

## The Rejected Werewolf Princess by Didiadeyemi Chapter 66-70

### Chapter 67

Ryker and I were on our feet in an instant. He had to put Aurora down first before we made our way to the front of the palace where the message lay. I was expecting a box or something to point out that I had gotten a parcel but instead, there was a page glued to the wall on the side of the palace. I ripped it off and skimmed through the contents and it took me two lines to realize that it was a page from a journal.

“Does anyone know how it got here?” I asked but everyone stayed silent. I could feel Ryker quietly hovering over me so I handed him the letter.

He read it through in a quick second and I could see his brow furrow.

“How did he get his hands on this?” he kept his voice deliberately soft so only I would hear. I shrugged and he turned and handed it over to Kevin. “Take this to the elders and tell them to figure out how authentic it is.”

Once Kevin had disappeared, it was just us and the guards who were manning the front gate. Everyone kept their eyes to the ground because they knew we were pissed. I didn't- couldn't form any words because I was too busy thinking about the contents of that page. Judging by the signature at the bottom of the page, it belonged to my father and in it, he spoke about his son and how he was happy that he had one seeing as my mother could not grant him one.

“How the hell did he get in?” you could hear the barely restrained anger coming off from Ryker and everyone knew better than to respond. “You have one job and that is to keep the people in this building safe. How do you expect to do that if you cannot keep people out?”

There was a chorus of apologies but I wasn't bothered with listening to it. I wringed my fingers together wanting nothing more than to get out of there. While Ryker was talking to them, I turned on my heels and walked away I could feel everyone's eyes on me but I couldn't bring myself to care. I made my way to the private living room and I saw Christine there. She looked like she was searching for something and when she saw me, she jumped.

“Is everything okay?” she asked and I nodded. “I heard that things aren't exactly going well today.”

“I have a theory that I want you to listen to,” I began and she immediately settled into a chair.

“I'm listening.”

“Frederick is getting into the palace somehow. If he isn't using the doors, then how?”

“Does he have someone on the inside that's helping him?”

"I thought about that but it can't be. He would need more than one person to get through the number of guards. I have thought about everything but I can't seem to stump that. It makes no sense. He didn't grow up here so how can he comfortably get in and out?"

"I understand you clearly," she chuckled dryly. "I grew up here and sometimes I still find rooms that I didn't even know existed. I'll see if I can pull up the blueprints of the palace and find anything. I'm not making any promises but if I do find out something, I will let you know."

I thanked her and she just gave me a small smile in return. She reached out to grab what she was looking for and it was a small book I couldn't see the title because it seemed like she was trying to hide it. Just as she walked out of the room, Ryker walked in. He looked genuinely concerned as he made his way over to me.

He sat next to me but he didn't say any words. I was the one who broke the silence first. "I just wanted to be alone."

"I know," he admitted. "I increased the guards around the palace. We still have no idea how he is sneaking in but we will find out soon enough"

We better because we have six days before Frederick makes good on his threat."

The rest of the day was spent in and out of meetings and by the time evening rolled around, I was exhausted. I wanted nothing more than to sink into the comfort of my bed and pretend like this was all a fever dream but I couldn't. I had one important event of the day and I couldn't miss it for the world. As I made my way into the dining room, Audrey

rushed up to me and wrapped her arms around my legs.

81%

I felt some of the tension bleed out of me as I looked down at my daughter. She was smiling from ear to ear as she told me everything about her day. Despite how exhausted I was, I listened and hung on to every word. I hated that I couldn't be with her before she went for her lessons or right after she finished due to a meeting but I tried to make up by promising to be there tomorrow

According to her, she was learning about the kingdom history and she seemed to enjoy it. Dinner was the highlight of my day because I was surrounded by family and I could push everything away and just focus on them. By the time it was over, everyone was half asleep and ready to call it a night but I was stopped outside the dining room by one of the elders.

"Your majesty," he bowed. "I know it is late but we found your father's journals."

He pulled his hand out of his robe and in them was a stack of journals. They

were leather bound and there looked to be at least six of them. I knew it would take me ages to get through them all. I hesitantly took them from him but I knew there was more that he wanted to say.

“What is it?” I asked finally and he swallowed deeply before continuing.

“The page found in front of the palace matches his writing and his signature but we cannot find the journal it came from. It is possible that your father had another journal that we don’t know about.”

I realized what he was saying. My father may have left the journal with Frederick as some form of memorial. I forced a professional smile on my face. “Thank you, if that is all.”

He bowed and disappeared. I turned to see Ryker waiting in the hallway for me. I showed him the journals with what I hoped was a dismissive shrug. He took them out of my hands and led me up the stairs and towards our room. I couldn’t wait to delve into them because the quicker I finished them, the better it was for me. I needed to know what and who we were dealing with.

As soon as I was dressed for bed, I picked up the first one. It was dated the year that he married my mother. I started reading when I felt eyes on me and I looked up to see Ryker staring at me weirdly.

“What is it?” I asked and I noticed him staring at the journal. “Come on, Ryker, do you see how many there are? Six days is not enough time to finish it. I need to start as soon as possible.”

