

## The Rejected Werewolf Princess by Didiadeyemi Chapter 56-60

### Chapter 56

I woke up first and the weight of my actions settled on me like lead. Ryker's arm was wound around my waist and he was tucked by my side. I slowly disentangled myself from his hold but it proved harder than I thought because he was not ready to let go. I couldn't help but face palm myself as I managed to get out. He has another child back home and here I am rolling into bed with him like a hormonal teenager.

I ran my hands down my face as I saw Ryker begin to stare and I pulled a robe around my body to shield what little dignity I have left. I gathered our clothes from the floor and put mine in the laundry bag while I arranged Ryker's neatly at the foot of the bed for him.

He finally woke up when he reached out into the bed and saw I wasn't there. He sat up instantly and then he saw me standing there. He sat up slowly as if he was gauging my expression on my face and the situation in front of him.

"You're awake," he began and I hummed. "Camilla before you say anything-,"

"You should go," I cut him off and I saw his face fall. "Audrey comes into my room every morning and I don't want her to come in here and see something that we both can't explain."

"Why are you doing this?" he stood to his feet in all his naked glory and crossed the length of the room so he was standing directly in front of me.

"Put some clothes on," I murmured trying not to look at him but his hand reached out and grabbed my chin then tilted my head back so I was staring right in his eyes.

"You want this, I know it and last night was more than enough proof. Why are you pushing me away? Why are you doing this?" I bit my tongue to stay silent. "Camilla, what is it that is refusing to allow you come to me?"

"Don't act stupid it is not an attractive look," I spat hoping he would pull away at the insult but he didn't. "You have a child Ryker, we cannot be doing this."

"What does Audrey have to do with anything?"

“Not Audrey, Lauren’s child,” I all but yelled and he froze.

He opened his mouth to speak but I pushed him off me. He tried to step closer but I held out a hand to stop him and Ryker stood immobile. He stared down at me with wide eyes and he let out a sigh.

“I don’t have a child with Lauren,” he told me. “I have no idea what you’re talking about. Is that why you ran, because Lauren told you we were having a child? You know better than I do that you should never listen to her.”

“She didn’t tell me.”

“Then what was so convincing that you believed them over me.”

“I heard it from Lucy. I heard Lucy tell her that she was pregnant and I heard her say that you both didn’t want me to know. I saw you with her.”

“Camilla, baby, you’re not making’ any sense.”

“I think you should leave Ryker,” I crossed my arms over my chest and Ryker let out a heavy exhale.

“Okay,” he nodded and started to put on his clothes.

The air was thick with tension and I watched as he glanced at me ever so slightly hoping and praying I would change my mind and ask him to stay so we could talk but I was firm in my decision. The last thing I want is Ryker lying to me and telling me that what I saw was some kind of apparition. I know what I saw, I never forgot it and seeing him right here in front of me denying everything is like a blow to the heart.

Ryker quietly exited my room and I slid to the floor with my head buried in my legs. I allowed myself the luxury of five minutes to mourn whatever had just happened before I forced myself to rise. I am the princess and I have work to do. I do

not have the liberty to cry over a man, much less a man who cheated.

As I pushed to my feet, the maids appeared with warm water for a bath and once I was cleaned, I settled for one of my more extravagant dresses. A part of me hoped I would be able to hide all my sorrows with the dress. As soon as

I stepped out of my room, Audrey was already stumbling towards my door while rubbing her eyes.

I picked up my daughter and went to clean her up. By the time she was finally awake, she wanted to wear a dress just like mine and that is how Audrey and I ended up down the stairs in frilly light pink dresses adorned with jewels and embroidery. When we got to the dining room, mother raised a brow.

For the first time ever, someone had out dressed her and she raised her glass to me in a sort of toast. Christine however was sending me curious looks as if she was worried about me and I tried my best to avoid her gaze because I know her and she can undo me with one look.

Mother was called out of the dining room and as soon as the door shut behind her, Christine leaned over to me and whispered.

“What’s with the dress?” she asked and I shrugged. “Come on, I know you better than that.

“Audrey wanted to match.”

“You have a million pink dresses that match, why this one?”

“It’s pretty,” I deadpanned, “Do I need any other reason to pick a dress other than its beauty?”

“Camilla,” she began but I cut her off.

“I really don’t want to talk about it right now.” She raised her hands in mock surrender. “Will you be able to watch Audrey when she is with Ryker? I can’t be there today.”

“Is everything okay?”.

“Yes,” I assured her, “I just want to go into town and see what I can do.”

She looked like she didn’t believe me but she let out a sigh and nodded. This is one of the reasons I am most grateful for Christine. She will never push unless it is absolutely necessary and she is always there for me to count on even when I cannot count on myself.

After breakfast, I passed by Ryker in the halls and I could tell he wanted to speak to me but I pointedly ignored him and made my way out of the palace

and towards the gardens. Only Steven was following me because he is one of four guards permitted to enter the gardens.

I sat on my heels on the ground and Steven stayed by the entrance to give me the semblance of privacy that I so craved while I allowed my mind wander. I couldn't help but go back to last night's actions with Ryker I knew I should regret them but I couldn't bring myself to do it. In fact, I wanted to do it over and over again.

It made me feel icky on the inside because I should know better. I should be setting a good example for my daughter that she should never let a man toss her around but here I am running back into bed with a man who cheated on me and got another woman pregnant although he denies that it ever happened.

Some illogical part of my mind hoped that he was telling the truth because the fact of the matter is that I never stopped loving Ryker. It was practically impossible for me to. I tried my best to get his memories out of my head but it was like he was cemented in there. When Audrey came along it got worse because she reminded me so much of him. She acts like him, she has his eyes and sometimes when I look at her, all I see is her father.

