

## The Rejected Werewolf Princess by Didiadeyemi Chapter 96

Chapter 96

CAMILLA'S P.O.V

I didn't realize how much pressure was on me until Ryker said those words. I don't think he meant for me to worry but I couldn't help it. I spent the entire morning thinking about his words. Loris had to cut training short because my mind seemed to be everywhere else but present. I almost hit him in the face with a stream of water while I was meant to move it from one stream to another.

The bodies were returned to the families today and I couldn't bring myself to see them. I watched from a pillar while they sobbed into the bodies of their sons. My heart ached for them and I wanted nothing more than to comfort them but my feet couldn't move. I couldn't imagine how I would react if I lost a child.

I felt a hand on my shoulder and I relaxed considerably when I realized it was Ryker. His scent crowded my space and I heaved a small sigh. His arms wrapped around my shoulders and he placed his chin on the center of my head. I could feel his eyes on me instead of the family.

"I feel bad," I admitted. "It is our job to protect them and we failed."

"This isn't your fault. It isn't even theirs. The fault resides with the vampire who killed them."

"He won't stop," I whispered and he didn't respond. There was no need for him to, he knew I was right. "We have to stop him before he kills anyone else."

"We will, it's just taking a little longer than we thought," he pulled back from me. "One of us should be there to comfort them."

Before I could say anything, he brushed past me and walked over to the family. The mother sobbed into his arms and I watched as Ryker comforted her. He wasn't supposed to touch them and I knew the elders would have a field day if they saw him but I couldn't help but smile softly. One thing I loved most about Ryker was his ability to be so empathetic without saying a word. He deserved to be king much more than I deserved to be Queen. He would have found a way to sort this thing out. I only wished the vampire king were half the man he was. If he was, he would have known that his subjects were stepping out of line and he would have handled them.

As soon as that thought landed, I gasped. All this time, we had been chasing the wrong lead. There was no way that we were going to find the vampire who was doing this, we needed to find the king. I wanted to inform Ryker but he was too busy with the family so I made my way to the secret library alone. If I

was going to find anything on him, it was going to be there.

I pulled out every single book I could find on vampires and put my wall firmly in place so I wouldn't be disturbed. I couldn't tell how long I sat there flipping through books and trying to figure out who the infamous king was. There were so many texts on him but none of them mentioned his name or even what he looked like. I knew finding him was going to be hard but I never realized it was going to be this hard.

It was around evening when Ryker found me with my head buried in the books. I was so lost in my reading that I didn't realize he was close until he spoke.

"This is where you've been," he mused and I jumped. He had to place a hand at the back of my chair to prevent it from tipping over. "We've been scouring the entire palace for you. Is this payback from when I made you worry?"

I couldn't help but smile. "Maybe, maybe not. At least now you know how it feels."

He peered over my shoulder at the books opened in front of me. "What are we searching for today? Did you find something?"

I explained my theory to him and he listened intently while I spoke. By the time I was done, he had a wary look on his face and I immediately knew that there were going to be complaints.

"This is brilliant but we are working on the assumption that the vampire king is someone who can be reasoned with," he ran his hand down his jaw. "This man could be over a thousand years old. He might not be willing to listen or even care about what is happening."

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"He's the king, he has to," my brows furrowed. "No one wants a war. If he is up to a thousand years old then he must have seen first-hand the war."

"Why don't we handle this tomorrow?" he asked and I wanted to refute but my stomach chose that exact moment to rumble. "Come on baby, let's get some food into you."

"Can I get some books first?" I asked and he nodded.

I gathered my books and just as I was about to leave, I got an idea. He mentioned something about the vampire king and the war so I grabbed the books I could see on the war. It was a far stretch but it was one worth looking into.

"Are you ready?" he asked and I nodded. He grabbed the books from my hand and gestured for me to walk ahead of him. This time, I didn't hesitate before moving.

I had plans to read after eating but I was so tired that I didn't even realize when I passed out from exhaustion. The next thing I realized was that I was waking up in bed during the early hours of the morning. Ryker was already up

and out of bed at the time and I rushed to get in line with my duties. The morning seemed to go like any other until we were told during breakfast that there were bodies. It felt like the weight of the world had crashed on me especially since we had planned to spend the day with the girls. Ryker decided that it would be best if he goes to check the bodies while I stay with the girls so as not to arouse suspicion. I wasn't entirely on board with it but he didn't give me much of a chance to protest.

I didn't want to be idle so while I sat with Audrey in her room, I was flipping through the books I had brought back. I decided to start with the ones on the war and to say there were unhelpful would have been an understatement. Most of them spoke about casualties and how the werewolves won the war but that wasn't what I wanted.

I was about to give up when I noticed another passage that seemed to be about the vampires. I decided to keep reading and although it didn't give much, it spoke about how the vampire king didn't live in the Northern mountains like the rest of them. Although it was a speculation, some believed that he lived in the mountains close to the palace to mirror the lives of the werewolves.