He sighed and picked up another one and settled next to me in bed. “We better get started then.”

I read well into the night with nothing much to show for it. As a young prince, it was obvious that my father was spoiled but at the same time wanted nothing to do with the life he had been given. He spoke about it disparagingly and always mentioned how he liked to escape into the woods just to get away from all the meetings and the people. I would have felt bad for him if he wasn’t the reason I was in the mess that I currently was.

I enjoyed the parts where he spoke about my mother but there was something that stood out to me. He acknowledged her beauty and her ferocity but he never spoke about her as anything more than a business proposal. It was clear he had no feelings for her but it was also more than that. I couldn’t help but wonder if there was someone else that he was in love with.

I turned to Ryker. “Did he mention any girl in there?”

He looked up

The with scrunched brows. “Not really, he just moans about how constricting marriage is and how he is being has sled for an heir.”

“What year is that?”

He checked the date. “Four years before you were born. Frederick’s mother should be pregnant around this time. If he mentions anything about it. I’ll be

sure to let you know.”

“Okay.” I nodded and I went back to reading.

continued for what felt like hours but in reality was only a few minutes. I was about to call it a day when I saw it- what I was looking for. It was a simple phrase but it solidified everything I thought.

no

I wish Leonor were her, maybe it would be easier to marry her.

## Chapter 66

I expected that after the naming, I would be away on a trip with Ryker enjoying some quality time with my family but instead, I was being roped into a meeting with the elders to figure out what we were to do about Frederick. In all honesty, I didn't care about him or his claim but the elders seemed genuinely worried. I only had time to nurse Aurora and put her to sleep before I was out. The elders were frantic when I got to the council room. Ryker was already there seated at his usual spot next to mine. When I walked into the room, they all fell silent and I ignored them as I made my way over to the chair. I had barely sat down, before the first one spoke.

“The boy has a right to the throne,” he began and I raised a brow in his direction. He understood what that look meant because he swallowed. “What I meant to say was that if he truly is your father's son then he has a claim and he can contest for it.”

“What does the law say?” I asked and everyone turned to me in confusion.

“What does the law say about heirs and the throne? There has to be something that talks about the child being a descendant of both people on the throne. Doesn't anyone read the law?”

I knew I shouldn't be snapping at them but I was frustrated. I wanted to be with my mate and my children instead of being stuck in a meeting with six sniveling adults who could not care less if I were to live or die as long as they regained their position as the elders. They mumbled between themselves and I knew they were trying to remember.

I felt Ryker place a hand on my thigh and I turned to him. He was looking at me with concern but I shook my head to let him know that I was okay. I could tell that he didn't believe me but he knew better than to push where we were so instead, he lounged back in his seat and watched the entire scene unfold. He rarely spoke during council meetings and I made a mental note to ask why.

“We will have to check in on that, your majesty,” one of the elders said finally and I resisted the urge to roll my eyes. “It does not change the fact however

that the news has gotten to the towns and people have varying responses to it.”

“What are you talking about?”

“News travels fast in this kingdom and people are beginning to question the validity of your claim to the throne. You are younger than him and he is-” he trailed off but I knew exactly what he wanted to say.

“Is this because he is male?” I asked and they all stayed silent. “What do you think?”

“I think that you are Queen and nothing else matters.”

Translation: He wouldn’t speak against me for fear of his life but that didn’t mean that he supported me.

I resisted the urge to scream. After all it had taken me to get here, I was going to get overthrown because of something as stupid as this and I couldn’t even count on the elders to defend me because everyone had their own hidden agendas.

“Thank you all for coming but this meeting is over,” I declared and they all looked between themselves in confusion “When you leave, find out what the law says and I need access to my father’s things. If he had another son and that picture is true then he must have record of it somewhere and I need to find it before it falls into the

wrong

“As you wish, your majesty.”

They bowed and I watched them all file out. I pinched my brows in frustration and I felt Ryker place a comforting hand on my back. I allowed myself to lean into his hold and just be his mate for a few seconds. I didn’t know how we were going to get through this but I had faith that we would. He pressed a small kiss to the top of my head and I sighed.

“That went well.” he teased and I laughed. It was my first genuine laugh of the day and I could feel the pride rolling off him. You are an amazing Queen and your subjects know that. The elders are just scared and they don’t know what to do or how to react to this. It came as a shock to everyone

“I just wish this happened before we settled down. I don’t want the girls caught up in all of this. I don’t want their childhood tainted with memories of wars and fights. I wish mother was here.”

He sighed. “I know you do, but you can do this. Everyone in this palace swore allegiance to you- even me. I promise you that we will get out of this.

Frederick is one man, how big of an army could he have amassed in silence? The palace has the largest and best trained army that anyone has seen. Do you doubt their abilities?”

“No,” I said after a beat and I felt him smile. “Why don’t you ever speak at the council meetings? You just watch.”

“You are the Queen and as backwards as it might seem, they would respect a man more. You are the ruler here, not me. I am only by your side to help you and nothing more.”

“That’s not true.”

