

THE REJECTED WEREWOLF PRINCESS

The Rejected Werewolf Princess Chapter 231



CAMILLA'S POV

Ryker told me all about his plan to speak to Briggs and while that seemed like the smartest choice, we still had to wait for Briggs to arrive and in the meantime, I thought about how I was going to make sure everyone in the palace was safe if Reina decided to attack. The easiest choice would have been to just ensure that everyone left the palace but that would have meant a lot of explanation which I was unprepared to do.

“What do you think?” I asked Christine who was seated opposite me. She had a book open in her lap as she looked up at me.

“Think about what?”

“How do I get Riley and Damien out of here?” I explained and her mouth formed an o. “Also, how do I get the girls out? I don’t want anyone getting hurt again.”

I don’t know what she heard in my voice, but it had her sighing as she put her book down. “if you want them to leave you could just ask but I dont think it is the smartest choice.”

“What do you mean?”

“As at right now, we don’t know where exactly she is. She could be waiting for you to send one of them out and she will take them,” I opened my mouth to

protest but she held up a hand to stop me. “I didnt say she would, I just said that she could. I think they are safer here than anywhere else. At least within these walls, we can keep a close eye on them. What harm could possibly come to them here?”

“You don’t understand,” I whispered. “The last time she got them both, they were within these walls. She had someone in here taken them to her”

A dark look crossed her face as she realized what exactly I was talking about. She reached over the table and held my hand in hers. I knew she wanted me to look at her but I couldn't, if I did, I knew there would be tears in my eyes. I didn't want to think about that situation. If you are not reading this novel on Jobnlb.com, some sentences are incomplete. It had never left my mind but I had somehow managed to push it into the recesses where I wouldn't have to worry about it.

“Camilla,” she whispered softly but I shook my head. “He willingly betrayed you, I know that, but no one here will betray you. Your children are safe. The girls are safe. If I have to watch them every day of my life then I will but nothing will happen to you.”

“No, you can't do that. You have more important things to do. I could watch them.”

“You have important things to do as well,” she reminded me. “Look, if you want to keep them safe then I suggest that you leave them with Riley and Damien. You get to keep everyone you are worried about together.”

“Riley and Damien don't know what we are facing.”

“Then tell them,” she shrugged as if it were the most important thing in the world. “You don't have to tell them everything but you should tell them. They will understand and they will be willing to help. It is one week, Camilla, and you cannot do it all by yourself. You need to take help.”

I knew she was right so I ran my hands down my face to try and calm myself. “Do you want to come with me while I tell them?”

She nodded immediately. “Of course, you don’t even have to ask.”

She walked in step with me and it was only the fact that she was right next to me that stopped me from running away. I lifted my hand to knock on the door but before my fist hit the wood, it was pulled open. Riley was shocked to see me there with my hand mere inches from her face and she laughed.

“I was just coming to find you,” she exclaimed. “Do you know where Ryker is?”

“Yes, but he can’t come right now, he is doing some important work.”

She stilled. “Are you alright? Is everything okay? You seem a little pale and you look worried.”

“I’m fine, but can I talk to you and Damien, please?”

I saw worry flash across her eyes but she gave me a small smile and nodded. She pulled the door opening revealing Damien who was seated at the edge of the bed. He looked up and as soon as he saw Christine and I, he sat up straight.

“Your girls are asleep in their rooms,” Riley explained as we walked into the room. “Audrey knocked herself out after a few hours of running around with Damien.”

“I didn’t really come to talk to you about them,” I cut her off. “It concerns them but that isn’t exactly what everything is about.”

I swallowed deeply and told her. I didn’t tell her everything but I told her what she needed to know to make an accurate picture of what was going on. I explained how I got new powers and Reina attacked. I explained how I lost my memories and how we lost Aurora the first time. Then I explained what had happened now and how Reina was prime to attack in about six days.

“Do you want us to leave?” she asked after I was done but I shook my head.

“I don't know if she is waiting for you to leave to attack. There is nothing she would love more than to hold one of you as an exchange for what she wants,” Christine explained. “What we wanted to ask is if you could stay.”

“I don't trust anyone with my children right now. I know I am asking a lot but I will go on my knees if I have to,” I clasped my hands together. “Please, watch over my kids for me while you stay. You are the only people that she can use against us and I just need to ensure that you are all safe”

There was silence for a minute before they both nodded. I felt immense relief pour out of me when I realized they had agreed. I knew they would but knowing and seeing it were two completely different things.

“We will watch your kids with our life,” Riley assured me as she pulled me into a fierce hug. “You never even have to ask. They are my nieces and I want them to be safe.”

“Thank you,” I wiped the stray tears that had dropped from my cheeks. “I need to go because I have some things to go over.”

Christine and I had gotten to the hallway when Damien came rushing after us. His eyes were on Christine so I knew who he wanted to speak to but when I tried to give them space, she grabbed my wrist in a bruising grip and shot me a warning look that promised all forms of bodily harm if I let her go.

“Hi, I just wanted to know if we could talk,” he began but her face betrayed nothing. “I just wanted to say congratulations and ask if we could-”

“Please don't,” she whispered and he frowned. “My mate hates you and out of respect for him, I can't do this.”

“You don't even know what I want to talk about.”

“Honestly, I don’t need to know. I don’t want any blood between us but I will not put Juan in a position where he feels uncomfortable or defensive. You can write it in a note or something or you could tell it to him.”

“He will not listen to me.”

“Exactly.”

He finally understood what she was saying. “Okay, I understand. Congratulations on the baby.”

“Thank you!”

He walked off without another word leaving us in uncomfortable silence. I watched him leave and Christine let out a exasperated sigh. Without warning, she dropped into the nearest bench and buried her face into her hands. She didn't say a word but I knew company would go a long way so I sat next to her in complete and utter silence.

“Do you want to talk about it?” I asked after a beat of silence but she shook her head.

“Ask me anything else that doesn’t have the word mate in it, please,” she moaned, almost begging and I wracked my brain when I finally figured out what I wanted to ask about.

“Where are the other dolls?” I asked and that seemed to do the trick because she sat up straight.

“I kept them in my drawer. After what I saw with the first one, I couldn't bear to look at the others but Juan does. He said that they look normal.”

“Do we have any idea who they belong to?” I asked and she shook her head.

“Do you think we could find out?”

“How do you propose we do that? We aren't witches. We don't know how to control them.”

I bit my lip before asking the question that had been plaguing me for a while with careful precision. “If we were to burn them or destroy them, do you think the people would die?”

She raised a brow in amusement. “Are you serious right now?”

I nodded. “We have to destroy them or at least try to. Do you think they would die?”

“I don’t know, when Marie died, the doll got destroyed too. It might work the other way too.”

“Okay, what if we didn’t kill them but rather hurt them?” I offered and her brows furrowed but I could tell she was listening.

“We could do something to the dolls and see if it reflects on the human.”

“You want to deliberately main or hurt someone because of a doll?”

“I want to figure out who those dolls are for and yes, I am willing to be dramatic in order to find that out.”

Her eyes were wide but she didn't look disgusted, if anything, she looked intrigued. Still, I expected her to refuse because Christine was a stickler for the rules. To my surprise, she sighed and crossed her arms over her chest.

“Fine, but you better not disfigure or main anyone just in case the doll belongs to Juan or I. I would very much like to have my kid in one piece.”

I laughed. “You have a deal.”

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RYKER'S POV

When Camilla sent an urgent mind link telling me that she needed me in her room, I had thought of a million possible things, what I didn't think was that I would see her and Christine sitting with the two dolls in between them I immediately knew that whatever she was going to say would be absolutely absurd but it didn't prepare me for the words that actually came out of her mouth.

"Would you like to repeat that?" I asked slowly and her cheeks heated. At least she knew that it was an insane.

"I think it is a good idea to find out who the dolls belong to. I am not going to main anyone, I'll just make a cut on th arm or something," she shrugged. "I don't think it is a big deal. It isn't like I will be killing anyone."

I pinched the bridge of my nose muttering a few choice words under my breath before looking up at her again. I was more shocked that Christine had even agreed to this but she seemed to be in full support. I opened my mouth trying to think of where to start discouraging them from but no words would come out. I didn't even know where to start. "You don't know how to use this," I said finally. "You could really hurt someone."

"How bad could it be?" Christine shrugged. "Besides, it is a cut on the arm, not a knife in the heart or something. I assure you, it will not be as hard or as difficult as you want to think it is."

"Exactly," Camilla echoed. "The way I see it, we could have done it without telling you both but we wanted you to be here. We want to know who she was able to get easy access to."

The annoying thing about everything was that she was right. She could very well have done it without talking to me first and there was absolutely nothing I could have done. I glanced over at Juan who just shrugged, he clearly had no

interest in getting into it with anyone. I dragged over a wooden chair and sat down.

“Fine, do your experiment.”

Both of them seemed surprised that I had agreed. I had half a mind to change my mind but the truth was that I was curious as well. Camilla took out a small dagger from the side table and I watched as she carefully sliced down the arm of one of the dolls. It wasn't anything deep, it was small enough to leave a mark. We all waited but there was nothing. I watched her do the same to the other doll but once again, there was nothing.