As soon as I read that, I tried to mind link Ryker but his wall was up. I mind linked Christine next and she was quick to rush into the room. I showed her what I had found and she pored over it for far longer than necessary. After what felt like minutes, she looked up at me.

"I think we should wait for Ryker," she said and I frowned. "If this is true, you could be walking into an ambush. It is best if you go with guards."

"That would look like a declaration of war. I just want to talk to him. I can take a few guards with me but if I carry an entire army which is what Ryker is going to do then the conversation will end before it even starts."

She sighed knowing she couldn't win with me. "What do you propose then?"

"I need you to watch the kids," she opened her mouth to refute but I cut her off. "Ryker is busy right now and I am not going to make him leave whatever he is doing to come to me. I'll just take two guards and go on horses."

She still didn't look convinced but she reluctantly nodded. I grabbed her hands and gave her a small smile.

"Just be safe," she whispered. "Take some of the best guards."

"I will. Can you arrange some for me? You know them better than I do."

She left to organize the guards and I secretly hoped that Ryker would return before she did but he didn't. I was terribly anxious to go alone but I was the Queen and Ryker was right I needed to start acting like it. Audrey demanded to walk with me to the horses and I couldn't refuse her. She didn't want to let me go and if I were smarter, I would have taken that as a sign to stay back.

–“I’ll be back soon,” I promised and she frowned. “When I’m back we can play house again, okay?”

She hesitated before nodding and pulling me into a hug. Christine had to hold her back while I mounted the horse. I explained to the guards where we were going. I was kept in the middle for security reasons and we began the journey.

We

had estimated a few hours for the journey and I knew that if all went as planned then we would leave by nightfall.

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The journey was quiet but I could feel the tension emanating. We were just four in number and I hoped that it wouldn’t be seen as too much. We went deeper into the woods than I had ever gone before and the further we went, the colder it

got. was grateful for the coat that Christine had made me pack. Even if it didn’t completely protect me from the cold, it did a better job than my dress would have.

“Your majesty, do you know exactly what we are looking for? We are almost at the mountains.”

“Just keep going. You’ll know it when you see it.”

We kept going for a few minutes when I felt eyes on me. I couldn’t see them but I knew they were there so I immediately ordered everyone to stop. The guards must have sensed the urgency in my voice because they immediately formed a protective circle around me.

“We can turn back now,” one of them began but I shook my head.

“You’re a long way from home, Camilla,” I heard someone drawl from the woods and I looked to see bright glowing red eyes staring back at me.

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“I mean no harm,” I called out but the vampire made no move to step out. “I just want to see your king.”

He laughed maniacally. “Not many people live to see that request. Our king does not like visitors neither does he tolerate them.” The guards tightened their circle around me.

“My name is Camilla and I am the Queen of the wolves. I believe he should want to see me. I would not come here unless it was important.”

There was silence for a minute and I honestly thought he wasn’t going to respond until he spoke. “I know who you are. He has been expecting you but

we didn't know you would come with guards of your own."

"Did you expect me to walk into unknown territory unprotected?"

He finally stepped out of the woods. His hair was cropped short and close to his head. He looked like a normal person except for the unusual paleness of his skin. It was patchy and white like snow. I figured it was expected considering they were practically dead and lived in the cold of the mountains. He smiled and I saw a hint of his fangs.

Although I had never seen him, I recognized him from his eyes alone. "You were the one watching me in the woods, weren't you?"

He smiled. "Maybe. Come, Camilla, the king awaits."

The guards with me hesitated but I figured that we were already here and if he wanted to hurt me then he would have done so already. He walked ahead of us unbothered about his bare feet touching the rough plain. I figured not much bothered the undead. We got to the mouth of a cave and the guards in front of me stopped.

"Your majesty," one of them began. "Are you sure this is a good idea? We don't know if there is an army in there. We are walking in blind."

"I can assure you that there is no army," the vampire said from in front of me. We turned to him in confusion and he tapped his ears. "We have better hearing than you guys. To answer your question, there is no army. We don't need one. I can assure you that there are less than five people, including me."

The guards still didn't look convinced so I knew I would have to make the first move. I slowly got off my horse and glanced up at the guards to assure them that it was fine. They dismounted too and we allowed the vampire lead us into the cave. It was pitch black and it took longer than usual for me to get adjusted to the light. The distinct smell of blood filled the air and unease threatened to choke me. "Forgive the smell," he said off handedly. "We do have to feed sooner or later. I'm sure you understand."

If the vampire realized that we were uncomfortable, he didn't let on. He just walked further in until we got to what I assumed was the center of the cave. There was an opening at the top that allowed light filter inwards. Right in the center of that opening was a throne carved from stone. It was massive and seated atop it was a man who looked no older than mid-forties but I knew better than to judge him based off his looks. When he saw me, he sat up straighter.

His hair was long and reached past his shoulders. His eyes held wisdom that I couldn't even begin to fathom. Even though he was seated, I could tell that he was a tall man. There was blood at the corner of his lips and he made a show of wiping it away with his thumb.

