

THE REJECTED WEREWOLF PRINCESS

The Rejected Werewolf Princess Chapter 241



CAMILLA'S POV

I waited for Ryker and Audrey to emerge from the bathroom. If I said I wasn't worried, I would have been lying through my teeth. Something was bothering Ryker, I had seen it since the moment we had killed Reina but he didn't want to talk about it. I didn't want to push too much but that didn't mean that I wasn't concerned and curious as to what it was.

Aurora lay on her back in front of me saying words that I didn't recognize but loved to listen to either way. I smiled at my daughter who was oblivious to everything. I couldn't help but crave the feeling of ignorant bliss that came with being a child. I placed soft kisses all over her cheeks and she giggled loudly.

"Do me next," Audrey announced rushing over to me.

She jumped into my arms before I even had the chance to process what was happening. She knocked the wind right out of me but I wasn't even upset, she was my child and I wanted her next to me. I kissed her face all over until she finally managed to wiggle herself out of my arms. I watched her move over to her sister's side and I watched both girls with vast attention.

I felt Ryker behind me. He placed both hands on my shoulders and I leaned back into him. Neither of us said a word, we just watched our children playing. He was seated behind me, his arms wrapped around my upper body while I

just basked in the feel of his skin on mine. He pressed a kiss to the side of my head and I sighed.

“Are you okay?” I asked down the mind link and he hummed. It wasn’t a yes but it also wasn’t a no. “You know that you can talk to me, right?”

“I know, baby,” he assured me but there was something in his voice, something that sounded almost defeated. “It is nothing important, I'm just happy that we are safe and nobody got hurt. It was a close call”

“Is that really what this is about?” I didn’t believe him one bit. He was lying through his teeth and he knew it. “You could at least try to be more believable.”

He snorted. “Give me a few days, I'll try again.”

We both laughed at that and I sighed. “Just tell me that you'll be fine and I will drop it”

“I will be fine.”

I knew I had to drop it but somehow, I wasn't sure if he had been trying to convince me or himself.

We wore both girls out after dinner with enough games that it became hard for them to keep their eyes open. Once they were both asleep, the reality of the days events settled on me like a weight. Please visit) o b nib _.com and search the book title to read the entire book for free. _My dress was filthy and I had tiny splatters of blood on it. It was a surprise that neither girl noticed. The dagger was in Ryker's possession and the moment we were out of the room, he pulled it out. It was caked with blood on its edges and I should have felt bad knowing we had killed someone but I felt nothing but immense relief.

“What do we do with it?” I asked him and he shrugged. “We should probably toss it. We won't have any use for it now that she is dead. Don't you think?”

He hesitated and I saw something flash across his eyes. Something was bothering him whether he wanted to admit it or not. He stared at the dagger like it was a ghost and I couldn't help but wonder if killing Reina had affected him in any way. I might have stabbed her but he dealt the final blow.

"Ryker," I whispered and he blinked at me. It was almost as if his mind had gone somewhere else. "We are trying to decide what to do with the dagger"

"I think we should keep it," he said suddenly and I was taken aback. "It might come in handy later"

"It was specifically designed to kill the goddess' priestess. Reina was the last one as far as I know. The dagger is basically a normal knife now."

He shrugged. "You can never have an abundance of knives. Besides, it can serve as a reminder of everything we faced."

"Okay then," I still didn't agree with keeping it but there was no harm in doing so. "Where will we keep it then?"

"I'll clean it and have it dropped off at the private library. It will look nice on the shelves."

Without waiting for a response from me, Ryker turned on his heels and walked away. If I had any doubts that something was bothering him before, they were gone in that exact moment. I watched him walk away and for a moment, I debated going with him and demanding to know what was going on but if there was one thing I knew about Ryker, it was that he didn't like to be pushed. He was going to talk when he wanted to talk.

Despite every nerve in me wanting to follow him, I forced my feet to move in the opposite direction to our room. The palace was practically empty, it was already dark and for the first time in forever, I felt a semblance of peace.

There was a nagging feeling at the back of my head that told me it wouldn't last but I was determined to enjoy it for as long as I could.

On my way to the room, I passed by Christine. She was in one of her flowing nightgowns and I could see her small baby bump. She saw where my eyes were fixed and her cheeks flushed pink.

“Juan likes to see it,” she mumbled. “I’m not going to lie, I like to see it too. It feels very different, I don’t know how to explain it but I’m sure you understand seeing as you’ve been pregnant twice now. It feels weird but in a good way.”

