look like you have a stick shoved up your a*s all the time.”

She laughed. If someone had told me that Damien would be making Christine laugh, I would have called them insane yet it was all unfolding in front of me. He gave her a warm smile and I watched as they shook hands. It was the first interaction had ever seen them have and she took a step back from him.

“Have a good day, Damien, I'll see you around,” he gave her a slight bow before walking away and once he was gone, she let out a deep breath and placed her hands on the walls.

I immediately knew something was wrong and rushed over to her side. She leaned against me without protesting and I realized she was breathing heavily. "Are you alright? Do you need me to call Juan?"

She shook her head. "The pain, it just took a while to hit. It is an entire bond breaking, it doesn't feel so good. At least it is over now, I can officially get mated to Juan. My baby will not be born out of wedlock." This content © Nôv/elDr(a)m/a.Org.

She seemed to be getting paler. "Forget about the baby for a second, are you alright?"

"Yes," she stood up straight and tried to smile at me but the smile faltered and before I could even process what was happening, her eyes fluttered shut and she collapsed into my arms.