“Did I do it wrong?” she asked and I shrugged. I didn't know how to answer that. “Maybe I should try it again and-” “No,” I cut her off with her hand inches away from making another incision. “We don't know who the dolls are for and that's fine. Just put them away, please, we can think about them later if they ever come in handy.”

“But”

“We have much bigger things to worry about, Camilla,” I stood to my feet.

“You should be happy that those don't belong to any of us. Maybe the person they belong to isn't even here. There is no way for us to know and I would very much rather keep it that way.”

After much persuasion, Camilla agreed to hide the dolls back up. Once I was sure that her hand wasn't going to slip with a knife, I made my way out of the room and towards the training room. There was still a shit ton that the guards needed to learn before Reina attacked. I couldn't help but think about Juan's comment and if she was at the top of her powers but unfortunately, I didn't have the answer to that so we had to train as if she was.

We were in the middle of the training when a maid walked in. “Your majesty, I was sent to inform you that a Mr. Briggs had arrived.”

I didn't need to hear any other thing before I called off the training for the day. Briggs was waiting in the hallway and he looked a lot better than the last time we saw him when he was at death's door. Camilla must have been informed as well because she was already embracing him by the time I arrived.

"Thank you for coming," I told him extending my hand to him for a handshake and he waved me off.

"Please, it was not as if I could refuse you. After everything you did for me, it is because of you that I am alive right now. If you had asked me to climb a mountain I would have," he joked. "What do you need my help for? Your letter said that it was urgent."

"It is a matter of privacy, would you come with me?" I ordered the maids to take his things to one of the guest rooms while I led him to my office. He was clearly bothered and curious the entire time but neither of us said a word until after I had shut the door. "For safety reasons, I need to know that you are Briggs. Tell us something that only you know."

He seemed shocked. "What is this about?"

"We have to be careful," Camilla told him in an apologetic tone. "Just tell us please."

"I buried your father's letters in a box at the base of a tree and hid the key in a hole. Will that suffice?"

"Yes, it will" I let out a sigh of relief knowing that he was real. "The problem is Reina."

His brows furrowed. "The witch? I would have sworn that she was gone. I heard rumors that-"

"I am sure you also heard rumors that Camilla was dead," I cut him off and he nodded slowly. "I don't know what happened but they both managed to

survive a fall off a cliff. We had used the dagger that we found in the attic- the one that specifically said it could kill her but it didn't work."

"That's weird, I have heard of that dagger. I have never seen it being used in my lifetime but I heard that when the priestesses of the goddess realize that their leader has backslidden, they would take the dagger and kill them with it. It should have worked."

"But it didn't," I said simply. "Is there anything that might clue us in as to why? Is there anything you might have heard over the years? You are our only hope right now. Reina is set to attack in a few days and we need to have the advantage. We need to know exactly what we can do to win or else everyone here will be lost."

"Why is she attacking? Is it still about your powers?"

Camilla shook her head. "After the fall, I lost those powers. I can't access them at all. I feel empty. I don't think they exist anymore. If I am being honest, I am not too upset about that, the weight of those powers on my shoulder is enough to give anyone pause. I am glad that they are gone."

He smiled softly. "Unfortunately, I don't know anything. There were lots of rumors surrounding them. Some said that the one killing her had to die as well, others said that only their blood was needed on the dagger to ensure the evil party died. Others would say that only one the goddess had blessed could wield it. I don't know which is true."

I tried not to groan in frustration. He had done enough for us, he had done what he knew to do and that was fine. "Thank you, Briggs. You must have had a long journey. You should go and rest."

He nodded and I watched him disappear. It wasn't until he was gone that I finally let out a low curse and buried my face into my hands. We were no

closer to finding out how to kill Reina. All we had was an apparently useless knife and a bunch of rumors.

“We will figure it out,” Camilla said softly with a hand on my shoulder. “We always do. Besides, there has to be some layer of truth to rumors right? We just have to find it.”

I placed a lingering kiss to her temple. “We will. We just don’t have enough time.” Content held by

“Then we make time,” she said as if it were the simplest thing in the world. “We will make the best of the days that we have left and we will find a solution, I know we will.”

I hated being the pessimist. “What if we don’t?”

“Then we improvise,” she shrugged. “We might not know how to use the dagger but I’m pretty sure that no one can survive their head being cut off, right?”

I raised a brow in amusement. I never thought Camilla of all people would say that. I kissed her again before pulling her to her feet.

We made our way out of the office and I had no idea where I was going but all thoughts suddenly flew out of my head when I noticed Riley walking down the halls. I wasn’t sure if Camilla had seen what I saw too but I rushed over to my sister and grabbed her arm that was wrapped in a bandage.

“What happened to you?” I asked and she shrugged. “How did you get the cut?”

“I don’t have a cut, I’m fine,” she pulled off the bandage to show me and I let out a sigh of relief.

“Why do you have a bandage on your arm then?”

“it's because of Audrey,” my brows furrowed. “I didn’t want to tell you so you wouldn't worry but when she was playing a few hours ago, I think she cut herself on something. She was bleeding terribly. I helped her bandage it up and wrapped my own too so she didn’t feel weird.”

“Audrey cut herself, how?”

“I don't know, really. One minute it wasn't there and the next it was. It just appeared.”

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CAMILLA'S POV

When Ryker rushed out of the office, I had blindly followed him. I wasn’t sure what he had seen to make him react like that but I knew it had to be important. When I heard those words leave Riley's lips, it felt like my entire world had closed down on me. I couldn't speak, couldn't think, couldn't even breathe as the knowledge that one of those dolls belonged to my daughter.

“Are you sure she didn't cut herself on anything?” Ryker asked after seeing my face and Riley nodded.

“She was lying next to me on the floor. There was nothing sharp next to her, I can swear it by the goddess. I don't know what happened.”

“I think we do,” Riley looked confused but I knew Ryker wasn't going to explain anything to her. “Thank you, where is she now?”

“In her room.”

I didn't wait to hear anything else before I started walking in that direction. I heard Ryker's footsteps behind me and I should have waited so we could walk together but I didn't. I knew if he caught up to me he was going to shove some bullshit about it not being my fault down my throat until I took it but I didn't want to hear it. It was my stupid idea and I had never imagined that my daughter could be a potential victim. It had only been the four of us in my mind and that was my problem. This belongs to : ©.

I was being too narrow minded about the entire thing. How she managed to gain access to Audrey long enough to do that was beyond me but then again, we didn't really keep her away. We had our attention fixed on Marie, she could have done anything and we would have been none the wiser.

"Camilla," Ryker's hand wrapped around mine like a vice just as my fingers hit the doorknob. "You need to calm down. She isn't hurt, she is fine."

I raised a brow. "I am very sure that a cut on her arm does constitute as hurt."

"You know what I meant," he rolled his eyes. "We needed to know and now we do. There is no possible way we could have found out if we hadn't done this. Would you rather not know that she was the one?"

"I would have rather not hurt her"

"I know, I would have rather we didn't either but you beating yourself up about it is not going to change what has happened. Right now, we need to make sure that it is her and figure out who the other person was."

I knew he was right. I ran my hands down my face in frustration as I tried not to scream. "Could it be Aurora?"

"No, Riley was with both girls. If it was Aurora, she would have told us. All we need now is to focus on Audrey and then figure out how to get rid of those dolls."

I nodded and he kissed my temple before pushing the door open. For someone that had just been hurt, Audrey didn't seem phased at all. She was in her pink princess dress and she was doing a pretend tea party with Damien and Aurora. The bandage wrapped around her arm was prominent and caught my eye but it didn't seem to bother her. When she saw us, she smiled wide. "Join us for our tea party!" she exclaimed and without giving us a chance to refuse, she grabbed us by our arms and pulled us in. "There's space for you here next to uncle Damien."

I couldn't have protested even if I wanted to. I sat cross legged on the ground and watched as she mimed pouring tea for us. "How is your arm, Audrey?"

She shrugged. "It doesn't hurt anymore. Uncle Damien said I was a strong girl because I didn't cry."

"But you did cry," he shot back and she giggled.

"Only a little," she held up her index finger and thumb very close together. "I stopped crying very fast, mummy. Are you proud of me?"

"Very," I answered without hesitation. "Damien was right, you are a strong girl. Now, why don't you serve me some more tea?"

We sat there for the next half hour playing tea time with her and I only left when she was well and truly satisfied and tired. I managed to drag her down for dinner before she all but passed out at the dinner table. All eyes were on her bandage the entire time but no one said a word, at least, not until after I had put her in bed.

Christine met us in the hallway. "She had one of the dolls?" I nodded. "What about the other?"

"I don't know," I explained. "It wasn't Aurora and it wasn't either of us. Who do you think it is?"

“Honestly, I'm not sure either. What if it is one of the maids or servants?”

“There are millions of them. How are we going to find out which one? Besides, most of them are fully grown wolves, their cuts would have healed by now.”

We all knew we were stuck in a hard place, there was nothing we could do at that point. I wasn't going to risk using one of the dolls again and picking the wrong one- I could hurt Audrey.