I gave her a small smile. “The knowledge that a literal child is growing in there, yes, I understand. It only gets weirder as the weeks go by.”

She ran her hands through her hair. “Juan and I agreed to tell you and Ryker together tomorrow but I need to tell you now, that’s why I left the room anyway. We want to get mated this weekend.”

My eyes widened in shock and I pulled her into a tight hug. “That’s amazing, I am so happy for you both. It is what you both want.”

She nodded and I saw her wipe a tear from the corner of her eye. “We don’t want anything big, just a small ceremony with just the four of us and the girls. I would invite Riley and Damien but I don’t know if Juan would want them there!”

“You can have whoever you want, it is your day and I am happy for you, I swear. You deserve nothing but the best and you are finally getting it.”

She wiped her tears clean from her eyes. “I’m sorry, it’s the baby. I am not usually this emotional.”

I couldn’t stop myself from laughing. “You’ll be good, you should go back before Juan gets worried. I promise not to tell Ryker anything so you can have the honor of telling him yourself”

She thanked me once before rushing off with her dress billowing behind her.

I made the rest of the journey to my room alone. I couldn't wait to get out of my dress but getting the laces undone by myself was proving to be a nightmare. I managed to get a hold of it but it took twice as long as it would have if I had help. I heard the door open just as I managed to get it off and I didn't need anyone to tell me who it was.

Ryker was standing directly behind me, I could feel his eyes on my bare back. Instead of turning around, I focused on getting rid of my clothes. It was my chemise left when I felt his hand on my shoulder.

"Let me," he whispered. I stayed still as he slowly slipped it off my body until it was a pool at my feet. He helped me step out of it and I stood there naked as the day I was born while he was fully clothed.

His eyes roamed all over my body, never settling on one spot but generously roaming and appreciating. I opened my mouth to speak but no words came out. I wasn't sure that words were required in that moment.

"Did you hide it?" I ended up asking and he nodded. "Good, now she is out of our lives forever."

He nodded. "Yes, she is." Exclusive © material by

He still didn't move, he just had his hands fisted by his sides as he stared at me. I wasn't sure what exactly he was waiting for, he didn't give me any indication as to what. I could see the proof of his arousal, he wasn't doing much to hide it and judging by the veins running up his arms, it was difficult for him to remain not touching me so I don't know why he did it.

I decided to take the first step by closing the gap between us and running my hand gently up his bare arms. He hissed but didn't try to stop me. His eyes followed my movements until I got to the collar of his shirt.

I fiddled with it slightly making sure to look him straight in the eye as I spoke. "I want to take a bath. Will you join me?" "Camilla, I need to talk to you about something-"

"Is anyone dying?" I asked and he shook his head. "Is someone critically ill?" the answer was no. "If it isn't a matter of life and death then we can talk about it tomorrow. For now, I just want to enjoy the peace we have been given because I don't know how long it will last, okay?"

He thought about it for a second and then dipped his head until his lips were brushing mine. "Okay, a bath sounds very nice!"

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CAMILLA'S POV

He kissed me and for a second, everything disappeared. His hand was spread across the side of my face holding me just the way he wanted while his other tangled into my hair. The kiss was soft and slow but that didn't mean it lacked any bit of passion. He tugged my hair ever so slightly as he kissed me and I let out a small moan. He pulled back from me but our lips were still brushing. I met his eyes and he gave me a soft smile before pulling back.

I followed his lead as he walked into the bathroom. The tub was big enough for the both of us and when he started undoing the buttons on his shirt, I stopped him.

"Let me," I whispered and desire flashed in his eyes.

His hands dropped and I slowly undressed him. I made sure to take my time with my movements, never moving too fast or too slow either. His hands were

fisted by his side and it made me smile knowing I still had that effect on him. When I got to his trousers, I went down on my knees and he cursed.

“Baby,” he groaned running his hands down his face in want and frustration. “Don’t be a tease.”

I looked up at him through my lashes. “I have no idea what you are talking about.”

I didn’t take his pants off completely, I had zero intention of doing that. I just reached in and pulled him out. He was hard and pulsing in my hands. Ryker muttered a string of expletives as his fingers stroked my cheeks. He bit the inside of his cheek and it was clear that he was trying to take it slow and move at my pace but that wasn't what I wanted at all. I wanted him to fist my hair and fuck my mouth until I was gagging.

With a small smile, I placed a soft open mouthed kiss on his head. His breath caught as I darted my tongue out to lick him. I repeated the same actions all over him, never lingering long enough to actually do anything but enough to drive him insane. I took him into my mouth and sucked him deep before releasing him with a pop.