“That is how it needs to be,” his tone held finality and I knew he wasn’t going to entertain the conversation any longer. \*Come, we have a lot of meetings to get to today but before we go, I need to know if you are okay. You lost your temper very quickly today.”

“I couldn’t sleep well,” it wasn’t a lie. I was barely able to close my eyes for more than thirty minutes at a time and I had no idea why. “I just need some rest and I will be fine.”

He looked like he didn’t believe me but at the last minute, he nodded. He helped me to my feet and together we walked to our next meeting which was with the guards to find out how the hell Frederick managed to get into the palace undetected.

We spent four hours with the guards and we still hadn’t found his entrance. I was getting more frustrated as the hours went by and Ryker noticed because he pulled me out of there as soon as possible. As soon as we got out, we were greeted by Christine who was holding a screaming Aurora.

“I tried everything” she told me. “I cleaned her and rocked her but she won’t go back to sleep.”

Despite the frustration running through me, I moved to take my child but Ryker beat me to it. He balanced her with one hand and rocked her as he led me through the halls and out into the gardens. I was confused as to why until I noticed the picnic table set there. It was at that moment that I realized that I hadn’t eaten all day. I was touched that Ryker had noticed.

He managed to calm Aurora down and we ate together in silence. It felt like bliss because it was the first moment of peace I had gotten since I woke up. I could have fallen on my knees in gratitude. I didn’t know how Ryker got it set up but I was grateful for it. I knew there would not be many more of it so I tried to enjoy it for as long as I could.

When we finished eating. I made to return inside but Ryker’s hand wrapped around my wrist and he kept me seated. “Just stay, I pushed back the next meeting by an hour. You have this entire time to yourself.”

“Ryker,” I began but he cut me off.

“You are no good as a Queen if you are irritable. Right now, what you need is rest. You just had a baby, Camilla. This stress isn’t good for you.”

“I’m fine,” I argued and he stared at me blankly. He didn’t need to say a word, it was obvious that I wasn’t fine. “What if there is an emergency?”

"There won't be one. Just relax, Camilla, please."

"Where is Audrey?"

"Audrey started her lessons today, remember?"

Guilt wracked through me as I realized I wasn't there for her. She was to start her lessons because she was starting school in a year. She made me promise last night that I would be there to wish her luck and I forgot. With everything that was happening, I had neglected my own child.

"Camilla" Ryker turned me to face him. "Please don't do that. She knows you were busy, she understands. You can see her after everything. I know you feel bad but please, I need you to relax."

Hoby please.

I let out a sigh but did as he asked. I reluctantly allowed myself to relax against him. He was still holding Aurora in his arms and he didn't seem to mind or complain. We were like that for ten minutes before I heard footsteps. I didn't need to look up to know that whatever semblance of peace I thought I had was gone.

"What is wrong?" I heard Ryker ask and I finally looked up to see one of the guards staying there.

"A message was left for the Queen. I think she should see it."

## Chapter 67

Ryker and I were on our feet in an instant. He had to put Aurora down first before we made our way to the front of the palace where the message lay. I was expecting a box or something to point out that I had gotten a parcel but instead, there was a page glued to the wall on the side of the palace. I ripped it off and skimmed through the contents and it took me two lines to realize that it was a page from a journal.

"Does anyone know how it got here?" I asked but everyone stayed silent. I could feel Ryker quietly hovering over me so I handed him the letter. He read it through in a quick second and I could see his brow furrow. "How did he get his hands on this?" he kept his voice deliberately soft so only I would hear. I shrugged and he turned and handed it over to Kevin. "Take this to the elders and tell them to figure out how authentic it is." Once Kevin had disappeared, it was just us and the guards who were manning the front gate. Everyone kept their eyes to the ground because they knew we were pissed. I didn't- couldn't- form any words because I was too busy thinking about the contents of that page. Judging by the signature at the bottom of the page, it belonged to my father and in it, he spoke about his son and how he was happy that he had one seeing as my mother could not grant him one.

“How the hell did he get in?” you could hear the barely restrained anger coming off from Ryker and everyone knew better than to respond. “You have one job and that is to keep the people in this building safe. How do you expect to do that if you cannot keep people out?”

There was a chorus of apologies but I wasn't bothered with listening to it. I wringed my fingers together wanting nothing more than to get out of there. While Ryker was talking to them, I turned on my heels and walked away. I could feel everyone's eyes on me but I couldn't bring myself to care. I made my way to the private living room and I saw Christine there. She looked like she was searching for something and when she saw me, she jumped.

“Is everything okay?” she asked and I nodded. “I heard that things aren't exactly going well today.”

“I have a theory that I want you to listen to,” I began and she immediately settled into a chair.

“I'm listening.”

“Frederick is getting into the palace somehow. If he isn't using the doors, then how?”

“Does he have someone on the inside that's helping him?”

“I thought about that but it can't be. He would need more than one person to get through the number of guards. I have thought about everything but I can't seem to stump that. It makes no sense. He didn't grow up here so how can he comfortably get in and out?”