"Camilla," he practically purred my name. "You don't know how long I have waited to get your attention. Welcome to my abode. It might not be anything

much but it is something.”

The guards were still surrounding me so I broke out of their circle and stepped forward. One of them reached out in an attempt to grab me but I shot him a hard look before turning to face the king. He was looking at us with an amused expression on his face.

“Forgive the mess, it has been a while since we had visitors. If you had come in an hour ago, I doubt you would have been able to withstand the sight.”

I knew he was trying to push my buttons to see what made me tick but I had no time to spare on the conversation. I came with a mission in mind, I wanted to do it and get back home before anyone realized that I was missing.

“You’re the king,” I said more to confirm than anything and he nodded.

“I have gone by many names in my lifetime some of which are not very nice but you can refer to me as Alastair, it is the name I was given after I had turned.”

He spoke like he expected me to recognize the name but I had never heard it before. I thought long and hard in case it was something I had buried down in my mind but there was nothing.

“It is a pleasure to meet you, Alastair.”

He frowned when there was no recognition on my face. “It is customary for people to bow when they see a king.”

“The same way people ought to bow when they see a Queen,” I quipped back and the corner of his lips tipped upwards. “Let us not hold each other to standards that we do not hold ourselves, okay?”

“As you wish,” he made a dramatic show of hands and sat up straighter.

“What brings you here, Camilla? Wolves do not wander here by accident. I could see it as a breach of our peace treaty because you came to my dwelling place.”

“Considering that you broke the treaty first when he watched me, I’m not quite worried about that,” I jerked my thumb in the direction of the vampire who led us. “I am not here to fight. I have a problem that I think you would like to hear about.”

“I think I already know what it is. The vampire who keeps murdering your wolves,” when he saw the surprise on my face, he laughed. “News travels fast, Camilla. Did you really think that a vampire would be out of line and I wouldn’t know?”

I heaved a sigh of relief knowing that if he was aware, it would be handled soon. “I hope this means that you are working on it and the culprit will be apprehended soon?”

“Not quite,” my brows scrunched in confusion.

He turned to one of the others and nodded and I saw a large crate being dragged in. Inside that crate were two werewolves. They were bound and

gagged and although they were alive, they had been beaten and looked malnourished. Alastair watched my face intently as he stood to his feet and I couldn't help but take a subconscious step backwards. The guards were forming a protective ring around me but so were the vampires.

"It sure is a bother to find new wolves every day. I always like to have some in backup," he smirked and nodded once more. This time, his vampires moved. It was a perfectly evened out fight- three against three- but we were at a disadvantage. This was their home. It took less than five minutes for all the guards to drop dead by my side. It didn't take a genius to realize that I was screwed. I was standing alone in a room with four vampires who were older than I could ever imagine.

"What do you want?" I asked feigning bravery. If he was going to kill me then I wasn't going to die while cowering. "Was the killing your way of getting my attention?"

"Yes and no," he shrugged and leaned closer into the chair. "Living for a thousand years gets boring sometimes. I just wanted to be entertained but now that you are here, I think we can talk."

One of the vampires moved so fast that he was practically a blur. He grabbed my shoulders and pulled me down into a stone carved chair that wasn't there a second ago.

He walked towards me and curled a strand of my hair around his fingers. I stayed completely still while he moved. I knew it would be foolish to try to attack him when I was outnumbered so I kept my eyes fixated on the ground and tried to get to Ryker or Christine via mind link but I couldn't. It felt like there was something blocking the connection.

"Don't bother trying," Alastair suddenly said. "When you have lived as long as I have, you will make friends in high places. I had a witch spell the cave so no one can mind link inside of it. You are completely on your own."

The gravity of the situation hit me at once and I couldn't help but wish I had just stayed at home with the girls like Christine had suggested. I was going to die in the mountains with no one knowing the truth. I knew I had to stall. I looked around thinking of what I could ask and my eyes fell on the men in the cage.

"Why did you start attacking the wolves?" I asked and he froze behind me.

"We had a wonderful peace treaty going on. You were probably alive when it was made. You chose to break it, why? What could have been worth it?"

"There is a lot you don't know, Camilla. You werewolves are practically blind to the grand scheme of eternity. Do you know what it means to live for eons? To see centuries rise and fall while you remain. I believe it is both a blessing and a curse," he walked over so he could stand in front of me. "War is inevitable, Camilla, the quicker you realize that, the better."

“That doesn’t answer my question.”

“You have something that I want,” he said suddenly and my brows scrunched, “and you are going to give it to me.”

“I will never help you.”

“I thought you would say that,” he stood to his feet. “Look around you, Camilla, you aren’t getting out of here without giving me what I want. Do us both a favor and end this right now.”

“I don’t know what you want but I can promise that I will not be giving it to you,” I spat and his lips curled downwards.

“I never wanted it to come to this but you leave me no choice.”

“What are you even talking about?”

He didn’t respond.