“The best we can do is hide them,” I said simply. “Keep them somewhere that Reina will never find them. She had those dolls for a reason and we need to make sure that she doesn't succeed for whatever reason it is.”

“Who hides it then?” Ryker asked and we both turned to him. “Reina had access to our daughter. Who is to say that she somehow didn't get access to us? She isn't stupid, she knows those dolls are missing. What if she has others?” “Wouldn't we know if we were being controlled?” I asked but no one spoke. Neither of us knew the answer to that question. “So what do we do? How do we know who we can trust to hide it?”

“You do it,” Christine announced and I turned to her. “She wouldn't control you because she wants you. She would do it to the people around you to make you feel helpless. You take the dolls and hide them wherever you see fit.

“So we just forget about them?”

“It is magic, right? When Reina died, they will most likely die with her. We just need to keep it hidden until we can somehow kill her. What do you say?”

“Do I really have a choice?” I asked and she shook her head. “Give me the dolls.”

Christine went to retrieve them and I was left wondering where the hell I could possibly hide them. After a long few minutes of deliberation, I made my way over to the private library. Very few people knew about it and very few would

actually look in it. I hid it in one of the furthest drawers and locked it tight. It was a weird place to choose but I was confident that it wouldn't be found.

I left the library but when I walked past my father's bedroom, I stilled. I hadn't gone in there in a while and although didn't hold anything against him anymore, I just couldn't bring myself to love him like I did my mother.

"I miss him," I nearly jumped when I heard Brigg's voice from behind me. "I apologize for scaring you. I should be in bed but I couldn't sleep. I can count on one hand the number of times I was actually in this palace."

"Why is that?"

"Your father liked to keep certain aspects of his life away from each other," he explained. "It was why he kept Eva and Frederick away and it was why he kept me away at that vacation home. I was the only link between every part of his life. I knew everything inside and out and he didn't like that, neither did your mother if I am being honest. It was better for their marriage if I stayed away and allowed them live in blissful ignorance."

"Is there anyone excluding Frederick?" I asked and he shook his head.

"He was very careful after you were born. He loved you and you were everything that he wanted. I think that drove Eva mad because she knew he didn't love Frederick the same way."

"That doesn't make me feel any better," I said simply and he gave me a sad smile. "You can go into the room if you want. I don't think there is anything of importance there but if it makes you feel closer to your friend then-

"Your father is dead, and no matter how much I miss him, it will not bring him back to life. I can go into his room and mourn or I can help his daughter who is actually alive. How is it going with the witch?" I was stunned by the swift change in subject. "I have been thinking all evening to know if there was something I forgot."

“Is there?” I asked and he shook his head.

“I told you everything that I know. Everyone can be killed, Camilla, you just need to know how,” he cleared his throat and turned to walk away but stilled a few steps out. “How did you survive?”

“I don't know. I think my powers had something to do with it”

“How did she survive?” I didn't know the answer to that either and I didn't have any theories as to why. “Could you have possibly helped her survive.”

I shook my head. “My powers were well and truly spent. It is a miracle I even managed to live.”

“Well, perhaps you should start there. If you can find out why she lived then maybe you can find out how to kill her. There is something my father said for many years, he said that water held memories.”

“What does that mean?”

“I don't know, my father was an insane old man,” he chuckled. “But he was right about many things. Goodnight, Camilla.”

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CAMILLA'S POV

We had twenty-four hours until her set time for attack, and panic was everywhere. Majority of the palace still had no idea what was going on, it was just us and we had planned to keep it that way for as long as possible but as I sat in my office staring at the ceiling, I realized that we were probably well and truly f****d because we were no closer to figuring out how to kill the bitch.

“Camilla,” a voice snapped me out of my thoughts and I looked forward to find Christine staring at me with a look of concern. “I asked you the same question about five time now. Are you alright?”

Are you?” I shot back and she pursed her lips. “What is it?”

“Do you think we should at least inform the guards? They would need to prepare for her wouldn't they? She hasn't said or done anything yet. She has been radio silent and that worries me. Last time, she made sure everyone knew that she was coming.”

“Maybe she didn't need to this time, we already know,” I shrugged. “Or maybe she just wants to keep us on our toes. don't know why she would choose to do this. I wish I did and thinking about this is only stressing me out some more I don't know how to kill her and that is my major concern.”

“Juan has a theory that she isn't at her full strength,” she explained and I stilled. “HE says that since you lost something then probably she did too. It makes the most sense to me out of everything else I have tried to comd up with.”

She wasn't even looking at me as she spoke. Her eyes were cast down at the piece of paper in front of her. That just showed how much she didn't believe the theory but she was right, it seemed the most logical. We were both close to death, we should have lost something. I still had zero idea why we were alive but Brigg's words had been ringing in my ears over the past few days.

“I need to go back to that cliff” I announced standing to my feet and her eyes widened. She started to protest but I wasn't going to let her. “Before Briggs left yesterday, he told me something, he said water has memories. Something kept us both alive and I am going to find out.”

“How do you even plan to do that? It isn't like you will just go and sit down and ask the water. Are you even listening to yourself?”

“Asking is exactly what I plan to do,” I made my way over to the door. “You can either come with me or you can stay, I don’t really care but I am going either way.”

She was a mix between exasperated and annoyed but I knew Christine and I already knew what her answer would be. She was as desperate as I was to find a solution and if that meant going back to the cliff, she was going to say yes. It didn’t even take her up to five minutes before she sighed and rose to her feet.

“This better yield some good results” she mumbled. “Are you going to tell the men? Ryker isn’t going to be happy about you going back there.”

“I know, but it is a good thing I am not asking,” I winked at her. “I’ll inform him and if he has a problem with it then he can stay behind. Whatever happens, I will get answers today.

I will not face her blindly- not again.”

Christine went with me to talk to Ryker and Juan and just as we had predicted, neither of them was happy about it. Ryker tried to talk me out of it but when he realized my mind had been made up, he sighed and offered to go with me instead.

Neither of us truly wanted to be there, I wasn't even sure how I would react to be there. It was one of the most traumatic moments of my life, watching my daughter almost die in front of me and then almost dying myself. I remembered it like it was yesterday, remembered the goddess’ face as she stared at me.

We took a carriage because of Christine’s pregnancy and thankfully, we didn’t go to the top of the cliff, but rather the bottom where the river flowed. I stared at the raging river wondering how it was possible that I survived it but feeling nothing short of grateful.

“What now?” Juan asked and I sighed.

“I don't know,” I admitted moving a little closer to the river.

“I haven't done this before in case you didn't realize. I am just seeing where it goes.”

“Shouldn't you have thought about that before making us all come out here?”

Ryker gave him a warning growl. “You didn't have to come.

You asked to be here and so far, Camilla is the only one who has brought up any ideas.”

I didn't want to hear them argue so I walked away from them until I was standing at the bank of the river. I closed my eyes and just breathed everything in. I still had my powers over the water and I could almost feel the waves moving around inside of me. I couldn't calm it even if I tried, water was never made to be restrained. I just let it flow.

I could feel something in the waves, something angry, something dangerous and it wasn't just the fact that the water could sweep me away at will. There was something else and I couldn't stop myself from taking a step into the river. I heard screams behind me as someone tried to stop me but it was like I couldn't control myself. I kept moving forward until I was standing right in the center of the river, the water up to my waist. How I wasn't swept away, I had no idea but something kept my foot grounded, something kept the waves from knocking me over. It was almost as if the water wanted me there, wanted me to find something. This belongs to : ©.

“Tell me,” I whispered. “I don't know what you want to say but I'm listening.”

The water grazed my fingers and I could feel the raging emotions but I didn't know how to access the memories. I was just going with the flow as I closed my eyes. I took in a deep breath and allowed the emotions overwhelm me.

There was so much anger, so much pain and so much... death. It threatened to swallow me whole. It was overwhelming and I thought I would crash to my knees from the sheer intensity of it.

My eyes flew open and I realized I was cocooned by the water. It was raging all around me and that was when started to see it.

The images came fast, but I was able to decipher each of them. There were two men, brothers from what I knew. I saw one kill the other and dump the body, it was the first that the river claimed. I saw many more, many betrayals, it accumulated the anger. It became a dumping ground for the dead. It was no wonder the river was angry.

After a few people, I saw Reina, or at least, a younger version of her. She was covered in soot and I knew she had just burned down her coven. In order to avoid an incomplete reading experience, visit] 0b n ib. com. She stripped off he burned clothes and dumped them straight into the river. I could almost hear the screams of the witches. She cleanec herself, washed herself clean of all the evil she had done and left.

The scene then shifted to us atop the cliff. I watched as we fell in slow motion, not quite dead but not quite alive either.

I saw Reina pull out the knife from her chest as she struggled to get to the surface, but the river didn't want to let go of her. It wanted to claim her too, for all the lives she had taken. She grabbed onto me, determined to make sure we went down together and then I saw a light.

I knew it was the goddess, even before I saw her soft young face. She was looking straight at me as she spoke, as if she knew I would be here, or maybe, I had become the river and she was speaking to us.

“You have suffered so much,” she whispered. “You cannot take any more. Release this one.” I felt stubborn. I didn't want to budge. They came together, they had to go together.