Ryker grabbed my hair and tugged back until I was looking at him. “No one likes a tease, baby.”

I rolled my eyes with a coy smile on my lips. “Well, what are you going to do about that, hm?”

He tugged on my hair again, hard enough that I felt pinpricks on my scalp. My mouth fell open in a silent gasp and he took the opportunity to push in. He started slow, pushing into my mouth and I ran my tongue along his underside. H. was big, I couldn't take all of him into my mouth, I wrapped my hands around what was left. He groaned, his hand fisting my hair tighter but the burn only spurred me on.

I took him in as far as I could take him until he hit the back of my throat. My eyes burned and I tried to breathe through my nose. I looked up at Ryker and the sight of him nearly undid me. There was something powerful about knowing that you could drive a man to near insanity. I relaxed my throat and bobbed my head up and down his length.

“If you keep that up, I'm going to cum,” he warned but I didn't stop. I took him in deep again and this time, he cursed as he pulled me to my feet. Before I could even process what was going on, he kissed me harshly. “When I do cum, it won't be in your mouth.”

I tried to hide the glint of victory in my smile after knowing I had gotten exactly what I wanted. His hands moved down my spine and over my ass as he lifted me into his hands. I broke away long enough to glance behind me at the tub.

“What about the bath?” I asked and he paused long enough to laugh. “That was the entire point, wasn't it?”

“You just had my cock in your mouth and you're worried about a bath?” he asked and my cheeks tinged pink. “Fucking hell, Camilla, I'll give you a bath after”

He carried me into the room and dropped me unceremoniously on the bed. I lifted myself up on my elbows to watch as he pulled off his pants. He stood in front of me in all his glory and despite it not being the first time I was going to see him like this, it didn't make it any less special. He was perfect and I thanked the goddess every f*****g day that he was mine.

He climbed into bed pushing my legs apart as he did. His fingers trailed up my ankle to my inner thigh in feather light strokes that had me clenching around nothing. His eyes were fixed on me as he placed a kiss to my inner thigh. A breathy moan left me when he licked and nipped the area softly. He was so

close to exactly where I wanted him but he seemed to be having the time of his life repeating the pattern around my thighs. Exclusive © material by
“Ryker, please,” I moaned but all he did was hum. He nipped the skin right next to my core and I hissed when his stubble brushed against my c**t. “I can't take this.”

“Yes, you can,” he spoke against my thigh before finally moving to where I want him. I could feel his hot breath against me. I lifted my hips to him in an invitation but all he did was grab my hips and pin them to the bed. “I am going to enjoy taking my time with you. Fuck, baby, you look so good.”

He kissed me down there and I had to bite down on my bottom lip to keep from screaming. His lips glistened with arousal and his tongue darted out to lick it clean.

“You taste like fucking paradise, but I already knew that,” it sounded like he was speaking more to himself than to me. His fingers parted my folds and my cheeks flushed pink with arousal. He was touching me but not enough and his other hand still kept me pinned down.

“Please, please do something.”

“I am doing something, I am staring at how fucking beautiful you are. I wish you could see exactly what I could. I wish you knew just how crazy you drive me every second of every day.”

He finally put me out of my misery and licked me. I couldn't stop the scream from leaving my lips. He held my thighs wide open with both hands as he devoured me. When he curled his tongue and pushed it inside of me, I thought I was going to go mad. My hands flew into his hair grabbing onto the strands for dear life as he fucked me with his tongue.

“You taste so good on my tongue,” he mumbled. “You taste like mine. Do you want to taste yourself?”

I couldn't respond but I didn't need to. He pushed one finger into my pussy and it came out glistening. He lifted his hands to my lips and I wasted no time in licking it clean. I fixed my eyes on him loving how dark they turned as I licked his fingers like I did to his dick only a few minutes ago. He pulled his fingers out of my mouth and I made sure to drag my teeth across the pad as he did and he cursed.

"I'm trying to take this slow, baby, but you're not making it easy for me."

I shrugged. "I don't care about slow. I just want you"

"I do," he ground out. "You need to give me at least two orgasms before I even think about f*****g you."

"You don't have to-" my words died on my tongue as he settled back between my thighs.

I thought he was joking about the orgasms but he clearly wasn't and he made good on his promise. He tongue fucke me until I came on his face and he didn't stop, he simply pushed two fingers into my aching p***y.