“I understand you clearly,” she chuckled dryly. “I grew up here and sometimes I still find rooms that I didn't even know existed. I'll see if N can pull up the blueprints of the palace and find anything. I'm not making any promises but if I do find out something, I will let you know.”

I thanked her and she just gave me a small smile in return. She reached out to grab what she was looking for and it was a small book I couldn't see the title because it seemed like she was trying to hide it. Just as she walked out of the room, Ryker walked in. He looked genuinely concerned as he made his way over to me.



He sat next to me but he didn't say any words. I was the one who broke the silence first. "I just wanted to be alone."

"I know," he admitted. "I increased the guards around the palace. We still have no idea how he is sneaking in but we will find out soon enough."

"We better because we have six days before Frederick makes good on his threat."

The rest of the day was spent in and out of meetings and by the time evening rolled around, I was exhausted. I wanted nothing more than to sink into the comfort of my bed and pretend like this was all a fever dream but I couldn't. I had one more important event of the day and I couldn't miss it for the world. As I made my way into the dining room, Audrey rushed up to me and wrapped her arms around my legs.

I felt some of the tension bleed out of me as I looked down at my daughter. She was smiling from ear to ear as she told me everything about her day. Despite how exhausted I was, I listened and hung on to every word. I hated that I couldn't be with her before she went for her lessons or right after she finished due to a meeting but I tried to make up by promising to be there tomorrow.

According to her, she was learning about the kingdom history and she seemed to enjoy it. Dinner was the highlight of my day because I was surrounded by family and I could push everything away and just focus

on them. By the time it was over, everyone was half asleep and ready to call it a night but I was stopped outside the dining room by one of the elders.

"Your majesty," he bowed. "I know it is late but we found your father's journals."

He pulled his hand out of his robe and in them was a stack of journals. They were leather bound and there looked to be at least six of them. I knew it would take me ages to get through them all. I hesitantly took them from him but I knew there was more that he wanted to say.

"What is it?" I asked finally and he swallowed deeply before continuing. "The page found in front of the palace matches his writing and his signature but we c

cannot find the journal **it** came from. It is possible that your father had another journal that we don't know about."

I realized what he was saying. My father may have left the journal with Frederick as some form of memorial. I forced a professional smile on my face. "Thank you, if that is all."

He bowed and disappeared. I turned to see Ryker waiting in the hallway for me. I showed him the journals with what I hoped was a dismissive shrug. He took them out of my hands and led me up the stairs and towards our room. I couldn't wait to delve into them because the quicker I finished them, the better it was for me. I needed to know what and who we were dealing with.

**As** soon as I was dressed for bed, I picked up the first one. It was dated the year that he married my mother. I started reading when I felt eyes on me and I looked up to see Ryker staring at me weirdly.

"What is it?" I asked and I noticed him staring at the journal. "Come on, Ryker, do you see how many there are? Six days is not enough time to finish it. I need to start as soon **as** possible."

He sighed and picked up another one and settled next to me in bed. "We better get started then."

I read well into the night with nothing much to show for it. As a young prince, it was obvious that my father was spoiled but at the same time wanted nothing to do with the life he had been given. He spoke about it disparagingly and always mentioned how he liked to escape into the woods just to **get** away from all the meetings and the people. I would have felt bad for him if he wasn't the reason I was in the mess that I

currently was.

I enjoyed the parts where he spoke about my mother but there was something that stood out to me. He acknowledged her beauty and her ferocity but he never spoke about her as anything more than a business proposal. It was clear he had no feelings for her but it was also more than that. I couldn't help but wonder if there was someone else that he was in love with.

I turned to Ryker. "Did he mention any girl in there?"

He looked up at me with scrunched brows. “Not really, he just moans about how constricting marriage is and how he is being hassled for an heir.”

“What year is that?”

He checked the date. “Four years before you were born. Frederick’s mother should be pregnant around this time. If he mentions anything about it, I’ll be sure to let you know.”

“Okay,” I nodded and I went back to reading.

I continued for what felt like hours but in reality was only a few minutes. I was about to call it a day when I saw it- what I was looking for. It was a simple phrase but it solidified everything I thought.

I wish Leonor were her, maybe it would be easier to marry her.

Chapter 68

RYKER’S P.O.V

I could feel Camilla’s excitement and I immediately knew that she had found something. She wasted no time in turning to my side of the bed and showing me the singular quote. I read it over again but it didn’t seem to make sense. I hadn’t spoken to Leonor much before she died but one thing we- or rather, she- always threatened me over was that she never wanted me to be a cheater like her husband.

Judging by that singular quote, he was in love with this mystery woman and that was at odds with the image I already had of him in my head. I couldn’t tell if Leonor got it wrong or if he had just convinced himself in the moment that he wrote that he was in love with the woman. Despite my confusion, I was still able to offer Camilla a smile of encouragement. It was getting late so I took the book from her and kept a random piece of paper to hold her page.

Camilla was stubborn and she tried to pretend like she wasn’t exhausted but the moment her head hit the pillow; she was out like a light. I found it harder to fall asleep. There were so many thoughts going through my head at the same time. The thoughts had been plaguing me since the first day we had the misfortune of meeting Frederick. I was unsure if during all of this, I would be able to properly protect my family.