“If I claim both, will you let them live?” she asked and although it felt like I was being cheated, I felt myself nod. “I have to leave something for you, don't I?”

I nodded again.

“Don't worry, I am in debt to you and one of them will come back to repay it. She will set you free.”

This time, I knew she was talking directly about me. She put one finger in the water and it glowed. I watched as Rein: and I flowed downstream until we were spat out at the foot of the village and just like that, the images stopped. The water raged around me, as if reminding me of the goddess' promise. I didn't have the slightest idea what to do but I felt myself speak.

“Give it to me,” I whispered. “Give me all the pain and the anger and the suffering, I can take it” The water flowed unsure around me. “You have carried it for far too long. Give it to me.”

No sooner than the moment the last words left my lips, I felt it all crash into me. I let out a scream that came out garbled due to the raging of the water around me. There was so much pain, too much, it flew into me all at once and thought I was going to explode from the sheer magnitude of it.

It felt like hours until it stopped and even then, I felt the emotions slowly drifting out of me. They weren't designed to be held. It was not my pain, not my anger and I wasn't going to hold onto it. It was time to move on.

The water cocooning me slowly fell and what was once a raging river was now peacefully flowing. I turned around to see my family staring at me with varying looks of concern and worry.

“I got the answer,” was all I managed to say before my knees gave out.

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RYKER'S POV

There was no way to explain what we had seen except for the fact that it was pure magic. It sounded absurd to me even when I thought about it. She walked into the middle of the raging stream but it didn't sway her, we tried to go after her but it was like there was an invisible barrier at the shore that prevented us from doing so. Then the water had encompassed her and I nearly lost my mind because I thought she was going to drown and just as quickly as everything started, it stopped. It was a whirlwind of emotions but one thing I knew was that I never wanted to feel that way again- at least not in my lifetime.

When she passed out, I cursed. I wasn't sure how it was possible to move as fast as I did but I managed to catch her before she hit the water. The water was surprisingly calm despite the fact that it had been a raging storm just a few minutes ago and it seemed like it almost parted ways for us to get out quickly because it wasn't as stressful as it should have been.

Christine and Juan were standing anxiously at the edge of the river and I had to clamp down on my annoyance before I spoke. “Can you get the f*****g carriage ready or something?”

My words seemed to snap them into action because they rushed to do just as I had asked. By the time we managed to get into the carriage, Camilla still hadn't woken up and I was starting to worry. She was breathing properly and she seemed fine through our mate bond. It felt like she was just sleeping but

that didn't stop me from worrying. I pulled her across my lap and stroked her hair softly to keep it out of her face. The ride was terse and the air was pregnant with questions but no one said a thing. The only person who could answer them was knocked out cold.

She started to rouse a few minutes out from the palace. It was a soft groan at first and then her eyes slowly fluttered open. Relief poured through me and I quickly looked her over for any signs of injury. Once I was sure that she was fine, I placed a kiss to the center of her head.

"Are we on our way back?" she asked and I hummed in response. She could have pulled herself off my legs but for some reason, she only nestled closer to me. I wasn't about to push her away so I simply wrapped my arms tighter around her. "I have a pounding headache."

"You walked into the middle of a raging river," I couldn't keep the bite out of my voice. "That will not exactly leave you feeling like you just woke up on a bed of feathers now will it?"

She rolled her eyes at me and despite the fact that I was only half joking, I was still slightly annoyed so I switched to our mind link. "You don't do stupid things like that, Camilla. How many times have we spoken about this? You have to let me know your plans. I tried to go after you but I couldn't. There was a f*****g barrier around the river. I couldn' reach out to you."

"I'm sorry for scaring you, that was never my intention," I could tell she was being genuine. "The thing is, I didn't evel realize I was going to get into the river until I got into the river. It was almost like something was controlling me, something was telling me what to do."

It sounded insane but then again, everything that happened was insane, I could believe her being led by the river. I kissed her again just to remind myself that she was here, she was next to me and she was fine. If you are not

reading this novel on Jobn!b.com, some sentences are incomplete. Visit Jobn!b.com to read the complete sentences for free. She hadn't drowned, she hadn't fallen, she was with me. I wanted to ask what she had learned but I couldn't even bring myself to say the words. The only thing that mattered to me in that moment was her and until she offered, I wasn't going to ask.

Camilla looked around at the others before speaking. "What happened on the outside? Did anything weird happen?" It was Christine who explained everything that we saw and her face held contemplation the entire time. "It checks out with what I saw."

"What did you see?" Christine asked slowly and Camilla sighed.

"The goddess helped us survive basically. Right before I fell, when I was healing Aurora, she had appeared to me. She had warned that if I brought her back, I was going to die because it was going to take too much from me. When we both fell, she must have felt compassion because she asked the river to let us go. We had to leave something behind though, I presume I had to leave my powers."

I knew there was more to the story but she didn't want to go into it here. I chose not to press and instead focused on what she had said. "What did Reina leave?"

"I don't know," she admitted running her hands through her hair. "I still don't even know how to kill her. I just know why we survived. We are no closer to finding out how to kill her"

I could sense her getting frustrated. "We have something, Camilla, and we will figure out the rest. At least we know that she had to leave something behind, even if we don't know what."

That wasn't enough to completely calm her raging thoughts but it was enough to put a momentary end to it. She was quiet the rest of the way to the palace

and once we arrived, she rushed out as if someone lit a fire behind her. She was still unsteady on her feet but she didn't want any help. Christine started to go after her but I stopped her.

"She needs space," I explained. "Give it to her. She will come to us when she is ready."

"What do we do now? Reina is set to attack tomorrow and we have no idea what she has planned or what she is going to do," Christine whisper yelled. "Camilla was right, we have nothing"

"Do you think I don't know that?" I growled. "Reina is not stupid, she will not walk into the palace knowing she doesn't have her full powers. She has something big planned and we have no idea what it is. I am as worried about this as you and repeating it will not change it."

"Why not control where she goes?" Juan asked. "If she will not come to the palace then maybe we can make her go where we want. She is bound to follow you if she truly has plans of attacking tomorrow."

"That could work if she planned to attack us. Reina is resourceful and she isn't against killing a few innocent people just to make us go where she wants."

"She is after the dagger isn't she? I am convinced she is at least watching us. If you take the dagger with you, she will go after it. It does pose some risks because if she gets her hands on the dagger, then it is game over."

"It is still the best plan we have," I mumbled. "We will talk more about that. We have to find a place close enough to the palace so as not to raise suspicion but far enough that no one will be hurt if she decides to use whatever powers she has left. Can you find somewhere?"

He nodded and immediately rushed out of the car with Christine following close behind leaving just me. I could have retreated to my office but for some reason, I found myself taking a walk around the halls. There was still so much

wrong with our plans and there was a lot that was missing. I didn't know how but I found myself walking over to Riley and Damien's rooms. I stood outside not quite wanting to go in but also not quite wanting to leave.

Having them around was a gross inconvenience at a time like this. If I had my way, neither of them would be here. They had come right in the middle of a conflict and they posed a risk because now, we had more people to worry about. I raised my fist to knock on the door but as if on cue, it was pulled open.

Damien stood there and he had a small smile on his face. "Don't worry, we are watching your girls. They are both sleeping. I could smell you outside the door. Do you want to see them?"

I look through the open door at my daughters. Riley was seated with them and she had a smile on her face. I waved at my sister before turning back to Damien. "Whose idea was it to come here?"

His brows furrowed. "It was mine. Is this your way of saying that we have overstayed our welcome?"

I shook my head and gestured for him to come with me. I could feel his confusion but he said nothing and walked in line with me. I waited until we were a considerable distance away from the room before I finally turned to him. "When did you meet Peggy- or Reina, whatever her name is?" I asked and his brows furrowed.

"I don't know what you are talking about."

"I can't kill you, you're my friend, but I need to know. I don't know how those stupid dolls work so I don't know if she is in your head one hundred percent of the time but if I am right, you own the second doll upstairs. You hid the cut on your arm, you are an adult so it would have healed within minutes." Content held by

“Ryker-” he began but I cut him off with a warning growl.

“I may not want to kill you but when you jeopardize the lives of everyone in this palace, there is a lot I would be willing to do. I will ask one time and one time only, when did you meet Reina and why didn’t you tell us?”

He stared at me for a full minute before sighing. “I was out hunting”

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CAMILLA'S POV

It was exactly forty-five minutes before someone came to find me. I would have expected it to be either Christine or Ryker but it was Juan who walked into the private living room. I had opted against going to the bedroom because I knew that would have been the first place anyone checked. Juan took the seat next to me but didn’t say a word, he just placed his legs up on the center table and leaned back.

I watched him for five minutes before speaking. “The silent treatment doesn’t work on me. It isn’t going to make me miraculously start speaking.”

“And yet, here you are, speaking to me,” he drawled and I rolled my eyes. “I figured you could use some company. Ryker asked to give you space but that word doesn’t exist in my vocabulary.”