With his lips still glistening with my arousal, he kissed a path up my torso before wrapping his lips around my nipple It was too much especially when he was moving his fingers inside of me in a torturously slow pace that had my eyes rolling into the back of my head. I had lost all verbal skills after my first orgasm and was only able to produce tiny gasps and moans loud enough that my ears rang.

His teeth grazed my nipple as he curled his fingers inside of me and I exploded once more with his name on my lips. Ryker kissed me through the orgasm, swallowing every sound that I could possibly make. Our skins were slick with sweat and the veins in his arms were pulsing. He was rock hard and I knew it had to be painful at that point.

"Do you think you can give me one more?" he asked and I let out a groan.

“Please just fuck me,” I managed out. He started to pull back but I wrapped my legs around his waist. We both hissed as his d**k brushed my sensitive c**t. “Please, Ryker, for fucks sake, I need you inside of me right now.”

He rested his forehead against mine, one hand was on my hip and the other caressing my cheek as he slowly pushed inside of me. I was so wet that there were no restrictions whatsoever. I gasped into his mouth once he was fully sheathed inside of me and he stilled for a full minute.

“Ryker,” I mumbled trying desperately to move my hips but not being able to because he was holding me down.

“I need to breathe so this isn’t over before it starts,” he whispered before kissing me softly. “I love you.”

My heart warmed. “I love you too, now please f**k me because I am about to lose my mind.”

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RYKER'S POV

I knew I was dreaming. I wasn't sure how I knew, I just did.

It was completely dark, I couldn't even see my hands in front of me. I had never felt darkness like this in my life but what makes it worse was that it was alive. I could almost feel the darkness breathing, I could feel it moving around me. Fear gripped my chest and panic clawed at my throat. The emotions were not mine but they also were at the same time. It was almost as if someone was force feeding it to me.

“What the hell is this?” I called out but I got no response. “I don’t have time for this. Just tell me what the f**k you want.”

There was a soft hissing sound so close to my ear that I turned sharply but there was nothing. I was alone but I wasn't. It felt like I was losing my mind. The sound was suddenly on the other side of me and I was whipping around trying to find the source to no avail. My skin prickled with annoyance because the sound only intensified.

“What do you want?” I called out into the darkness and I could have sworn that I heard a laugh in response. “I didn't ask for this. I don’t want her magic. I never asked for it”

“She offered it to you,” I heard an answering hiss and I stilled. I wasn't expecting a response, I was just speaking out loud.

“Who are you?”

“I'm you, I am inside of you, I am around you, I am yours,” the words were punctuated with a cackle that reverberated. It was at that moment that I realized the sounds weren't coming from beside me, it was happening inside my own head. I slapped my hands over my ears hoping it would block out the sounds but it didn't, it only got worse.

“Get out of my head!” I screamed but all I received was a laugh. “I don’t want her offering”

“It doesn’t work like that, Ryker,” the voice sounded amused. “We are one, and so we will be, forever.”

I felt something ice cold grab me by my arms and I was thrown forward. I woke with a gasp and it took me a second to gather my bearings. Somehow, Camilla hadn't woken up and I felt relieved because I wasn’t prepared to answer her questions. I ran my hands through my hair and slowly dragged myself out of bed to splash some water on my face. I couldn't shake that eerie

feeling no matter how much I tried. I stood in the cold bathroom for five minutes trying to shake it off.

When I returned to the room, Camilla was still sleeping. She lay on her stomach with her hair pooling around her like a halo. I couldn't resist reaching out to tuck a strand away from her face and shoulders. She mumbled something under her breath as I kissed her shoulder softly. I just needed to remind myself that she was real and I wasn't dreaming anymore. At the touch of her skin and the inhaling of her scent, I felt some of the tension leave my shoulders.

"What time is it?" she mumbled as she slowly opened her eyes.

"I have no idea," I admitted looking out of the window at the still dark sky. "You should go back to sleep."

"I will, what are you doing awake?" she asked and I shrugged. That seemed to be the wrong response because she frowned and sat up straight. The only thing keeping her covered were the sheets that she clutched close to her chest "Ryker, are you alright?"

"I'm fine, baby," I kissed her forehead to try and distract her from the fact that I lied. "I'm always up early, you know that, I didn't mean to bother you."

She still didn't look convinced but thankfully, she didn't push much. Instead, she pushed my shoulders back until I was lying in bed and she lay on top of me. I didn't hesitate before wrapping my arms around her. She was soft where I was hard and fit perfectly against me. I ran my fingers up her spine and she shivered.

"Go to sleep," she instructed and I hummed. I knew there was no more sleep for me but if I had to pretend for her then I was willing to do it. "I mean it"

I smiled softly. "I know you do."