I buried my head into my palms as I thought of what I could possibly do about the entire situation. It is so sticky and tangled like a spider's web and I don't even know where I stay in this. I don't know why he didn't come with Lauren or his child with her. I would have expected him to do that honestly but maybe he did it out of respect for me.

I was so lost in my thoughts that I didn't hear the footsteps in the garden until a shadow fell directly over me. I looked up and saw Tyson standing there in all his glory with an unreadable expression on his face. I was on my knees so he was towering over me and instead of giving him the pleasure of thinking it had an effect, I simply sat back on my heels and

looked up at him with pure boredom.

I could tell it grated on his nerves because I saw his jaw tick but instead of lashing out, he reached behind him and brought out a bouquet of wild flowers.

"These are for you," he said as he handed them over to me and I stared at his outstretched hands as if they were poisoned. "I promise you, they aren't poisoned."

I reluctantly reached out and took them from him and I placed them on the ground next to me. I took it only out of courtesy and not because I plan to keep it. If anything, I want Tyson out of here as soon as possible.

“If that is all you can leave,” I said simply. “You know that you are not supposed to be here.”

“I wanted to speak to you personally,” he took a seat on the grass which I found shocking. “I wanted to apologize for my behavior over the past few days. I overreacted and I am sorry for the outbursts. It was very undignified of me.”

“What do you want Tyson?” I asked because I know Tyson would never apologize unless he has ulterior motives. I would rather deal with his straightforwardness than deal with a pretense of affection or remorse.

“Audrey is not my child, is she?”

“No, she is not. Why would you think she is and why would you think that I would have kept any child of yours?” he opened his mouth to speak but I cut him off. “You may have forgotten Tyson, but I have not. Tell me what you are really here for or I will call the guards and have you jailed for trespassing.”

I could see the shock on his face that I was speaking back to him and something else crossed his face but he was too covered by shadows for me to realize. Finally, he smiled and sighed deeply.

“I wanted to apologize Camilla and I wanted to tell you that I want you back.”

I scoffed, “If that is all, then it shouldn’t be a problem.” I stood to my feet. “You don’t have to wait long for an answer, it is

no.”

He reached out to grab my arm and I shot him a scathing look.

“If you do not let go of me, I will break your arm in places you did not know were possible.” He let go of me instantly and I brushed the dirt off my body, “I think it is time for you to leave.”

I didn’t wait for a response or an answer from him. Instead, I turned on my heels and walked out of the garden. Steven stared at me in a silent question

as I left but I shook my head letting him know everything was fine as we made our way back into the palace.

I saw Riley walking towards the doors as we were walking in and she cast me a withering look. She must not have been paying attention to where she was going because she tripped. I reached down to help her up when she whispered in a voice so soft only I could have heard.

“I saw the both of you. If you want to be his wh ore then leave Ryker out of it.”

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Before I could comprehend the sentence, she was on her feet and walking out of the palace.

## Chapter 57

Riley’s words rang in my ear for the last two days and when I woke up, it was one of the first things I thought about. I know that Riley can be very protective of her brother but I would never have expected that kind of response from her at any time. If someone had told me before yesterday that she would speak to me like that then I would have laughed in their faces.

Christine seemed to pick up on my absent minded mood because she asked me at least twice if I was doing okay and I lied to her those two times because I didn’t even know how to explain what was going on in my head. If it were anyone else, I would have called them out there and then and they would have never tried it again in their lives but it was Riley, she had a right to be pissed even though I had a bigger right though.

“Camilla,” Christine whispered harshly in my ear snapping me back to reality and I realized where I was.

I was in the council room talking with mother and the other elders on how the ceremony would go and I must have zoned out because all the elders were staring at me in anticipation as if they were waiting for my input or something. I turned to Christine and shot her a slightly panicked look and she rolled her eyes.

“They asked what your plans are for Audrey,” she whispered and I muttered a quick thanks.

“I want her in and out as quickly as possible,” I told them. “She should never be unprotected at any moment and I want no less than two or three guards on her. She is my topmost priority at any given moment. I can handle myself.””

“You’re going to be the crowned princess,” one of the elders told me. I can’t remember his name and if I’m being honest, I don’t care to know his name, he always pisses me off. “You’re more likely to be a target than she is. She is just a child, no one truly cares about her.”

“It is a good thing I was not asking your opinion then,” I shot back and I saw his face contort into a frown before he quickly schooled it. “Audrey is the most important person in a room at any given time. Before anyone is taken to safety- even me- my daughter must be safe, is that clear?”

“What about the queen?”

“I believe the queen is right in front of you and able to make her own decisions. You can ask her for details about her protection but I have told you about mine and my daughter’s. If anything happens to her during those ceremonies I will make sure that each and every one of you suffers terribly for it.”

“The palace is the most protected place in the world,” one of them said, “There is no way that anyone will be able to harm your daughter.”

“In case it skipped your attention gentlemen, I was taken from this very palace and I lived eighteen years of my life not knowing who I was. How is that for the most protected place in the world?”

They fell silent mainly because they knew I was right but I could see that the first elder was not happy with my decisions. I couldn’t bring myself to care because at the end of the day it is my ceremony and it is my choice on what I want to happen. If they think I will prioritize mine or anyone else’s life over my daughter then they must be thoroughly mistaken.

The meeting ended within ten minutes after that and I was the first person up and out of my seat. I could feel my mother’s curious gaze on me but I couldn’t bring myself to meet it as I walked out of the room. I heard footsteps rushing behind me but I didn’t stop to see who it might be. I already knew it was probably Christine and when she came to a stop beside me, I knew I was right.