I snorted. I was still exhausted from what happened at the river but I was slowly getting my energy back. Just because I didn't keep all of the negative emotions didn't mean I wasn't feeling the effects of them. If you are not reading this novel on Jobn'ib.com, some sentences are incomplete. Visit Jo'bnib.com to read the complete sentences for free. It was too much for me

to handle and with the knowledge that I didn't know what was happening with Reina I felt like I was going mad.

"We had an idea," he said suddenly. "We are going to take the dagger and lead Reina into where we want her. She will follow it and once she is on our turf, we can defeat her once and for all."

"Is that smart? Taking the dagger out in public, I mean. It doesn't seem like a very good idea. It is what she wants and we risk it falling into her hands."

"It is the best we have," he shrugged. He looked like he wanted to say more but the door to the office opened and Audrey walked in. I was shocked to see her walking around the palace without anyone behind her.

I rushed over to her and bent down until I was at eye level with her. I ran my hands over her trying to make sure there were no obvious injuries. "Are you okay? What are you doing out here?"

"Dad and Uncle Damien are talking," she said simply. "I closed my eyes and Aunt Riley thought I was sleeping. I wanted to make her laugh but I saw them outside the door. She is worried about Uncle Damien and everyone is mad. Is this because of the bad woman?"

I gave her a small smile. "You don't have to worry about anything, okay? You are fine, everything is fine. Dad and Uncle Damien are probably just having adult talk."

"Daddy seemed mad," she whispered as if it were a secret. "He was waving his hands all around," she waved hers for added effect. "His face got all red and Uncle Damien looked sad. Are they fighting?"

I glanced over at Juan over my shoulder who just shrugged. He had no idea what was going on either and I couldn't ask him to check for me- he hated Damien. To him, this was the best thing that could ever happen. After a moment of hesitation, I picked up Audrey and balanced her on my hip before

carrying her all the way to Damien and Riley's room. To my utter surprise, she was right.

They were arguing in hushed whispers that died down the moment they saw me. "I am glad that you have situational awareness when I am present and not when a child walks in. She came here to find you all and met you arguing so badly that she had to find me."

They all had the decency to look guilty. I placed Audrey down and smoothed her hair with my hand.

"Why don't you go into the room and play with your dolls, hm? I will be in to see you very soon. I just need to have some adult talk right now."

"Promise me no fighting."

I sighed. "I promise."

She held out her tiny finger. "You have to do the promise or it doesn't count mummy."

With a small smile on my face, I hooked my finger with her and kissed her forehead. "I promise I will not fight with anyone unless it is absolutely necessary."

That definitely wasn't what she wanted to hear but it was enough for her because the next minute, she skipped into the room. Once the door was shut behind her, I turned to the three adults.

"Someone better have a good explanation for what the hell just happened here because you," I gestured to Riley, "were supposed to be watching her. I get that it isn't your job but you offered to help and if at any point it got too much for you, you could have told me."

"It didn't get much. The issue here is that Ryker is accusing Damien of being a spy for the witch!" she exclaimed. Ryker pinched the bridge of his nose with

obvious frustration. "I didn't say he was a spy, he told me that he met Reina once while hunting. She was still Reina and not Peggy. She must have done something during that time because she had a doll that was connected to him. He got the second cut."

My eyes widened in shock and I turned to Damien. "Why didn't you tell us about this?"

"I didn't think it was important. It was a cut for fucks sake. I didn't know any of this was going on. You have kept us both in the dark," he pointed an accusatory finger at us. "You chose not to include us in any discussions."

"It is a good thing we did because she would have found out from you."

That seemed to piss Riley off because her face got red and splotchy and she marched up to me. "He would have never sold you out. How dare you say that? What is this even about? Why are you all attacking him? Is this because o what happened with Christine?"

I sighed. I knew it was going to come back to this. That was one of the reasons I hated the entire love triangle because it was now the basis for every interaction. It would always seem like we were choosing sides when in reality, there were no sides.

"Nobody is talking about Christine, Riley," I muttered in the calmest voice that I could. "Please leave her out of this and focus on what matters. Peggy was using Damien and now we are unsure if she has created another doll. She could be using you again."

Riley looked like she wanted to scream. I couldn't blame her, she was just trying to protect the man that she loved but she wasn't seeing the bigger picture. If I was right, we could all be in danger. He wouldn't willingly hurt us, I knew that, but Reina could make him and then, I didn't think he would be able to control it.

“Say something!” Riley screamed at Damien. “Why are you just standing there and watching them attack your character? Tell them that you would never.”: text © owner.

“Riley,” his voice was deceptively soft. He tucked a strand of hair behind her ear. “No one is attacking me. They know me better than I know myself. We have to be extra sure because I don't want to be responsible for anyone getting hurt”

“But you would never do that,” her voice cracked on the last word. “This isn't fair. I know that someone put them up to this. How do we know that Reina isn't controlling them?”

“Riley,” I began but she held up a hand to stop me.

“I'm done talking to the both of you. You made it clear what side you were on when you accused him.”

“You are being unreasonable,” I couldn't keep the annoyance out of my voice. “No one threw accusations except you. You are refusing to listen.”

“Fine,” she shrugged. “I'm done. I'm not going to be your puppet or your baby sitter anymore. The moment things are safe, I am leaving”

She stormed off before I could say another word. Damien looked embarrassed. He ran his hands down his face in exhaustion. “I'm sorry, guys. I'll talk to her and get her to listen. I don't know why she is being so emotional about this”

He rushed off after her leaving Ryker and I in the hallway wondering what the hell had just happened. Riley never acted like that-ever. She was young and immature sometimes but she was smart as hell. She knew how to separate emotions from logic most times and she should have understood that no one was trying to attack Damien. Even Damien understood it so why didn't she?

Ryker whispered something in my ear before walking into the room to get Audrey. She was oblivious to everything that happened as we walked her back to her room. She just kept chattering on about all she wanted to do with Riley tomorrow and I didn't have the heart to tell her that she might not get the chance to spend time with Riley tomorrow. I settled her in her bed and sat cross legged on it facing her. She had a doll in her hands that occupied her full attention.

"What do you think about spending tomorrow with us?" I asked slowly and she looked up at me. "You can spend time with me and your dad. We could go out and do something fun."

"You'll be busy tomorrow," she shrugged and my brows furrowed.

"What do you mean?"

"You have to catch the mean woman."

I turned to Ryker in a silent question but he quickly shook his head. If he hadn't told her about Reina then how did she know. Did she overhear us?

"What mean woman, Audrey? Did you hear someone say something?" I asked and she shook her head. "What mean woman are you talking about?"

"The one with the bad magic. We have good magic and she has bad magic. She is coming tomorrow and you are going to be busy with her"

"We?" I asked and she nodded. "Who is we?"

"I can't tell you," she whispered. "She said I shouldn't tell you."

I was even more confused now. "Who is she?"

She rolled her eyes as if I were slow. "The goddess mummy, she said I shouldn't tell you. It's a secret and you're to find out." "Audrey," I kept my voice soft which was the stark opposite of how I was feeling. "How do you know about this?"

"I saw her in my dreams."

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CAMILLA'S POV

"What does she mean by she saw her in her dream? We locked her powers, Ryker," I whispered harshly once we were out of the room. Audrey was seated cross legged on the bed oblivious to what was happening and I made sure to check on her every few seconds. "Lyla locked her powers. We didn't want this to happen. How long has it been happening?"

"Calm down."

"I cannot calm down. You remember what happened the last time she had these kinds of dreams. Our daughter couldn't sleep for days. She was a shell of herself. I cannot watch that happen to her again. I refuse to."

"Camilla-"

"She is our baby. She does not deserve this. She should have a few years left. We were promised a few years. This is not a few years."

He placed both hands on my shoulders. "Breathe, baby, you will drive yourself insane."

I forced air into my lungs and forced them back out. I couldn't think, couldn't see clearly in front of me. I remembered just how bad it was the last time, it was a miracle she was still sitting in front of us, except she was hiding the worst of it but I didn't think Audrey could do that which meant it was still manageable. Some paragraphs are incomplete if you are not reading this novel on Jobnib.com. I glanced at my daughter once more and this time, she

lifted her head. She smiled when she saw me and waved. I couldn't stop myself from waving back before turning to Ryker.

“What should we do?” I asked but he said nothing. “Ryker, I need you right now because I don't know what to do. I cannot think about Reina and think about Audrey at the same time.”

“I know,” he whispered softly. “We need to know how bad it is. We need to know how much she has seen and we need to find a witch to try and lock her powers.”

“Please don't,” I heard Audrey say from inside and I turned to her. “She said you would do that but you can't. If you lock it again, it will be very bad.”

“How bad?” I asked and she shrugged. “what exactly did she say?”
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“I don't know. She told me to ask you not to lock it.”

I turned back to Ryker unable to say anything and he ran his hands through his hair in frustration. It was clear she could hear us so I switched to the mind link.

“Now what?” I couldn't keep the worry out of my voice. “Do you think that maybe when Lyla died, her spell broke?” “It is a possibility. I don't know how witches work but that could be it”

I sighed. “This is a mess and this is clearly just the beginning because remember earlier, she said we. I don't know who we is”

“One step at a time,” he assured me before breaking of the link.