"I'm going to stay awake until you-" her words were cut off by a yawn and I had to bite the inside of my mouth to stop myself from laughing. "I just need to-" she yawned again as I moved my other hand into her hair to massage her scalp. "You're not playing fair"

"Sleep, baby, I'm right behind you."

It didn't take long before she fell asleep. Once I was sure she was sleeping, I sighed deeply and stared out the window. The moon stood in the sky staring back at me. Something had happened with Reina and I was determined to find out exactly what it was because it was driving me mad.

Once the sun started to rise, I managed to pull myself out of bed. I had one plan for the day and I needed a way to execute it without seeming suspicious meaning Camilla couldn't come with me. I knew exactly who to ask and waited until Juan came down for our morning run.

"How long have you been waiting here?" he drawled as he made his way towards me. "You look like you didn't sleep wink."

"Maybe because I didn't," I shot back and his brows furrowed. "Relax, I'm fine. I was kidding."

"You do look like shit though," he mumbled as he took off running and I rolled my eyes.

I caught up to him easily and started speaking. "I need a favor"

His steps faltered slightly. "What do you need?"

"I need you to come with me to the spot where we killed Reina. I need to figure out something. It has been eating at me for a while"

"Are you going to tell me what it is?"

“I just want to know why she chose that spot,” he seemed confused so I elaborated. “The horses wouldn’t move past that spot. It seemed like something was stopping them. She chose that spot and I want to know why.”

This time he stopped running and turned to me. “Are you sure that you are alright? If something is wrong then you can tell me.”

I made a show of scoffing and slapping his shoulders. “Careful, Juan or I might think that you actually like me.”

“I’m serious.”

I sighed. “I know you are and so am I. I just need to know why.”

It was clear he didn’t believe me but he didn’t push, he just nodded. “Fine, what time do you want to leave?”

We prepared to leave within the hour. The hard part was trying to explain to Camilla. She was with the girls when I walked in. I thought it best to just rip the band aid off and although she didn’t push much, it was clear that she was worried about me. She just stared at me for what I felt was a few seconds too long before nodding. As I was about to leave, she threw her arms around me and asked me to be careful. I knew then that she suspected something but she didn’t say a word.

Juan and I had mounted our horses when Riley came running out. “Ryker, I need to talk to you.”

“I can’t right now, Riley,” it wasn’t that I didn’t want to talk to my sister- I did. But I didn’t have the time to start mending bridges right now. There were more important things.

“I know you’re upset-” she began but I cut her off.

“When I’m back, Riley,” I didn’t mean for my voice to come out as harshly as it did. “I’ll be back in a few hours. You can come and talk to me then.”

She pursed her lips in frustration and if it were any other day, I would have tried to stay and placate her but I couldn't be bothered right now, not when there was much more at stake. I turned to Juan and nodded and with that, we were off. He followed behind me as I retraced the exact path we took. It felt like reliving the memories all over again but I kept my eyes fixed on the road in front of me.

“What exactly are you hoping to find?” Juan asked after a minute of riding in silence and I hesitated before responding. “I need to know what to help you look for and why you took me instead of Camilla.”

“I don't know,” I said in response to everything before focusing on his first question. “I just know that when I see it, I will know. If you see anything suspicious, let me know.”

He still seemed confused but he nodded.

We got to the spot with ease and everything seemed normal. I had buried the body before we left so unless you were with Camilla and I, you would have never known that something happened. The horses stopped just like they did the first time. It didn't matter how much we pushed or pulled, they wouldn't move.

“That is weird,” Juan mumbled and I gave him a look as if to say that I knew. “I'll look around and call out for you if I see something.”

We started looking in opposite directions and for the first half hour, there was nothing. I was beginning to think that had imagined it all when I heard Juan call out to me. There was a level of panic in his voice that had me rushing over to him. He was standing a bit of a distance away from where we had killed Reina.

“What did you find?” I asked immediately and he gestured towards the bush that he stood in front of.

He stepped aside for me and I saw a single doll lying there. I hadn't noticed it before. I picked it up slowly and I felt rush go into me and an image flashed before my eyes. It was of Reina seated in front of a flame as she knitted the doll slowly. She slipped a few strands of hair into it as she did and once she was done, she tossed it into the fire. The image vanished after that and I was left gasping for breath.

Juan was by my side asking a few questions but I couldn't hear him. My ears were ringing a single thought filled my head. I couldn't tell how I knew, I just knew that it was my hair in that vision and the doll was mine. Whatever happened wasn't accidental, Reina planned it long before she died.