“What’s going on with you today?” she asked. “It is not that I didn’t love how you put Evan in his place today but you seem weird. Are you okay?”

“I’m fine,” I lied but from the way her lips tilted down it was obvious that she didn’t believe me.

“That’s a lie and you know it,” she scoffed. “Is it about Audrey? She’s safe with Ryker and Steven is watching over her just like you asked. Nobody is going to try anything funny especially now that we are so close to the ceremony. Surely you know that.”

“I’m not worried about Audrey,” she stopped mid step and I sighed, “Of course I am a little worried about her but right now

I’m worried about Riley.”

“Who is Riley?”

“Ryker’s sister.”

This time a fresh wave of confusion took over her features and I calmly explained everything that had happened two days ago. She listened intently to every word and when I was done, her eyebrows had almost disappeared into her hair line. She stayed quiet for a few seconds as if she was wondering how to place the words she wanted to say.

“That’s something,” she said carefully after a beat. “First of all that was disrespectful as hell and you’re lucky I wasn’t there because there is no way she would have gotten away with it. Second, we need to do something about that Tyson, he cannot keep sneaking into the palace and if he can sneak in then goddess knows who else can.”

“I already told Steven about Tyson so he and the guards can try to figure out where Tyson always manages to sneak in from and as for Riley, she has a reason to be upset. We were friendly and I just got up and left.”

“You didn’t just get up and leave, her brother was a cheating asshole. You saw him with his dick in someone else and then found out that someone else was pregnant. If that isn’t a reason to leave then I don’t know what is.”

“What?”



That singular word stopped us both in our tracks and we turned around to see Ryker standing there with the most confused expression on his face. We were so consumed by our conversation that we didn't realize that he was standing right there and he had been listening to us.

"Camilla, I'm so sorry," Christine whispered to me, but I gave her a small smile..

"It is fine," I assured her, "You should go, I think I might need to have a conversation."

She gave me a look wracked with guilt but she did as I had asked and walked away. Ryker was still standing there with his brows furrowed and I knew we were standing in a public place so I turned on my heels and started walking out of the palace. As expected; he followed behind me not saying a word but waiting for me to speak and I didn't stop walking until we got to the private garden.

Other than the fact that Tyson has snuck in twice, it is the most quiet place in the entire palace. If you ever want to have a conversation without the fear of anyone listening in then this is your best bet. It is probably going to be you, the trees and the occasional critter that wanders in..

It seemed that Ryker was very eager to have the conversation because as soon as we got to the garden, he grabbed my arm

and turned me to face him.

"What the hell was she talking about?" he asked. "Who did you see f\*\*king someone else and who was the other person?"

"Please don't play dumb," I could feel my irritation rising. "I know what I saw and honestly I would have preferred to never see a sight like that. You know what's funny about all of it, that you called me to your office and then I get there only to see you with your dick in someone else."

"I have no idea what you're talking about," he all but yelled. "The day you left I wasn't even in the pack house. After we got there I was called out to check on a proposed rogue problem. I had asked the maids to feed you and when I got back, Eve told me that you left."

I wanted to let out a scream of frustration. This is why I never wanted to have this conversation because I knew he would never admit to his wrong doing. I knew he would never admit that he was the one at fault but we all know it. I know what I saw and unless he is telling me that there is a problem with my eyes then he is lying.

“I know what I saw!” I screamed at him. “I saw you with Lauren bent over your f\*\*king desk and the next day, I saw Lucy telling her that she was pregnant for you and that you didn’t want me to know.”

“Camilla, you’re not making any sense. The last time I f\*\*ked Lauren was over a year before I even met you. After the incident with us almost having a child I stopped everything I had with her.”

“That’s not what I saw. Are you telling me that what I saw was wrong or it was some kind of apparition?”

He let out a sigh and spoke softly in comparison to how he was speaking before. “I’m not discrediting whatever you saw but I am telling you that it wasn’t me. Did you get a good look at the person, did you smell the person? It was not me and you have to believe me when I say this.”

He was staring straight into my eyes almost pleading and almost begging me to believe him and I could see the sincerity swirling in his eyes but I couldn’t find it in myself to believe him. I know what I saw and unless there is irrefutable proof that he didn’t f\*\*k her then I don’t believe it.

“I can’t believe you, I’m sorry.”

He sighed. “Did you feel any pain?” I was taken aback and I blinked at him twice. He must have seen my explanation. “When you saw me having sex with Lauren did you feel any pain?”

“Other than the pain of my heart shattering you mean?” I asked and I let the sarcasm bleed into my tone.

“We are mates,” he explained, “If I had cheated on you then you would have felt it like a searing hot iron in your chest. It is just how the mate bond works and if you didn’t feel that then you know that I didn’t cheat on you. You would have felt like our bond was going to snap and the pain is almost unbearable.”

A shadow of doubt began to cast in my mind but I hesitated. What if he is just lying in order to make me believe him?

“How do I know that you’re telling the truth?”

“You can ask anyone,” he whispered and I saw him take a step closer to me. “Ask anyone and they will tell you that I’m saying the truth. I have no other way of proving this to you because it is my word against yours and hers. I sent for Lauren but no one knows where she is. She disappeared from the pack a few days ago but I sent for Lucy.”

“Why would you do that?”

“I want to hear from her if she actually had that conversation with Lauren because I didn’t know about it.”

Ryker was now standing directly in front of me and I could feel the heat from his body. I wanted to reach out and touch him. but I fisted my hands by my side.

“I’m going to prove to you that I did nothing wrong,” he assured me. “Just ask your mother or your cousin. If I had cheated on you then you would have felt it.”