After a lot of tossing and turning, I managed to fall asleep. I was up early as usual and Camilla woke up while I was getting dressed. I reminded her about Audrey and it was clear from the guilty look on her face that she had forgotten. She was quick to get ready and when we got to Audrey's room, her entire face lit up. I could tell that she didn't expect Camilla to come. I watched as they interacted and I noticed Christine sneak in. It was clear that she wanted to say something.

I grabbed her upper arm and pulled her out of the room. "What is it?"

She retrieved a piece of paper from her back and I wasted no time in taking it from her. It was another page from a journal and this time, it was detailing how Frederick's first birthday was spent.

– "Frederick dropped this off last night. I think he is doing some sort of countdown until the final day. I'm guessing this means that he is still within the palace borders but I don't understand how he hasn't been seen yet. He would need to eat."

"He might have people within the palace walls," I finally let out the

thoughts that had been bothering me for a while. "Whether we like it or not, it is something that we should consider. How many guards have seen this?"

"Only the four who were watching the back entrance because that is where he placed this one. Although, I am sure it is only a matter of time before the news spreads. Guards like to talk and the servants will overhear. I just don't want it to get into town because that is where we might have a problem on our hands."

"What do you mean?"

"There are a few people who weren't happy when my aunt was ruling. They felt that she wasn't a direct descendant and she was a woman. They are mostly quiet because they know that she would not have tolerated any treason but Camilla-"  
" she trailed off with a sigh. "Camilla isn't her mother. She is kind and I fear that some people may see that as her being weak."

Before I could respond, I heard the door open and Camilla made her way outside. She glanced between Christine and I. "Is everything alright?" My first insti

nct was to hide the page from her and pretend like all was fine but I knew I wouldn't be helping her in any way so I reluctantly handed it over. "Frederick dropped this sometime last night. You can read it on your way to the council room because we have another meeting with the elders. We need to find out who that woman was.

The elders proved to be useless. None of them knew anything about the king's affairs. According to them, he never left the palace except on hunts and diplomatic meetings but that didn't make sense except his mistress was in the palace or he was sneaking out without anyone knowing. The former was the most likely because I doubted that the king would be able to leave undetected.

"What about people in the palace?" I asked and the elders glanced at Camilla before they spoke.

"He had a fondness for serving girls but he wasn't in love with any of them. He never visited the same girl more than three times. None of the palace serving girls got pregnant. If they did, we would have been the first

to know."

"Just like you were the first to know about Frederick," Camilla quipped and they all went silent. "Is it possible that he used to sneak out using the same means that Frederick uses to sneak in? It might be something he

was taught, don't you think?"

"That makes sense," I said slowly wondering how I didn't think of that. "The fact of the matter remains that we still don't know how Frederick is sneaking in." I turned to the elders. "Have you found anything?"

They all shook their heads and I realized we were back at square one. I hated not knowing and I hated when someone else had the advantage. It felt like I was playing their games and their rules and more often than not, you were bound to lose if you did that.

"I understand that this **is** crazy and we have almost nothing to go on but we don't have time. Frederick will be here and everything my mother has worked for will be gone," Camilla spoke softly almost **as** if she were tired and I wouldn't have blamed her if she was.

“Forgive me, your majesty,” one of the elders spoke. “But this is your father’s kingdom, isn’t it?”

Camilla raised a brow. “Is there a point to that statement?” when the elder didn’t speak she stood to her feet. “Find something, anything we can use to pin this guy down. If you can’t find who he is then at least find out where he is. He has to be within or close to the palace in order to drop daily notes on our walls and he needs to be finding food from somewhere. I want answers by tomorrow.”

She didn’t wait for a response from them before she stormed out of the room with me following directly behind her. As soon as the doors shut and we were alone in the hallway, I saw her shoulders sag. I knew it was hard for her to be going through all of this especially after just having a baby.

I walked up behind her slowly and placed my hands on her shoulders. She relaxed against me instantly and I kissed her head. “You should go and rest, I can handle the rest of the day.”

“I am Queen, Ryker, I do not have the luxury of rest.”

“I am your mate and I will not watch you destroy yourself like this. You are tired, not just physically, go upstairs.”

She looked like she was going to refuse but the exhaustion won out because she nodded. I watched as a handful of guards followed her up the stairs and I waited until she had disappeared from view before I went off to the next meeting.

Before evening, I was just about ready to call it a day. The day had been a process of running around in circles. Some of the guards had gone into

the town closest to us to ask around for Frederick but no one knew who he was. The caves in the woods nearby were abandoned and Frederick was nowhere to be seen. If I didn’t know better, I would have assumed that he was a warlock who could appear at will but he was flesh and bone like we were and for some reason, he was in the air like smoke.

The elders were just as useless because they couldn’t find anything. It was incredibly difficult to find out about someone’s past if you didn’t know where they

came from. They were determined that his mother was found. outside the palace but I couldn't shake off the feeling that she worked here so I asked for a list of every single female who had worked in the palace since the king was born. The list was extensive- there were over a thousand names- and each name came with a file of what they did and the interactions they had with him.