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CAMILLA'S POV

As soon as Ryker and Juan were gone, I went in search of Christine. It wasn't hard to find her, she was in the dining room snacking on some fruits. As soon as she saw me, she must have realized that something was terribly wrong because she immediately rushed over to my side.

"Tell me," she said and I explained how weird Ryker had been acting and how he had gone out with Juan and it seemed suspicious. When I was done, she sighed. "Juan told me that they were going back to where Reina died but he wouldn't say more than that"

"That was exactly what Ryker told me but I have a feeling there is more. Why would he just go back there unprovoked. Most people would try to stay as far away from the witch that tried to kill them, don't you think?"

She couldn't help but nod. I ran my hands through my hair and bit down on the inside of my cheeks. I didn't know much but all I knew was that something serious was going on and Ryker wasn't telling me about it. He was always telling me to be open and trust him but it seemed like he was having a hard time trusting me. I understood, honestly I knew how hard it was but it couldn't be that serious that he couldn't just talk to me about it. We had already been through so much together- what was one more?

Christine and I shared a few ideas of what we thought could be happening but neither of them seemed plausible. The most popular idea was that Reina didn't die but I had seen her die, I saw her body burn and I saw it getting buried, she was dead, there was no denying that. Perhaps she did something before she died that I didn't know of and that was what Ryker was trying to hide. Whatever it was, I was determined to find out.

I thanked Christine and the both of us exited the dining room only to see Riley making her way down the halls. She seemed annoyed and her eyes were red rimmed while her nose had a light sheen to it as if she had been sniffing. I cast a wary glance at Christine before going after her. Christine was close behind me but made sure to keep her distance.

"Are you alright?" I asked Riley when I caught up to her and she stilled. She didn't look happy to see me in the slightest. Instead, she wrapped her arms tighter around herself and put on the most indifferent mask I had ever seen. "If something is wrong then you can talk to-"

"Nothing is wrong," she cut me off in a slightly harsh tone. "I was just walking, now if I might continue to do that without any further interruptions, I would be more than grateful"

She tried to walk past me but I grabbed her upper arm and kept her in place. "What the hell is this about? You have never acted like this before so why are

you doing it right now? We are adults, Riley, if something is wrong then you open your mouth and communicate.”

“How self-righteous of you,” she spat. “I could have told you the same when you were off tossing me to the side like some attraction or old trinket.” I was so confused as to what she was saying but she clearly wasn’t done. “It doesn’t matter either way, we will be leaving within the week. It is what you want, is it not?”

“What are you even talking about? You aren't making any sense, Riley.”

“You have been excluding us from everything!” she exclaimed and I was taken aback by the sheer emotion in her tone. Her eyes burned and her face turned crimson with each passing second. Her brows were furrowed in anger and her fists were clenched by her side. “This entire time, you have been the one telling Ryker to exclude us.”

I almost laughed. It was so comical to even imagine that my first reaction was to laugh but I had to bite down on the inside of my cheek because I knew it would only cause more trouble in the end because it would seem like I was trying to make fun of her. With each passing second that I tried to catch my breath, she seemed to grow even more frustrated.

“I never did that and I have no idea what you are talking about,” I said finally. “Where did you even get that absurd idea.”

“When we first came, he wouldn't even spend time with me. It was always something about you and I know you lost your memory but why does everything bad always happen to you? He left today and wouldn't even glance at me and I know he was running an errand for you. I wanted to apologize for how I acted to him earlier but he didn't even care.”

"I don't even know why Ryker left today," I admitted and her brows furrowed in confusion. "All he said was that he had something to do so I highly doubt that has anything to do with me. Your opinions are founded on nothing."

"No they're not!" she was getting more annoyed by the second.

"Then how do you explain whatever this is?" I gestured between us. "Let's assume you are right and he was spending an ungodly amount of time trying to fix things for me, he is my mate and I am truly not in the mood to argue that with anyone, much less his sister. He will put his family and this palace first before anyone else. What exactly is your problem and where are you getting these insane ideas from?"

"I just know!" she slapped her hands over her mouth as if she shouldn't have said that but the words were already out.

"What do you mean by you just know?"

"I don't know, I just do," she crossed her arms over her chest in an attempt to look brave but my patience was at an all-time low and I wasn't going to play any games. I grabbed her by the upper arm.

"Listen to me, I will not play this game with you. You can either open your mouth and speak or you can shut up and go back home. I really don't care for all of this. If after all these years, you have not realized that I am not your enemy then I don't know what else to say to you," I released her hand. "The choice is yours."