Without another word, he pressed a soft kiss to my forehead and he disappeared from the garden. As I watched him leave I couldn’t help but think about how much I wanted to believe him.

## Chapter 58

Ryker’s words rang through my head and the first thing I did was go to my mother’s office. I didn’t knock, I just pulled the door open and walked in. I saw her raise a brow at me but she didn’t say anything and instead closed the document she was working on and looked up at me.

I shut the door behind us and took a seat in front of her. She stayed quiet as she peered up at me through her thick lashes and the intensity of her gaze had me squirming. Sometimes it is almost terrifying looking at my mother because it feels like looking in a mirror. She doesn’t look her age at all; in fact, she can pass for an older version of me sometimes

“Is there a reason you barged into my office, Camilla?” she asked with humor lacing her tone. “Or did you simply miss my presence so much that you felt the need to reenact one of Audrey’s scenes? I hate to inform you that it won’t have quite the same reaction considering there is no one here and everyone already knows of your existence.”

I rolled my eyes, “I’m honestly debating whether or not the question is worth it at this point.”

“You’re already here,” she leaned back in her seat. “You might as well get the answers that you came for. Don’t you think so?”

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I realized that she was right but judging by the amused look in her eye, I knew she wasn’t going to make this easy for me. I can count on one hand the number of times I have come to my mother for advice. It isn’t that she doesn’t give good advice- quite the contrary actually. She gives the best advice but before she does so, she will draw out the conversation and make you feel stupid.

The first time I came to her was when I found out I was pregnant for Audrey. I asked her whether I should go back to Ryker and she laughed in my face for a full minute then proceeded to tell me that if my pride was as weak as my decision making skills then she would give me her express permission to go back and be his mistress.

I didn’t go back again after that. There is only so much ridicule a person can take at the hands of someone, seated in her office and looking to her for advice.

someone else but here I am

“Did my father ever cheat on you?” I asked and her smile fell. “I know you don’t talk about him much but I wanted to know.”

My question seemed to have rocked her because for once she didn’t look like the formidable queen I knew her to be. I have asked her about my father before but she promptly shut down the conversation and told me that she would never entertain questions about him. I knew I was risking a lot by asking but I needed the answers.

“You say cheat so easily, as if it is a onetime thing.” She began finally, “If you ask him, he would say he didn’t and honestly L would agree. To cheat there would have to be a relationship and what we had was anything but. It was an alliance formed out of duty and desperation and nothing more.”

Translation: He did- many times.

“Ryker told me something today,” I began and her lips curled up cruelly.

“Are you letting him into your head again?” she asked, “Honestly Camilla, I thought you were smarter than this. You are more than welcome to play around with your own life but have you once considered that Audrey might be affected by all of this? Do you really want to get her attached and then-,”

“Do not talk about my daughter,” I cut her off. “Everything that I have done, I have done for her. I don’t need advice from a woman who had her child kidnapped right under her nose. I came here to ask a simple question and if all you will do is make me feel like shi t over it then I will take my questions and leave. Don’t mistake my silence for acceptance mother. I am not one of your subjects that you will oppress without a struggle.”

My mother was shocked that I had spoken back to her. Hell, I was shocked that I had spoken back because it isn’t something I make a habit of doing. I mainly try my best to avoid any kinds of conflict. The last thing you will see me doing is diving head first into it.

The silence in the room stretched to an uncomfortable tension. My body itched to apologize but I also knew that if anyone should be apologizing then it should be her. I did nothing wrong and I said nothing wrong. She had no right to bring up Audrey like I was a bad parent. I have looked out for her since before she was even born and I would never do anything to jeopardize that.

“I’m sorry,” I wasn’t expecting those words from her and my brows disappeared into my hairline when I heard them. “Don’t look at me like that, I am quite capable of apologizing when I’m wrong.”

“I know you are, I just didn’t think you would do it.”

She rolled her eyes, “Why did you come here? Don’t waste my time because I have a lot of work to do.”

I cleared my throat. "When your mate cheats on you, do you feel pain in your chest or abdomen?"

She raised a perfectly arched brow at my question. "Is there a certain reason why you're asking? Did you feel any pain anywhere?"

"I didn't," I began slowly. "It was just that Ryker and I were talking and was so adamant that he didn't cheat on me but there's no way to prove he didn't because I know what I saw and then he asked if I felt any pain. Of course I told him no and then he said that if he cheated I would have felt pain."

"He's right," she said and my eyes widened. "Every single time your father f\*\*ked another woman, I felt it. It was terribly excruciating and it was so terrible that I asked a witch to break our bond. I couldn't leave him, he was the king of course but at least I never felt that pain again."

Everything suddenly seemed to spin as I tried to wrap my head around what she had just said: I didn't feel any pain- I never did then and I haven't till now. Why didn't I feel any pain if I clearly saw Ryker having sex with Lauren? Is it because we hadn't done our mating ceremony? What exactly was the reason why I never felt anything from him?

"What are you thinking about?" mother asked, "I can see the wheels turning in your head."

"I didn't feel any pain when I saw them together. Does that mean he's telling the truth?"

"Of course he is. I always knew he never cheated on you. From the moment you told me the story, I knew he was innocent because if he really did it then you would have felt it."

"But I know what I saw," I argued. "I wasn't seeing things and I clearly saw his face and hers. I also know what I heard and she said she was pregnant for him. I didn't imagine all of those."

"I never said  
you did."

"What if he found a witch to break our bond just like you did with f ather?"