I watched as he made his way over to Audrey. Instead of sitting next to her, he sat on the floor. She smiled at him and on the surface, he looked at ease but I could see the tension in his shoulders and I could feel his raging emotions down our bond. It never ceased to amaze me how put together

Ryker managed to look even during the worst of times. He always had his head screwed on straight and he was always level headed. He was the gentle flowing stream to my raging inferno.

“When did you start having dreams again?” he asked Audrey and she hesitated. “It's okay, princess, it's just me, you can trust me, can't you?” she nodded albeit slowly. “Tell me when the dreams started. I promise I won't lock them up again.”

“It started before mummy came back,” she finally responded. “It wasn't bad like the last time. There was this nice lady, she had pretty hair and she said she was a friend of mummy's.”

“Was she a little girl too?” I asked and she nodded. “A little older than you though, maybe ten?” she nodded again and I turned to Ryker who looked confused. “The goddess.” I turned back to Audrey. “What did she say to you?”

“She said that you locked my dreams because you were scared and she was going to help me so I didn't get scared again. She showed me mummy coming back and then you came,” she seemed excited as she spoke.

Her powers were exciting in the right context, if she were an adult and if they had come when they should but knowing that they had come over a decade and a half early was enough to throw me into a panic. She was too young for the

responsibility. If anyone were to find out what she could do, she would be in horrible danger and I wasn't ready to put my child through that- not again.

“She showed me a few things after, but nothing too bad. She showed me the mean woman again. She's very nice. She sits with me when she shows me.”

“You dream of the goddess every night?” I said slowly to confirm and she shook her head.

“Not every night silly,” she giggled. “But she is with me in my dreams. She says it is to help me. She's very sweet.”

I exhaled heavily. “Thank you for telling me, Audrey, but you have to promise not to tell anyone else.”

Her face fell. “Why not? I could help them?”

“No, princess,” Ryker cut in. “You cannot tell a soul or they might put you in danger. You aren't supposed to have these dreams until you're an adult. If anyone finds out they could try to hurt you.”

Her eyes widened in fear but she nodded. I didn't want to scare her but it was exactly what needed to be done. I placed a kiss on her temple. “I have to go do something right now, is there anything you want before that?”

“Can you sit with me for a while?” she asked and I nodded.

“Of course,” there was no hesitation whatsoever. I was going to sit with her as long as she wanted.

I sat there stroking her curls until her eyes had drifted close. When I was sure that she was sleeping, I carefully extracted myself and closed her room door.

“We need someone watching her at all times,” I said simply and Ryker nodded gesturing to the two guards who were already walking towards us.

“I called them here. They will keep an eye on her and there are guards already watching Aurora. They are both going to be safe, I promise you.”

I wanted to believe that but I wasn't worried about them being attacked here, I was worried about her gifts. I was worried about how they would play out in the long run and what the goddess was thinking when she gave her the powers so early. It had always been twenty-one, for centuries. She broke the rule with my mother when she gave her powers despite not being from the royal family and now she had broken it again.

“Do we tell Christine and Juan?” I asked and he immediately shook his head.

“I think it is better for everyone involved if we are the only two who know. But we do need to ready them for the inevitable arrival of Reina. If Audrey is right, then Reina is planning something tomorrow and we have to be ready.”

I agreed with that so that was exactly what we did. We found Christine and Juan and told them to prepare. They were a bit surprised at our urgency but said nothing. The plan was simple, take the dagger and lead Reina as far away from the palace as possible. Keep her away and make sure that we killed her because if she managed to get her hands on that dagger- it was game over.

“Camilla,” Christine rushed up to me after the meeting. I had been the first to leave and I hadn't expected anyone to follow. “Is everything okay? I was worried about you. You looked a little green inside.”

“I'm fine,” I assured her. “I am just worried about how things will turn out tomorrow. We are taking a huge risk.”

“I think you would all do better with me out there,” she began but I held up a hand to stop her. “You have been out fighting while pregnant too. Do you remember Lauren? You also fought with Frederick only a few weeks after giving birth. You could do it.”

“Not by choice,” I shot back. “If I had my way, I would have never been there. Your number one priority is to your baby, Christine. You are doing more than enough for us from here. Just keep your attention on you and focus on making sure that both you and the baby are safe.”

“But I can help-”

“I know you can,” I whispered. “And you will be helping but from here. I need someone to keep an eye on the girls for me and I need you to do it. I know this

isnt what you want but you are pregnant and I am not going to just easily forget that.”

“Why can't Riley do it?” I explained what happened with Riley and Juan. When I was done, her eyes widened in shock “Shit, is he still under her control?”

“We don't know. He didn't even know he was under her control. Right now, all that we are trying to do is to make sur everything is safe for tomorrow. I don't know if Riley will come around and if she doesn't, it means the girls are unprotected. This might not seem like much to you but those girls are my life, Christine.”

“You don't have to explain it to me,” she reached out and grabbed both of my hands. “I will watch them and we will all be waiting for you to return.”

“Thank you.”

I wanted to tell her about Audrey, but I couldn't. Christine had always been my confidante and there had never been anything I couldn't talk to her about until now. It felt weird and strange.

“Make sure you kill that witch for me,” she mused and I laughed.

“Don't worry, I'll bring back her head.”

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CAMILLA'S POV

“Let's go over this one more time, please,” I announced and if Ryker wasn't as stressed as I was, he would have rollec his eyes. “I need to be sure that we are all on the same page.”

“Camilla,” Ryker somehow managed to sound exhausted and patient at the same time. “You know the plan, everyone knows the plan. We are fine, I can assure you of that.”

“What if we mess up.”

“We won't,” he assured me before looking up at Juan. It was only the three of us leaving. It was a stupid idea but it was also the safest way to ensure that no one else got hurt.

The plan was simple, we were going to pretend to hide the dagger somewhere in the hopes that she would follow us. Ryker had demanded to hold the dagger because he believed she would go after whomever was holding it first. I didn't have the heart to tell him that I didn't believe she would. I had a gut feeling about the way things were going to go but I couldn't be sure and I didn't want to jinx it

“We will be fine,” Ryker assured me and although I didn't quite believe him, I nodded. “The horses are poised and ready. Are you sure you want to do this?”

“I have to be there if we want to make this more believable,” I shrugged but that wasn't the answer he wanted. He grabbed my shoulders and forced me to turn to him.

“Do you want to do this?” he punctuated each word slowly and I sighed before nodding. It was better me than anyone else and somehow, I just knew that I had to be there. “Good, let us go and kill a witch.”

We walked out hand in hand and he helped me onto my horse. Things seemed to be going smoothly and we were prepared to leave when I saw Damien rushing out of the palace. He was heading straight for us and I glanced over at Ryker uneasily. He stayed next to me because neither of us knew what Damien wanted. We also weren't sure whether Reina still had her claws in him or not.

“Thank the goddess I managed to catch you,” he managed out as he tried to even his breathing. “I just wanted to apologize for what happened before. I-”

“Damien,” I cut him off. “We are on a very time sensitive quest. If you want to apologize then you don’t need to, you are forgiven. If that will be all then-”

“No, I wanted to tell you that I felt her in my head,” he dropped his voice to a whisper before adding. “The witch. I don’t know how to explain it, it was like someone else was digging into my mind and controlling my movements. I was almost watching myself move.”

“What did she make you do?” I asked slowly and he looked around to ensure that no one was listening before stepping closer to us.

“She was looking at the entrances and exits as well as how many people were guarding them. It seemed like she was taking notes. I can't explain it. I wish I could. Thankfully, she didn’t go near the children but she seemed very interested with the lower parts of the palace- where the vaults are”

“The vaults are heavily guarded,” Ryker said simply but Damien just shrugged.

“I just thought you should know.”

Ryker turned to me in a silent question and I switched to our mind link. “If he is telling the truth then she might attack today. This whole dagger thing could be a distraction.”

“Or, she could have sent him to distract us so we can leave all our protection in the palace and she will attack us when we are out.”

Both seemed like very plausible options. After a long minute of deliberation, I opened a link between myself and Juan. “I need you to stay back.”

He had his hand on a horse ready to mount and he stilled. “Is there a reason for that?”

“We have reason to believe that she might attack the palace and I need you to be here just in case that happens. We need someone who can rally the guards and keep her at bay until we return.”

“What if she attacks you?”

“Ryker and I are more than capable of defending ourselves.”

“She is a powerful witch.”

“I have powers of my own,” I said simply. “I don’t want to fight with you on this, Juan. You are the only one I trust to do it. We don’t know what she will do and we need to be prepared for every circumstance.”

“I don’t like this,” he said finally. “You will be out there and undefended. You could get hurt. You will get hurt. There is no debating that”

“As long as we keep the palace safe”

“I’ll stay but if you need help, call for it immediately.”

“I will”

He broke off the mind link and I watched Juan undo the saddle of his horse and retreat into the palace leaving just Ryker and I. I was even more terrified than earlier because our initial plan involved Juan. We were walking out blind and hoping that things would sort themselves out. It was insane and some would call it a suicide mission.

Ryker and I rode side by side. Neither of us said a word as we rode through the empty forest. So far, there was no sign of Reina but I still had that gut feeling, like there was something I was missing. I looked around trying to see if someone was following us but the path was empty- it was just us.