She was quiet for two minutes and to be honest, I thought she wasn't going to speak. I was prepared to turn on my heels and walk out when she finally spoke.

"I woke up one morning and I just knew," she crossed her arms over her chest. "I don't know how to explain it but I knew and the more I watched you, the more I realized what was happening and Peggy-"

"You mean Reina," I cut her off. "The very same witch that tried to kill Ryker and I, the very same witch that killed Aurora. You were listening to a witch." Content rights belong to

She frowned. "She said-"

"I don't give a damn what she said," I had to pinch the bridge of my nose so as not to scream. "You took advice from the very person who was trying to kill us. Are you insane?"

At this point, she was stuttering and stammering over her words. "I didn't- she said- I just- I don't know okay."

I ran my hands down my face. "I can't do this today. If you want to listen to a witch then go right ahead but don't you ever try to disrespect me in my home again. Am I clear?"

She nodded slowly and I walked past her without another word. I was furious and disappointed to say the least. I expected more from Riley of all people but at the same time, I couldn't blame her. She didn't have the same experience that we had with Reina, she didn't know how dangerous she was. Riley was naive and Reina must have taken advantage of that.

"Are you okay?" Christine asked once we were a considerable distance away and I nodded. "That seemed rough, if you need anything then I can-"

"I'm fine," I cut her off with a small smile. "Everything will be fine. I just need Ryker to return and speak to his sister because I have no idea what to do."

"He'll be back soon," she assured me and all I could do was hum. "If you want me to stay with you then-"

"No," I cut her off. "I have a lot of work to do and you do too. I don't want to keep you. Please, just go do whatever it is that you were doing before."

She didn't leave immediately, she watched me for a full minute before finally nodding and walking away. Once she was gone, I headed for my office. It wasn't until I had gotten into the safety of my office that I finally let out an exasperated sigh.

I tried to reach out to Ryker through the mind link but the wall was firmly in place. It didn't matter how much I tried, couldn't break through. Usually he always left a small gap for me if I needed to talk to him but today, there was nothing and I couldn't help but wonder what the hell was happening.

I tried to focus on my work but I was so strung up and worried that I could barely get anything done. I just couldn't shake the feeling that something was wrong and I was proven right when a guard rushed into my office. He had a light sheen of sweat on his face and he was fiddling anxiously with his fingers. My thoughts immediately went to Ryker.

"What's wrong?" I asked but he didn't respond immediately. "Is it Ryker?"

"No, your majesty," he replied and although that should have calmed me, it didn't because if it wasn't Ryker, then it was someone else. "The school sent a letter to the palace and they asked that you go down there as soon as possible"

"What did they say was the issue?"

"They didn't, all they said was that it concerned the princess."

The Rejected Werewolf Princess Chapter 245



CAMILLA'S POV

I didn't hesitate before rushing into the nearest carriage. My heart was pounding in my chest and my hands were clammy as I tried to keep them stable in my lap. It hit me that I hadn't told anyone that I had left. I hadn't even asked anyone to watch Aurora. I was just so concerned and so much in a panic that I forgot. I quickly mind linked Christine and thankfully, her wall was down.

"I need you to watch Aurora," I didn't even give the chance to exchange pleasantries. "I promise to explain when I am back but-

"When you are back?" she asked and I hummed. "Where did you- you know what? Never mind. Explain when you're back but if Ryker returns before you and he loses his shit because you aren't here then that's on you."

I laughed. "I can handle my own mate but thank you."

I broke off the mind link the exact moment that the carriage stopped. The principal was waiting outside the school gate for me and she had a somewhat panicked look on her face. I tried to keep my face stoic and not let her know that I was equally in a panic. I squared my shoulders and gave her a small smile as I approached.

She bowed. "Thank you for coming here on such short notice, your majesty. I apologize for the urgent tone in the message but I really needed to make sure that we had this handled."

"What exactly is the problem?" I cut her off and she opened her mouth to speak but thought better of it at the last moment.

"I think you should just come and see for yourself"

That statement never meant anything good but I still refused to panic and followed her into the school. The students were in class so the halls were empty. She led me to her office where Audrey was seated. As soon as my daughter saw me she rushed into my arms. I couldn't keep my stoic face even if I tried. I wrapped my arms around her and placed soft kiss on her forehead.

“The principal said I did something bad,” she whispered to me. “I didn't do anything. I was just making a pretty picture”

Picture? What the hell was going on. I gave my daughter a small smile and smoothed her hair back before turning to the principal. She had a seat for me and one for Audrey and once we were both seated, she slid a piece of paper over to me. I wasn't sure what it was meant to be.