“The pain would have been even worse than the pain of him f\*\*king someone else.” I was more confused at this point and she knew it because she sighed. “I don’t know what happened Camilla and I believe you when you say you saw him but the truth is that I think there is more to this story than what you think.”

“For now he is here and he is an awesome father to your daughter. He is trying to prove himself to you as well and I think you should give him a second chance. If your father did half of what Ryker is doing whenever he cheated on me then I would have never broken our bond. If he was half the father Ryker is to Audrey then I would have mourned his death longer than a day. I cannot tell you what to do but as your mother, I have given you the advice that I can.”

“I can’t just forget what saw.”

“I’m not asking you to. I am asking you to be with your mate and I will run a search on what happened. It will be difficult considering it was four years ago but I will see what I can figure out.”

“Thank you.”

I wanted to pull her into a hug, I wanted to say so many more words but I knew my mother was not a woman of hugs or actions. She just gave me a soft smile and went back to the documents in front of her. I knew it was a dismissal and for once, I didn’t mind. I quietly stood to my feet and walked out of her office.

The sun had already set by the time I left mother’s office. I expected Audrey to be in her room or with Christine and that was why I was shocked when I made my way to the private living room and heard her giggles.

I saw her sitting with Ryker on his lap while he made weird hand gestures and whispered some words into her ears. He must

have heard my footsteps because he stopped speaking instantly and his eyes met mine. Audrey picked up on his silence and she followed his gaze.

“Hi mummy,” she squealed as she jumped off his lap and ran over to me.

I picked her up with ease and balanced her on one hip as I pressed a soft kiss to her forehead. She giggled and buried her face into my neck and it took all my effort to hide my smile.

“I’m sorry,” Ryker said suddenly as he stood to his feet. “I tried to tell her that she had to go back but she was insisting that I tell her another story. She liked the way I did the voices.”

I hummed and I turned to Audrey who was gazing up at me with innocent eyes. She blinked softly as if trying to win me over with puppy dog eyes and the corner of my lips tilted up..

“Go outside the door and meet Steven. He is going to take you to Christine and you are going to go upstairs and get ready for bed.”

“But mummy,” she began and I shot her a stern look.

She sighed deeply and I put her down so she could do as I asked. She first of all ran over to give Ryker a quick hug before disappearing out the door. I watched her leave and as badly as I wanted to go after her and make sure that she reached her destination safely, I forced my legs to stay put. Steven is the best in the business and he will watch over Audrey with his life.

Ryker was standing in front of me unmoving and I could tell that he was bracing himself for me to yell but instead, I crossed the length of the room and took a seat next to him.

“You have one chance to convince me,” I said as I crossed my ankles in front of me. “Do not blow it.”

## Chapter 59

At first there was complete shock on his face. The shock slowly morphed into understanding as the words settled in his head followed by a deep sigh as he took his seat. Out of the corner of my eye I saw him looking at me but I couldn’t bear to meet his eyes. I wanted to be able to keep a clear head and an even clearer mind while he spoke.

“I don’t know where to start,” he began. “I don’t know where the issue started from. I don’t know what you saw or what you heard but I know one thing is I would have never dreamed of doing anything to hurt you. Camilla, I lo-,”

“Don’t say it, please,” I was annoyed at how weak my voice sounded. I was annoyed that I knew what he was about to say and I didn’t want to hear it because those three words would promptly end this conversation and I would be back in his arms like nothing ever happened.



I hated how weak it made me feel and how easy it would be for him to just sway me and get me back in his arms like nothing happened. Everything was suddenly so confusing because I don't even know what to believe anymore. I don't know if I should believe what I saw or what mother and Ryker say.

I know I believe my mother because she wouldn't lie to me and I hate to say it but I already believe Ryker. Judging by what mother said, he didn't cheat but that doesn't explain what I saw. It is like there is a war raging in my head and I don't know what is real and what isn't anymore. I don't know who to believe or if I can even trust myself at this point.

"Camilla," Ryker's voice was soft and pleading. "I have never looked at Lauren twice since I met you. I don't want her, I have never wanted her. Since the moment you stumbled across my border, even when I told you I didn't want a mate, even when you wouldn't look me in the eye like you wouldn't right now. I was wholly and completely yours from the first moment our eyes met and I don't know what I can say to make you believe me because you know what you saw and I believe you when you say you saw that but I know for a fact that I was nowhere near Lauren while you were at the pack house."

"Then who was with her?" I asked finally turning to face him. "Who was the man who looked exactly like you that she was f\*\*king in your office? She was bent over your desk and someone was standing behind her. Who was it if not you?"

"I don't know."

I threw my hand up in frustration and stood to my feet. If I had a scrap of sense or dignity, I would walk away right now. It makes no sense how I know I saw him there but he is adamant that nothing happened and he wasn't even there. If someone else were in my position I would have told them to leave because he was trying to gaslight them but I am here and I can see the sincerity in his

eyes.

He looked just as frustrated as I did. He looked annoyed by the entire thing and he just looked sad. He looked like he wanted it all to be over and his emotions mirrored mine because I wanted it all to be over. I wanted to be back in his arms, I wanted to forget everything and I just wanted him.

I ran my hands down my face in barely concealed frustration and I could see Ryker watching me carefully as if I was a ticking time bomb on the brink of explosion. He looked like he was preparing for the worst case scenario.

“Where is Lauren now?” I asked. “Where has she been in the past four years?”

“I would assume she was in the pack but I’m not sure because I never checked on her once. I didn’t care what she was doing because my main focus was finding you. My only reason for waking up every day was to find you. I told you a few days ago that she wasn’t found at the pack. I don’t know how long she has been missing.”

“You don’t have a child with her,” I repeated just to be sure and he nodded.