“Everything will be fine,” Ryker whispered and I wasn’t sure if he was trying to assure me or himself. “Reina will take the bait”

“Somehow, that is what I am worried about,” I admitted. “What happens if we have grossly underestimated her and we are unable to beat her? We are banking on the fact that she lost something as well in that river but what if she didn’t lose much? What if she is more powerful than the both of us?”

“We defeated her once, we will defeat her again. We just have to-”

His words died off when both of our horses skidded to a stop. I turned to him with confusion in my brows but even he looked as confused as I felt. I tried to get my horse to move but she stubbornly remained in place. There was something ahead that scared her, something that they could sense.

“Should we turn back or go the rest of the way on foot?” I asked.

Instead of responding, Ryker got off his horse, tied it to a tree and helped me off mine. Once both horses were safe, we headed forward. I kept my hand intertwined with his. Some paragraphs are incomplete if you are not reading this novel on Jobnib.com. It was the only thing that kept me sane and kept my feet moving forward despite the growing ache in my belly. It seemed to be getting worse the further we went until it was almost unbearable and I cursed. “Something is wrong,” I whispered. “We have to go back now. I don’t know what it is but we need to leave.” “Camille-” he began but I cut him off.

“Ryker, I know this. You need to trust me.”

He didn't even hesitate before nodding. We rushed back towards where we had kept the horses but when we got there, I was shocked by who I saw standing. Reina was standing there, she still possessed Peggy's body but she was dressed like herself. It felt weird to see the woman I had looked up to like a mother figure and know that she was probably my worst enemy.

“Well, seeing as you are here now, I suppose we can skip the introductions and unnecessary small talk,” she drawled “For someone so powerful, Camilla,

it sure took you long enough to realize something was wrong. I thought for sure that you would notice it when your horses stopped.”

“You had been following us,” I deduced and she shrugged. “How didn’t we notice you?”

“Magic,” she said simply. “You know, Camilla, if we were not enemies, we would have been very good friends.”

“You don’t know the meaning of that word. You burned your entire coven to the ground because they wouldn’t join you to practice dark magic.”

Her eyes flashed with anger. “You know nothing about what I did. You don’t know what it is like to live and be manipulated by the goddess. I suppose you do considering your daughter is a seer.”

I stilled. “How do you know that?”

I should have probably called her bluff and denied it but when it came to my child, I didn’t play around. Reina had no need to lie to me, she had no need to try to draw things out. If she said that Audrey was a seer, it was because she knew.

“I have been among many seers in my lifetime, it was not hard to figure out,” she shrugged. “Your daughter will be manipulated by the goddess all her life. She will be cursed to see things and be unable to change them. Have you ever wondered why the goddess gave her the powers so early? Has she yet told you that the goddess asked her not to tell you things.”

I remained silent.

“I know she has. She is trying to brain wash your child. I was lucky enough to break free of her control. I was lucky enough to see the truth. Dark magic gave me my freedom back. I can give Audrey hers too. Just give me the dagger and we can work together”

I glanced over at Ryker but he wasn't looking at her, he was looking at me. He was letting me make the choice. I thought about it for a second before turning to Reina.

"Go to hell," I spat and her smile fell instantly.

"Very well then, as brave as that was, it was also very stupid. I don't want to fight you, I just want the dagger."

"We have backup on the way," I lied and she snorted.

"Believe me, I have kept your palace very busy," she pulled out two dolls from her pockets. "I will save you the trouble of having to guess who these are. One is Damien and the other is Juan. Now, you have two options: you can give me the dagger or I will make them burn that palace to the ground with everyone in it. The choice is yours and you have five seconds."

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CAMILLA'S POV

"Five," she began and I turned to Ryker unsure of what to do.

I switched to our mind link. "What do we do?"

"I don't know," he admitted at the same time she counted four. "If we let her then everyone's deaths will be on our hands."

"But we cannot give her the dagger, what assurance do we have that she will not kill them regardless and kill us?" "Three," she sing songed.

"We need a plan," Ryker mumbled and a crazy idea popped into my head.

"What is it?"

“I need you to trust me and just go with the flow.”

“Camilla-" he began but I cut off the mind link and turned to Reina.

She had a cruel smirk on her face as she watched us. She knew this was a difficult choice and somehow, I knew that was the entire point. I exhaled deeply before reaching out with my senses. I had pulled water from a cliff below, I could pull water from beneath the ground. I could feel it under my feet and I willed it upward. Reina was still counting and just as she hit one, everywhere exploded.

Water shot up like a geyser and it was enough to knock her off guard for a minute. The dolls flew out of her hands and Ryker was quick to grab both of them. Reina was soaking wet and I was breathing hard. Please visit Jobnib.com and search the book title to read the entire book for free. I didn't realize how much it would take out of me to do that. I willed the water shut long enough for her to get back to her feet. She was spluttering and most of all, she looked pissed off.

“I thought we could do this the easy way,” she began as she made a circular motion with her hands. I saw black smoke follow her movements. “But since you want to play dirty, I will play dirty.”

She threw whatever she had conjured in my direction and if not for Ryker pushing me out of the way, it probably would have hit me. It hit the tree behind me and I saw it smoke before dissolving into ashes. I turned to her with raised brows but she was already making another one.

“Come on, Reina,” I began softly. “Do you really want to do this? Do you want to spend the rest of your life fighting? Even if you beat me, the goddess will send someone else after you. You will never be able to live in peace because you are killing the very people she wants to save you.”

She shot another flaming ball in my direction and this time, I was able to erect a wall of water. The wall smoked out when the ball hit but it was enough to protect Ryker and I.

“We should surround her,” Ryker whispered but I shook my head. “It would be easier to have her attention split.” “No,” I kept my voice firm. “You could get badly hurt. Reina is ruthless and you cannot get killed by her”

“I won't,” she shot another ball our way and this time when Ryker pushed me out of the way, he rolled in the opposite direction. I nearly screamed because he had done exactly what I asked him not to.

Reina looked between the both of us with an amused smirk. “Is this your grand plan? Divide and conquer? It isn't going to work.”

“Maybe,” Ryker shrugged as he took out the dagger from the holster. My eyes widened to the point of saucers. I tried to mind link him to ask what he was doing but his wall was firmly in place. “This is what you want, right? I'll give it to you but on one condition.”

“You are in no position to make demands but I am willing to hear you out”

“You have to swear- make a blood oath- and say that you will never bother us again. If we are certain that you will leave us alone then you can have the dagger.”

She hesitated before crossing her arms over her chest. “You drive a hard bargain but fine, I will do it. Do you know how a blood oath works?”

“Yes, actually, I read up on them which is why I know that people of equal standing should do it. Camilla will make the oath with you,” he gestured for me to step closer and although I was stunned, I found my feet moving in accordance to his beckoning.

Once I was close enough, I dropped my voice to a whisper. "What the hell are you doing, Ryker? You are going to get us both killed."

"I need you to trust me on this," he whispered as he grabbed my left hand. "I have a theory and I need to make sure that I am right"

"What-" my words turned to a hiss when he slashed my palm with said dagger. It was silver tipped so it burned and I didn't miss how the blade glowed slightly when my blood touched it.

He handed the dagger to me. "It is her turn now."

"How am I sure that you will not try to attack me once I am close?" I asked Reina and she sighed.

"I swear it on my life"

It wasn't enough but it was all that I was going to get. I walked over to her noting that the cut on my arm was yet to heal. Reina stretched out her hand to me and I made a careful incision along the center. I knew this was an absurd idea but I was choosing to trust Ryker. Once I was done, I turned to him.

"What now?" I asked and he opened his mouth to respond when Reina cursed.

"What did you do to me, you bitch?" she spat and I looked down at where I had cut, it was bleeding profusely and black smoke was oozing out of it. She reached out to grab me but fell to her knees as if in pain.

"Kill her now!" Ryker yelled and without hesitation, I plunged the dagger deep into her chest. Her mouth formed an "O" as more black smoke seeped out of her and seemed to almost gather into a circle in the air.

"You bastard," she managed out and I thought she was talking to me but her eyes were fixed on Ryker.

“I guess you don’t know as much about the dagger as you thought you did,” Ryker mused coming to stand next to me “Good fucking riddance, witch.”

He pulled out the knife and stabbed her once again. I had to shut my eyes but I couldn't rid my ears of the sound of squelching flesh. I heard her body drop to the ground and I opened my eyes in time to see the light leave her eyes. Her eyes were alight with anger and she had a single finger pointed at Ryker.

“It's over,” I began and I tried to rush towards Ryker when I noticed something that had me halting in my tracks.

I had thought the black smoke dissipated into thin air when she died but no, it was currently swirling over my mate's head. I pointed slowly at it and he looked up. No sooner than his eyes connected with it did it move. It slammed into him so quickly that neither of us could have prepared for it. I screamed and reached out for him but it was like I was frozen in place. I watched as the smoke encompassed him until I couldn't see him at all.

“Ryker!” I screamed but I couldn't reach him. There was an invisible wall stopping me from touching him. It remained that way for exactly two minutes and then, I watched the smoke disappear into his skin.