The first thing I did was filter out the much older women and the obvious minors but there were still a lot of names and by the time the sun was setting, a headache had started to form but I was determined not to go to bed until I found something. I didn't realize how long I had been locked in my office until I heard a soft knock and Camilla walked in.

"It's late," were the first words out of her mouth. "Audrey is asking of you and you haven't even held Aurora today."

I closed the files in front of me and stood to my feet. "I lost track of time." "What are you doing" she asked never taking her eyes off the files.

"I'm trying to find Frederick's mother."

"Any luck?" I shook my head. "Maybe dinner can help that."

I couldn't agree more. We were barely out of my office when Christine came rushing over. There were a bunch of scrolls and rolled up pieces of paper in her hands. She came to a stop in front of us and I could tell that she was trying to regulate her breathing.

"I found it," she sounded excited and I wondered what she was talking about. "I found out how he is getting into the palace undetected."

Chapter 69

CAMILLA'S P.O.V

By the time Christine was done speaking, I was staring at her in shock and confusion. She had dragged us back into Ryker's office so she could lay out the papers in her hands and despite that, I was still utterly confused.

"He's using tunnels," I said feeling and sounding stupid and she nodded. "How didn't we know about the tunnels? How didn't you know about the tunnels? Surely my mother would have told you."

"I don't think she knew," she answered honestly. "The tunnels aren't even shown on any of the blueprints. The only way I know about them is because I found the old architectural notes. The original ones are obviously lost but every three years they are rewritten to keep the integrity. I found the ones from just after your parents got married and it talks about the tunnels but the next one doesn't"

"Someone asked them to stop writing about it," I deduced and she nodded. I turned to Ryker. "He didn't meet with his mistress in the palace. He met with her outside and he used the tunnels to do so. He must have either told Frederick or his mother did. That's how Frederick is getting in."

Ryker turned to Christine. "Do you have any idea where the tunnel entrances are?"

She shook her head. "All I know is that they span the entire length of the castle and underground but nothing else is said. I think there were more to the notes but most of them are lost. I'm sorry."

I placed a hand on her shoulder. "There is nothing to be sorry about. You have been a tremendous help and you have no idea. Thank you so much. I am sure that we will find something in his journal. If he truly loved this woman then he would not be able to resist talking about her."

She nodded and grabbed the papers then left. Ryker and I went to the dining room where Audrey was waiting patiently. I felt bad for keeping her waiting especially when I saw that she was already half asleep. She still fought to have dinner with us despite the fact that she was one wrong move away from falling face first into her meal.

After dinner, Ryker and I tucked her into bed and once we were certain that both children were asleep, we made our way back to our room.

Thanks to Ryker sending me to rest during the day, I wasn't nearly as exhausted as I should have been but looking at my mate and the dark circles beginning to form under his eyes, I knew he needed rest so when he picked up the journal to pick up from where he left, I took it out of his hands.

"You need to rest," I told him and his eyes narrowed playfully. "I can take over tonight."



“I don’t feel comfortable sleeping when you’re awake.”

I rolled my eyes at him. “I’m not going to die if I’m left alone for five minutes.” He stared at me blankly to let me know that my joke wasn’t funny so I sighed. “Fine, we’ll both go to sleep then.”

I knew he didn’t trust my words which was smart of him because I had no plan of going to sleep. I put the journal on my bedside table and kay directly next to him so he was wrapped around me from behind. The temptation to just close my eyes and fall asleep was great but I pushed past it and fought to keep my eyes open. I waited until I felt Ryker’s breathing even out which surprisingly didn’t take long considering how tired he was.

Once I was sure he was asleep, I reached out for the journal and started reading.

I must have fallen asleep while reading because the next thing I knew, Ryker was pulling the journal out of my hand gently. I realized that he was dressed and the curtains were open to allow light filter into the room. He smiled at me and didn’t say anything about me tricking him. Instead, he leaned down and placed a kiss on my forehead.

“What time is it?” my voice was still sleep induced.

“Shortly after six,” he answered and I practically rushed out of bed and started rushing into the bathroom. “Shit!”

“What’s wrong?” Ryker asked and I could practically feel the concern bleeding off him. “Is something wrong?”

“I forgot to tell you last night but we have a meeting by 8 and after that I need to talk to the scribes to see if anyone knows anything about the tunnels then we have to speak to the spies who are going to look for said entrances and-”

Ryker placed steady hands on my shoulders cutting me off mid rant. “Breathe, baby,” he instructed and he waited until I had exhaled deeply before he continued. “We can take this one at a time starting with our

daughter who didn’t get to spend enough time with us last night then we can handle the rest, okay?”

I nodded.

“Good, now get ready. I can handle things until then.”

Ryker served as a reminder to stay calm and I knew that if it weren't for him, I would have lost my mind. Aurora refused to be put down today so I had to carry her everywhere. Ryker tried to take her from me a few times but she would immediately start fussing. The meeting ran longer than it should have, the scribes knew nothing, Frederick had dropped another page and add a screaming baby to that, I felt like I was losing my

mind.