“You are the only woman I have and have ever wanted a child with. If Lauren truly was pregnant then you

would know because I would never shy away from my parental duties and you know that. I don’t know exactly what you saw Camilla but I know this, you cannot believe a word Lauren says. I couldn’t get Lucy to come over but she is adamant that she never had any sort of conversation like that with Lauren.”

I wanted to pull my hair out and scream. If he truly doesn’t have a child with Lauren then she lied. The problem is was Lucy in on that lie? Was everything I saw a lie? I don’t know what is real and what is not anymore. It is frustrating and it makes me feel like I am running in circles. It makes me feel like I am in the woods blindfolded and I am nearing a cliff but I don’t know how to avoid it before I fall to my death.

“What now?” I asked softly because I didn’t know what else to do or say.

“What happens now?”

“I’m doing everything I can to find Lauren. She is the only other common denominator in everything and she is the only person who knows the truth. I don’t expect you to believe me or come back to me Camilla but I truly hope that you give me a chance. I miss you and you don’t want me to say it but I love you. You are all I have thought of in the past four years. I scoured every corner of the earth looking for you. I went to your mother and I went to every pack I could just to find you.”

“Why would you do that?” my voice was small and I almost didn’t ask the question because I was scared of his response. “Why would you spend so much effort in finding me if I just stood up and left? You should have cut your losses and moved

on.”

“There is no greater loss than losing you.” He was on his feet now and he crossed the length of the room until he was standing directly in front of me.

I looked up at him and the raw emotion in his eyes almost made me stumble. His hand reached up to cup my face and I knew I should pull away but I allowed him hold me. I allowed him stroke his thumb across my cheek softly and I allowed myself relax in his hold even though I knew I should be doing better.

He knew exactly what words to say and I felt them permeate the deepest parts of my heart. It felt like we were in our own personal bubble and for once, I could forget everything that had happened and just do what I wanted to do which was be with him. I saw his eyes fall to my lips and there was a sharp tug in my lower belly.

“Ryker,” I breathed softly, “We shouldn’t. It will get too complicated and the last thing we need is more complications.”

“There is nothing complicated about wanting my mate.”

“Ryker,” it was meant to come out as a warning but it sounded more pleading.

He leaned closer until our lips were practically brushing and I couldn’t even bring myself to pull away. The truth was that I wanted it just as much as he did.

“Let’s start over,” his lips moved against mine with every word. “While we search for the truth, let us start over. I want you Camilla and I don’t want to live one more second away from you.”

“This isn’t how to start over. If we were to start over then we would be strangers before becoming friends or anything more) We have a daughter Ryker, there is no starting over for us.”

“Then let me have you, in any way that you want me to. I am merely a footstool to be used at your disposal. I would rather be a speck of dust in your world than a king in a world where you do not exist. I love you Camilla.”

Everything was too much; the words, the feel of his lips against mine. My head was spinning and this time I clearly knew that I was the one who bridged the gap between us when I kissed him. I knew that it was completely irresponsible and stupid of me to do that but I couldn't bring myself to care as my hands wrapped around his neck...

His hands held my hips and pulled me flush against him so I could feel every ridge and contour of his body as he ravaged my lips. I may have been the one who kissed him first but he was the one who was in control. He claimed my mouth with unmatched passion and I could feel every bit of emotion that he poured into that kiss.

His fingers slid to my a\*s and when he squeezed softly, I let out a soft moan. He used the opportunity to slip his tongue inside and as his tongue caressed my mouth, I could feel myself getting impossibly wetter and I knew that I wanted him- in my bed, in my heart, everywhere. I just wasn't sure how things would play out if I did.

Suddenly, Ryker pulled away and he ran his hands through his hair while muttering the word f\*\*k over and over again. He started to pace the length of the room and I could see that he was confused and conflicted. I had my hand over my lips that were still stinging and tingling and I didn't know how to respond to the warring emotions inside me.

“I don't want you to regret this,” Ryker said when he had calmed down. “You already regret it the first time. I don't want you to regret this a second time. I can deal with you avoiding and hating me but I cannot deal with you hating yourself for a -decision we both made.”

“I don't regret it,” he glanced up at me with a look of disbelief. “I don't know what is going on but I know that I don't regret it. I'm confused Ryker. On one hand I believe you but on the other hand, I know what I saw. I don't know what is happening

and I don't want to make this more complicated than it already is.”

He still looked unsure so I sighed. “Audrey comes into my room every morning and I didn't want her to see us together and start assuming things. I don't want

to hurt our daughter by making her think something is happening and then have her hopes shattered.”

By the time I finished speaking, I expected him to say something but instead, he just stayed there staring at me with wide eyes as if he was shocked. I wanted to ask why he was looking at me like that but I knew it was only a matter of time before he told me by himself.

He crossed the length of the room until he was standing in front of me and then his hand reached out to stroke a stray strand of hair behind my ears. There was a look in his eyes, one that I couldn't quite put my finger on.

“You said our daughter,” he said after a beat of silence. “I don't know if you've said it before but hearing you say it now. I don't know how I feel but I loved hearing it.”

“She is your daughter, Ryker,” I said simply. “And if we are going to do this then we have to keep her out of it. I don't know what's going to happen after the coronation and I don't know how we are going to work things out between us but we can figure that out later. For now, I just want to make sure that no one gets hurt.”

“That's exactly what I want,” he assured me.

This time, he made the move and he kissed me. I don't know how long we stood there in the dead of night with our lips speaking multitudes of words for us. It felt so innocent and pure but also forbidden because the last thing I wanted to do was pull away.