He was on his knees and I reached out for him relieved that I could finally touch him. I wrapped my arms around his shoulders and sobbed. His chest was heaving and his voice was hoarse as he tried to assure me that everything was fine. I pulled back and cupped his cheeks looking over him for any signs that he was hurt.

“What the hell was that?” I asked and he waved me off. “Don’t you dare do that shit. You better start speaking now.” He laughed. I was panicking and he had the audacity to laugh. He kissed my lips softly before reaching into his pocket and where lay the dolls before now lay a string of yarn and some pieces of hair.

“We won,” he whispered to me. “That is what happened.”

“How did we win?” I shot back. “How did you know about the blood oath? How did you know to cut me first?”

“It was something Audrey whispered to me yesterday. She said we needed both sides for it to work. She said life beats death in her fairytales and I remember you had the powers of life. I didn't know if it would work. I took a huge risk and it paid off. We won, Camilla, that is all that matters.”

I threw my hands around his neck and squeezed tightly. “Don't you ever scare me again or I swear I will kill you myself and bury you six feet under.”

He laughed once again. He wrapped his arms around me and rose with me still in his arms. I didn't want to let go, I couldn't. I had never felt a panic like I did a few moments ago. I had thought he was going to die and he was standing here normal. I wasn't sure if I wanted to cry or fall to my knees in appreciation of the goddess.

“What about the black smoke?” I asked after a minute of silence and he stilled. “What was that about?”

“I don't know,” he admitted slowly pulling away from me. “There was complete darkness, I could feel the magic around me. It was cold, it was evil, it was there and the next minute, it was gone.”

“Do we need to find another witch? Perhaps we can find someone who will explain all of this to us?” I began but he cut me off.

“I think I have had enough of witches for a while,” he laughed before going to retrieve some matches. Content © exclusive by

“Why do you have that?”

“I hoped we would need it,” he said simply before striking it. The smell infiltrated my nose and I had to take a step back. I watched as Ryker dropped the match on Reina’s body.

It didn't take long before the smell of burning flesh filled the air.

The Rejected Werewolf Princess Chapter 240



RYKER'S POV

I couldn't tell Camilla the truth. She seemed so happy and peaceful knowing that Reina was dead. I didn't have the heart to tell her that there was more to the story than that. Instead, I put a smile on my face and lied through my f*****g teeth. It was a wonder that she didn't even notice, she could usually tell when I was bull shitting her but maybe she just wanted to believe so badly that I was telling the truth.

The ride back to the palace was tranquil but my mind was a raging inferno. There was so much that could go wrong and I wasn't sure if I had the heart to tell her. Reina was dead-yes, there was no denying that but whatever she had dabbled in, whatever she had put her hands into- it wasn't gone, not by a long shot.

I could still feel the icy feeling of the darkness around me. I had never felt as alone as I had in that moment. It took me back to the worst moments of my life- a child, unable to defend my own mother and my sister. It took me back to the icy feeling of despair, fear and helplessness. It was no wonder Reina was the way she was if she had to deal with that every second of the day. It felt like nails scratching down my back, and I had heard a voice.

That was the kind of voice I was never going to forget until the day I died. It was eerie and otherworldly. I had felt it reverberate in every fiber of my being. It was Reina's voice but it was not at the same time. It was something different, something stronger. All it had said was one sentence but that one sentence was going to haunt me for the rest of my life.

"You think this is over?" it had asked and then I heard a dark cackle. I couldn't describe what happened next even if I tried but I had a sinking feeling. I didn't want to tell Camilla yet because I didn't want her to worry. I had everything under control.

"Ryker," she called out and I stilled atop my horse. I turned to her and she was watching me with concern in her eyes "You zoned out there for a second, are you alright?"

I nodded immediately. "Of course, I am just ready to get home. I think we have had enough of witches for a very long time." She smiled. "Honestly, I agree, but we have something else waiting for us- Audrey."

"Audrey's powers aren't bothering anyone right now and I think we can take a much deserved break and not think about anything until it becomes an actual problem, hm?"

"Isn't the entire purpose to prevent it before it becomes a problem?"

"Camilla, you worry too much."

"You don't worry enough," she shot back. "I am concerned. I know I shouldn't take stock to whatever Reina said but she made some very big accusations and what if a part of her is right."

I turned to her and gave her a bland look. Her cheeks heated crimson in response. "Do you want to take the word of the woman who has tried to kill you multiple times over the word of the goddess who saved you every single

time? She sighed. "You're right, I'm just worried. This is Audrey we are talking about. She is our daughter."

"And she will be fine," I finished. "For now, let us focus on getting home."

Juan and Damien were waiting in front of the palace when we arrived. I had never seen Juan as panicked as he was in that moment. He didn't even wait for us to get off the horses before he rushed over.

"She was in my head," he said and I nodded but he either didn't notice or didn't care. "I couldn't get her out. How did I not know that she was in my head? How did I not realize what was happening? I could have hurt-

"But you didn't," I cut him off. "That is what matters. She is dead and everything is over." He still didn't look convinced. "Reina is dead. The dolls unraveled. She must have gotten to you when she was in the palace but she is gone now and she can no longer get into your head.": text © owner.

"She wanted me to burn the palace down," he whispered. "I felt the idea drop in my head. She didn't push on it but I got the idea. She wanted me to start with mine and Christine's room and I would not have been able to stop myself if she had asked. I would have killed my family and I would have been unable to stop myself"

I could see just how truly worried he was. I reached out and placed a hand on his shoulder. "You are fine. You didn't hurt them. I know she is probably looking for you right now."

"How do I face her?"

"The way you always have, with the knowledge that you would never willingly hurt her and you would rather die than let anything happen to her. She needs you right now, you should go."

He nodded before rushing off into the palace. Damien was talking to Camilla but his eyes were on me. As soon as he saw that I was done with Juan, he made his way over to me.

“Is this what your life is like all the time- witches and problems?”

I thought about it before nodding. “Most of the time, yeah.”

He cursed. “That sounds like a lot. I'm sure we didn't do you any favors by coming here. But at least I got to make up with Juan, he isn't a bad guy.”

I laughed despite not feeling the slightest bit amused. “I'm glad that worked out for you.”

I made to brush past him but he reached out and stopped me. “Look, I know a lot has happened so far but I still consider you my best friend and as your best friend of many years, I know when something is wrong. Did something happen out there?”

“Other than the fact that we battled a witch?” there was no reason for me to be sarcastic but I didn't want him deciphering what had happened.

He rolled his eyes. “You know what I mean. Are you alright? You look different- you look uneasy.”

“I just need to see my family and make sure that they are alright”

He clearly didn't believe me, but he stepped aside for me. Camilla was waiting at the front of the palace doors for me and I wasted no time in intertwining my fingers with hers and walking in. She seemed relaxed but I could feel her watchful gaze.

“You can ask,” I said after a minute of silence and she let out a sigh of relief.

“Damien was right- you look off. If something is bothering you then you can tell me.”

I stopped her in her tracks then turned her to face me. I rested my forehead against hers and for a few seconds, it was just us. There were no witches, no people to save, it was just us. I closed my eyes and basked in that feeling for as long as possible before kissing her softly. For a few minutes, I could pretend like there were no problems- like I was fine.

"I'm good," I lied once I had pulled away. "Now, can we go check on our daughters?"

They were with a maid when we got there. I knew Juan would have pulled Christine away and I couldn't even be upset. As soon as we walked in, Audrey just looked up at us and said. "I knew you would win."

It was a bit unsettling especially seeing as she had said it in this calm monotonous voice. I knew it would take a while to get used to her powers and to find a way to hide them so that people didn't find out. She was still too young she wasn't ready to deal with the entire scrutiny and the pressure that came with having magic. She needed to be a child and that was exactly what we were determined to do.

We distracted them with toys and stories. In all honesty, it was more of a distraction for ourselves. I could feel Audrey's eyes on me the entire time, almost assessing, as if she knew something was wrong but she didn't say anything and neither did I. I brushed it to the back of my mind and convinced myself that I was imagining things. That was until I started to feel something like a churning in my gut. I tried to ignore it but it only seemed to get worse.

"Excuse me," I whispered before rushing to my feet and into the bathroom. I barely had time to lock the door.

I didn't know what was happening but I knew that whatever it was, it wasn't good. I heard Camilla call out to me but assured her I was fine and just asked for a few minutes. I stood in front of the mirror staring down at my fingertips

that were blackened. I wasn't sure how it happened. Right before my eyes, they went back to normal and then to blackened again.

“What the fuck?” I whispered before looking into the mirror and I nearly stumbled back. My eyes were pitch black and not the kind of black that came when my wolf was in control. This was something else.

“Daddy,” I turned to find Audrey by the door and I cursed.

“You should go out and wait for me, princess, I'll be there soon,” she didn't move. “Audrey, please, I'll be there soon, okay? I'm fine.”

“No, you're not,” she shook her head. “It got into you.”

“What got into me, Audrey?” she remained quiet so I gestured for her to come closer. It took her a second before she moved and once she did, I bent down until I was eye level with her. “It's still me, princess. Now, I need you to tell me what got into me.”

“The bad magic, daddy, it's inside you.”