By the time we were done with the spies, I just wanted to flop on my bed and fall asleep. I made my way back to my office with Ryker in tow. When we got to the door, he stopped me.

“Let me take her,” he gestured to Aurora who was fast asleep on my shoulder and I hesitated. “She's sleeping, she will barely notice. You need a second to get yourself back together.

I narrowed my eyes at him. “Are you implying that I'm losing my mind?”

“I'm implying that you're tired and this is only making it worse,” he reached out and took Aurora from me. She whined softly but ultimately fell asleep again. “Go into your office, take a breather, I can handle her without you being there.”

I watched him disappear down the halls and even though I couldn't say it verbally, I was grateful. I walked into my office and when I saw the journals on my desk, I shook my head with a smile. Of course, Ryker knew that I wasn't going to just sit idly so he made sure I had something to do that wouldn't stress me out so much. I didn't deserve my mate but I was grateful that I had him and I couldn't imagine ruling with anyone else.

The journal was boring for lack of better words. There was nothing more about a mention of her and I began to wonder if he was ever going to speak about her again. My stomach rumbled, reminding me that I hadn't eaten breakfast yet so with the journal in my hand, I made my way into the kitchen to get a snack. I just asked for a few fruits and the maids were more than happy to oblige.

I was reading and eating when I heard a small crack. It sounded like someone had stepped on a rock. I froze instantly and looked around but I

heard nothing again. I began to think I had imagined it when I heard something like stones rolling. This time, I knew it wasn't a figment of my imagination and I stood to my feet abandoning the book in the process.

I made my way towards the source of the sound which so happened to be the far side of the dining room. I was alone and while common sense dictated that I call someone to check it out, I decided to investigate myself. I placed my hands on the wall and listened in waiting to see if I would hear something again but there was silence.

"Is anyone here?" I asked aloud but still, I was met with complete silence. I realized how ridiculous I looked with my ear pressed against the wall and I pulled away. Even if there was someone there, it was very unlikely that they would reveal their position. I stepped back with the intention of walking back to my food but something happened.

I must have hit something or triggered an opening because the next thing I knew, the wall gave way and I fell into darkness. I stood up to gather myself with the intention of walking out but the door slammed shut. My eyes adjusted quickly but I didn't know how to trigger the opening again. I wanted to call out for help but I knew that no one from the outside would hear and I didn't know who else was in the tunnels with me, shouting would give away my location.

I looked around the long hallway and I realized that I had unknowingly found one of the entrances.

## Chapter 70

### CAMILLA'S P.O.V

I knew in that moment that I didn't have many options so I decided to explore the tunnels. The walls were so close together, I didn't need to stretch my hands out before I was touching them. It was moldy and smelled like dust. There were also cobwebs everywhere and I accidentally walked into one. I didn't know where I was going but I hoped I would find an exit soon.

The further down in the tunnels I got, the cleaner they got. It was obvious that I was approaching the area that Frederick lived in or at least used often. I saw empty packs of snacks and I even came across what looked like discarded cl

others but I didn't stick around to find out. I got into what looked like a clearing and that was when I saw his sleeping area.

There was a black sleeping bag and lying next to it was the journal. I picked it up and turned it over in my hands, It was just like the others but it weighed considerably less and I assumed it was because of the pages he had ripped out. I had a feeling that this one would have the answers I was looking for. I turned to leave but I felt something sharp at *my* lower back making me freeze in place.

"I was going to come to you in a few days, I never thought you would come looking for me," Frederick mused in my ears. "Tell me, Camilla, where is your mate? Is he close by or are you here all alone?"

"I'm alone," I knew it was stupid to reveal that but I knew that if he wanted to hurt me then he would have done that already.

He allowed me turn until I was staring at him face to face "Welcome sister, I thought it was only befitting that I lived in the palace as I should have been, don't you?"

"I know about your mother," I began and he scoffed.

"You don't know half of what you think you do," he took a step back and to my shock, he pocketed his knife. "Leave, Camilla, I am many things but a coward is not one of them and I have no plans of killing you in the tunnels. If I will take your life then it will be where the entire world can watch. No one respects a king who is a coward."

"Is being king really that important to you?" I asked. "You can live in the palace as a member of the royal family, I am willing to give you that. You don't have to do all of this."

He laughed humorlessly. "You have no idea what it has been like for me. I would not expect you to understand, you had everything you could possibly want handed to you. I want what is rightfully mine and I will do everything in my power to get it. Do not mistake my act of mercy for foolishness. The next time you stumble into my space, I will kill you."

“I lived as an omega for the first eighteen years of my life,” I began slowly.

was raped and rejected before I came here. Didn't you know I was missing? I heard it was the talk of the town when I was found.”

“My mother wanted me to have nothing to do with the palace.”

He didn't need to say it but I knew that his mother's death must—have been the catalyst for his actions. I took a step closer to him and decided to try something. It was clear he cared for his mother and I knew my next words could either have good or disastrous consequences.

“Your mother wouldn't want this.”