It wasn't until I heard the clock chime 8 that I pulled back and I remembered that I was supposed to read Audrey a story before bed. Ryker must have been thinking the same thing because he cursed under his breath.

I made sure I was presentable before finally rushing out of the room and into Audrey's room. She was still awake when we both got there and she had a book waiting in her lap. Her eyes were downcast when I first walked in but when she saw me, she smiled widely and sat up.

Ryker appeared from behind me and it was like her smile grew impossibly wider. I tried to ignore his close proximity and the fact that I was currently dripping wetness between my thighs as I read to my daughter. She giggled

the entire time and by the time I closed the book, she was staring up at me with sleepy but happy eyes.

I pressed a kiss to her nose, "Goodnight Audrey, I love you."

"I love you too mummy," she yawned before turning to Ryker. "I love you daddy."

I saw the physical impact of her words land like a blow on Ryker and his eyes grew wet as he leaned down to kiss her hair. I could feel every emotion of his through our bond and it felt like I was intruding on such a special moment between them.

"I love you princess," he muttered against her hair.

He finally pulled away and I stood to my feet. When I shut her door behind us, I turned to Ryker to gauge his reaction and he looked completely stunned as if he couldn't believe what had just happened.

"How does it feel?" I asked him. "The first time she said it back to me I cried for hours."

"Overwhelming," he said in response to my first question. "I just can't wrap my head around it. She just met me and she loves me. I love her too but it's different for us, isn't it? We're her parents, we are supposed to love her."

"Don't over think it," I told him. "Appreciate the moments now before she becomes a teenager and her default setting is to hate us." He laughed and I found myself smiling softly.

Suddenly, the air stretched thick and I knew this was the moment. I could say goodnight and he would leave like nothing happened downstairs or I could invite him into my room knowing fully well what I was starting and what can I was opening. Whether it would be a can of worms or a good one was yet to be determined.

"Goodnight Camilla," Ryker said but he made no effort to leave.

He was putting the ball in my court and giving me the chance to make a choice for myself. I knew that whatever choice I made, he would go with it. He wouldn't hold it against me and he wouldn't try to make me feel stupid for it. He would take whatever it is that I was offering and he wouldn't complain.

That is one of the things that made me fall in love with Ryker in the first place, the fact that I knew he would never push. The fact that I knew he was always willing to do whatever it took to make me comfortable. I could feel a familiar feeling building up in my chest as I stared at my mate and I knew if I took my time, I would be able to place a name to that feeling but I didn't want to.

It felt like hours that I stood there silent but in reality it was only a few seconds. I had already made my decision and I looked him square in the eye as I spoke.

"Would you like to come in?"

## Chapter 60

When I woke up the next morning, I got a huge sense of déjà vu. Wasn't it just two days ago he fell asleep in my room and I practically kicked him out? He was still asleep but I had no urge to kick him out now. If anything, I wanted to just freeze time and stay in this moment where I didn't have to think about what was going on or what had been and not even what could be. I could just sit and enjoy the moment.

His hand was thrown around my waist and held me in place. My back was pressed flush against his chest and I could feel his hot breath fanning my skin with every rise and fall of his chest. Our legs were practically entangled and I knew there was no way I was getting out of his hold without him waking up first.

I shifted slightly to try and dislodge myself from his arms but I miscalculated my movements because I accidentally rubbed up against him. I held my breath hoping he wouldn't wake or notice but it was a foolish wish because I felt him stiffen against me and in the blink of an eye, I was on my back and Ryker was hovering over me. I offered him a slight smile and an innocent shrug but he just stared down at me.

After a beat of silence, he leaned down and kissed me softly. It was a soft peck and then he rolled off me and started to gather his clothes. I watched without saying a word trying to remind myself that him leaving was the best option for both of us but I couldn't ignore the soft pang in my chest. I couldn't quite pin point what the feeling was but it was something akin to grief.

Once he was dressed, he walked over to the door. I sat at the edge of the bed watching him leave then at the last minute, he turned around, walked over to me and angled my head for a bruising kiss. I was so shocked by it that it took me a minute to gather my wits and kiss him back. His tongue slipped into my mouth and I let out a breathy moan which resulted in him pulling away harshly.

"I should leave," he muttered more to himself than to me but he made no

move to go. He was absent mindedly rubbing his finger against his bottom lip as he stared at me. "Tell me to leave."

I opened my mouth but the words wouldn't escape. Try as I might, the words refused to leave my lips and I found myself with my mouth gaping open and closed like a fish. Ryker let out a groan and ran his fingers through his hair in frustration.

"We need to talk about this," he said and I nodded in agreement. "Promise me, you won't switch up on me later."

"I'm not going to switch up on you Ryker," I assured him and then my eyes caught the clock and I cursed. "You have to leave Audrey will be here soon and I don't want her to see you." Hurt flashed across his features and I let out a deep sigh. "She's a child, Ryker, she won't understand. Hell, I'm an adult and I still don't know what we're doing."

"You're right," he said after a beat and then with one last look at me, he pulled open the door.

I wasn't expecting to see Christine standing there and she blinked at both Ryker and I. I muttered a small curse under my breath. Ryker just nodded to her and walked past her. She looked at him as he was leaving and then turned back to me with a raised brow.

"Am I going to have to ask?" she asked me as she stepped into the room. "Or are you going to tell me what I just narrowly avoided seeing?"

"There's nothing to tell," I lied as I picked up my clothes from the floor and arranged them neatly into my laundry basket.

Christine hummed in obvious disbelief. "I'm sure there's nothing. After all, it isn't a big deal to see your mate walking out of your room with his shirt wrinkled. I'm sure your mother would love to hear about-,"

"Don't you dare." I cut her off and she smirked wide.

"I'll run the bath while you tell me."

I ended up telling Christine everything- well, a clean version of everything that happened. There was no way I was going to tell her about my sexual life with Ryker. It was first and foremost not her business and it was private.

She listened attentively and when I was done, all she said was to be careful and make sure no one got hurt from what we were doing. I knew she had more to say but she stayed silent and refused to speak no matter how many times I asked. She

wanted me to make my decision without any external influence and I appreciated that.

Once we were done talking, I went to get Audrey ready for the day and she seemed to be a little more sluggish than usual. She absolutely refused to let me put her down, not even during breakfast. I didn't know why she was acting that way and when I asked, she just shrugged and buried her head in my



shoulder.

After breakfast, she was supposed to see Ryker but she didn't seem to be in the mood to see anyone. She started running a fever and I was terribly worried. I called the royal physician and he checked her over but assured me there was nothing wrong with her. It is embarrassing to admit but I blew up at him. I told him there was no way she would be fine and be running a fever. He ended up giving her a drug that knocked her right out.

I reluctantly left her in her room so she could rest and I went to break the news to Ryker that Audrey wouldn't be joining him today. He wasn't in the private living room when I arrived and I asked the guards but they said he hadn't arrived. I knew the only other place I would find him was in his room but I was anxious to go there. Against my better judgment, I found myself going down the roads I knew led to his room and I had gone a certain distance when I heard raised voices.

I followed the voices and when I got closer, I recognized one of the voices as Riley. She was the one who was yelling while Ryker was speaking to her in a much calmer approach.

"You have to be crazy," Riley said. "What the hell were you thinking? After everything that happened, after everything she did. Do you remember what you were like when she left? Now you're running back to her with open arms." They were having an argument about me. Why would they be having an argument about me? How was he when I left? There were so many questions running through my head and I didn't know how to address them because the only people who could give me answers were currently arguing.

"I know what happened," Ryker told her. "But I think it is all a large misunderstanding. We are trying to work it out. It is none of your business and I do not owe you an explanation for any of my actions. It may have slipped your notice but you are nineteen and you do not have the vast pool of knowledge you think you have."

"Neither do you because if you did, you wouldn't be smelling like her. I don't even want to know what you guys did."

"Riley this conversation is over," Ryker cut her off and before I could brace myself the door flew open.

I put on my best confused expression as both pairs of eyes fell on me. Riley was looking at me with suspicious eyes as if she suspected me of listening in. "Is this a bad time?" I asked innocently. "I wanted to tell that Audrey isn't going to be able to join you today."

"You're keeping his kid from him, what's new?" Riley spat with venom and Ryker shot her a warning glare.

"Actually, she's sick," I told them both. "The physician gave her something that put her right to sleep. She should be up in a few hours but if you want to see

her, you can. You just have to be really careful so she doesn't wake up. She tends to be a light sleeper sometimes."

"We can see her when she wakes up," he said and then he grabbed my arm and led me away from the room.

I didn't know where he was leading me and honestly, I don't think he did either. I just followed him until we arrived at the palace garden. I made sure there was no one within earshot when I spoke.

"Is everything okay with Riley?" I asked and he nodded. "I'm really sorry about everything. I never wanted to cause any problems with your sister."

"I can handle Riley, don't worry."

He tucked a stray strand of hair behind my hair and kissed me. I eased into the kiss when I heard a sound of disgust from in front of us. I pulled back from Ryker only to see Tyson standing in front of us with a look of pure anger and his hands crossed over his chest.

"You've got to be f\*\*king kidding me," he spat. He was holding a bouquet of flowers in his hands. "I came here for your locking lips with someone else."

you

and

"What do you want Tyson?" I asked. "You're not supposed to be here. The last thing you're going to do is stand there and point fingers."

"You're such a f\*\*king wh ore," his good guy façade was slowly cracking and I could see the poison I knew lurked beneath the surface. "I was willing to forgive you for mating with someone else and then you go ahead and do this."

I felt Ryker's anger rising and he moved towards Tyson but I stepped in front of him. This was my fight, not his and the last thing he is going to do is start a fight in my mother's garden. She will not care who caused it, she will have both of them thrown out. Even though she never comes here, she loves this garden for some messed up reason.

"You are not going to start a fight," I told Ryker then I turned to Tyson. "You have two minutes to get the hell out of here before I call the guards to forcibly remove you."

He stared at me with barely concealed anger and spat at my feet before throwing the flowers on the floor. I held my breath as he turned to leave and I let out a sigh of relief thinking he had decided to go peacefully. I wasn't expecting him to turn around at the last minute and charge us. Ryker anticipated the move; he pushed me out of the way and tacked Tyson to the ground.

There was a loud crack as Ryker stood over Tyson's arm that was bent in an awkward angle.

"Get the f\*\*k out," he spat.

Tyson had murder in his eyes but he knew he was beat here. He muttered a few curses under his breath and left. I watched as he walked away and I let out a sigh of relief. It could have been much worse and I am grateful it didn't come to blows.

"We should go back in." I told Ryker and he nodded in agreement.

We walked inside together and I decided it was as good a time as any to see Audrey. We went up the stairs to her room and the guards set in front of her room bowed to me as they stepped aside for both of us. I pushed the door open and I was not expecting what I saw.

The bed was perfectly made and the room hadn't been touched since I was here last but Audrey wasn't on the bed where I left her.

"Where's my daughter?" I asked the guards and their brows furrowed in confusion. "Did someone take her out?"

"No your highness," they said. "No one has come in or out since you left." That was when I noticed the opened window and I heard a blood curdling scream.