His eyes snapped up to me so fast and despite the darkness, I could see the anger in them. He wrapped his hand around my throat and I let him. I could have broken free but I knew he would not hurt me. I could feel him vibrating with anger and hurt and he snarled in my face but I stayed immobile.

“Don't ever talk about my mother again,” he spat and he pushed me back. “Take that path straight down and take the second right, you'll find yourself at a wall. There's a loose patch on the floor, step on it and you will find an opening. Get out.”

I didn't hesitate before I turned on my heels and began walking away. I was nearly out of earshot when I heard him speak again.

“Do you even know her name?” he asked but I stayed silent and he scoffed. “Of course you don't, she was never more than a flimsy servant to you all but she was the one who captured the king's heart.”

“The king was not the kind of man whose heart could be captured.”

“Bull shit,” he spat. “He came to see me every week until he died, he told me about these tunnels, he loved my mother.”

I smiled wryly. “What **was** her name, Frederick?”

“Eva, now leave before I change my mind and putting a knife in your back. Your seven days is almost up, Camilla, I won't

t hesitate then.” This time when I left, he allowed me go. I followed his directions and

when I got to the wall, it was a bit difficult to find the loose floor piece but I did and the wall cracked open to reveal the front of the palace. It was a small secluded area that not many guards patrolled and I realized that he had given up his way into the palace. It only meant that he had no plans on using it anymore.

I had to blink repeatedly to adjust myself to the bright light. My clothes were dusty when I got out but I couldn’t bring myself to care. I had the journal under my arm and I had two entrances to the tunnels. I made my way to the front doors and the guards stared at me in shock when they saw me. A lot of them blinked as if they were staring at a ghost and only one had the courage to rush up to me.

“Are you alright, your majesty? Did something happen?” he asked but I shook my head.

“Ask the spies to assemble and wait for my instruction, I will be with them shortly.”

He looked confused but he rushed off to do as I had asked. The first place I went was not to the room to get changed, but to Ryker’s office. He wasn’t there when I checked and I went on a search for him. I was checking the council room when I heard a gasp from behind me. I turned to see Christine and there was relief etched on her face as she pulled me into a hug.

“Where have you been?” she asked me. “Ryker has been looking for you for almost half an hour now. He was losing his mind the last time I saw him. Also, why are you so filthy?”

“I’ll explain everything but where is he?”

She opened her mouth to speak but closed it immediately and nodded. Behind her. I turned to see my mate standing there, he looked like he had died a thousand times already and he slowly made his way over to me. He cupped my cheeks as if confirming that it was really me.

“I thought he took you,” he whispered. “I found something and I went looking for you but you weren’t there. Where did you go and why did you leave your things in the dining room? Do you have any idea-

” His fear and frustration were beginning to bleed out so I cut him off. “I found one of the entrances and I found Frederick.”

“Where is he?” it was Christine who asked and I told them everything about my encounter with Frederick. By the time I was done, they were quiet and I could see the wheels turning in both their heads. “It doesn’t make sense.”

“What do you mean?” I asked but Ryker spoke.

“He wants the throne and he has to know that he has no claim to it. The easiest way to get it is to get you out of the way. He could have done that but he didn’t. There is something much bigger at play.”

“I think he is just hurting. He probably wants peace but he is acting out. He implied that his mother passed away recently and I think he is just lashing out because he feels like she was abandoned. He doesn’t really want to hurt anyone.”

“I love you, Camilla, but this is a man who wants revenge. You are wrong on this one,” I frowned but Ryker didn’t even look at me as he spoke to Christine. “Tell the spies where the entrances are as Camilla described. Do not go in with them. He would have left by now but he may have left something behind.”

Christine left immediately leaving me alone with Ryker. I was staring up at him in disbelief that he had completely disregarded my words. He had never done that before and I still believed that he had the wrong idea about Frederick. When he spoke to me, he sounded like a broken man, not a man who wanted to wreak havoc and revenge.

“Have you had a chance to go through that yet?” Ryker gestured to the journal in my hands. “I want to confirm something I think I might know who his mother is.”

“No need, he already told me, her name was Eva,” I saw recognition flash across Ryker’s face. “Do you know her?”

“I saw her file, come.”

It didn't skip my attention that I was still covered in filth and my skin was a bit itchy but I wanted to know what he found so I ignored it. He led me to his office and I couldn't help but note how messy it was with the papers scattered all over his desk. He flipped through them until he got to a specific file and he pulled it out. He handed **it** over to me and although there was no picture of her attached, she was described as being very beautiful.

"She was one of the servants who was responsible for cleaning up after the royal family," Ryker explained. "There was nothing special about her, she never got into fights, she was described as quiet and demure but I did notice that your father specifically asked that she be placed as your mother's maid and there was a brief moment shortly after your parent's

marriage where she took a break for about a **year.**"

"She was pregnant," I deduced and he nodded. "Does she have any family in the area? Is there anyone who can tell us anything about her?"

He shook his head. "She was **an** orphan. Frederick is her only remaining family. Shortly after you went missing, she left the palace and never returned."