“We asked her to draw her family,” the principal explained. “We were expecting a simple picture of just you, her and her father.”

I looked at the picture again, there were at least eight people in the picture but it wasn't the people that caught my attention, it was the little details she added to each of them. I turned to Audrey.

“Can you point out everyone to me?” I asked and she nodded.

She was quick to point out herself then me. I should have guessed it was me because she added little swirls to my fingertips presumably to mimic water. She pointed out Ryker next but for the life of me, I couldn't figure out what that thing was behind him.

“Is that a shadow?” I asked and she shrugged. “Audrey, what is that?”

“I don't know,” she mumbled but I knew she was lying. “That is Aurora.”

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I stopped her again. “What is that in your sister's hands? It looks like a stick.”

“It's a bone.”

I was taken aback by that response. “Why is there a bone in your sister's hands?”

“I don't know, it just felt right,” this time, I knew she was telling the truth. “The other people are aunt Christine, Uncle Juan and the twins.”

My brows furrowed. “What twins? Audrey, what the hell are you talking about?”

“They're having twins.”

The principal was looking at me expectantly and I could understand why she called me now. Yes, Christine was pregnant but no one knew anything about any twins. I turned to the principal and gave her an apologetic look.

“She has an overactive imagination, I'm sorry if this worried you. She was probably drawing her ideal family or some funny variation of it,” I was lying through my teeth but it seemed enough to set the principal's heart at ease.

“Okay, I was just worried that there was something else at play,” she crossed her arms in front of her. “Seeing as school will be over in a few minutes anyway, I think it would be alright if you were to take Audrey home right now. She will not be missing much.”

“Thank you,” I reached out to shake her hand and she seemed shocked by the gesture. “If there are any other problems, don't hesitate to call for me. Also, would it be possible for me to take the drawing with me?”

“Of course not, please, it is all yours.”

After exchanging our goodbyes, I walked with Audrey to the carriage. I waited until we were alone in the carriage before I turned to her. “I'm not upset with you but I need to know what this means. Why did you draw twins and what is that thing behind your father?”

“I saw the twins in my sleep,” she said almost immediately. “They're very fun to play with, there is a boy and a girl.” “Wait,” I ran my hands down my face. “you saw a vision of Christine's kids?” she nodded. “How do you know that they are her kids?”

“I just know,” she shrugged. “I don't know mummy.”

"it's okay, what about the thing you drew behind daddy?" she went silent at that. "Audrey, you can tell me" She shook her head. "If I tell you then bad things will happen. You can't know, mummy."

"But"

"Please don't make me tell you," her eyes welled up with tears and I cursed. I pulled her close to me and wrapped my arms around her as tight as possible as her tiny shoulders shook with sobs.

"You don't have to tell me," I whispered and that seemed to be the only thing that calmed her tears. It took a few minutes to calm her down and wipe away her tears. "I don't want to scare anyone else so you cannot say anything about the twins, alright? Don't say anything about the picture, I will handle everything"

The rest of the ride was held in silence. I had the drawing folded up in my hands. I didn't know what to do with it but I needed to show Ryker first. He always knew how to handle things like this without panicking. She could be wrong, I was holding onto that reality but if for any reason Christine had twins then I had to worry about everything else in the picture including the bone in Aurora's hands and the shadow behind Ryker.

We were getting out of the carriage when I heard rushed footsteps come over to me. I turned just in time to see Ryker grab my face in both hands. He ran his eyes over me for any obvious signs of injury before letting out a sigh of relief.

"I'm fine, we are fine," I tried to assure him but that did little to calm him as he did the same thing to Audrey.

"Where did you go? You didn't tell anyone where you went. I came back and was worried as hell. All I was told was that you rushed into a carriage and ran off. What were you thinking?"

“I was told there was something that needed to be urgently discussed about Audrey. I didn’t think, I just left,” his eyes instantly went to our daughter but I grabbed his arm. “We will talk about it inside. Let her get changed and have lunch. It is not a conversation that we can have out here.”

Christine offered to help us take care of Audrey while we spoke and I showed him the picture and explained everything that had happened. He stared at it for a full minute and I could tell from his eyes that there was something that worried him.

“What is it?” I asked but he said nothing. “She won’t explain what anything is except the twins. She says she saw them and-”

“If she says she did then she did,” he cut me off and my brows furrowed. “We need to figure out what the bone is in Aurora’s hand and why.”

“Aren’t you the least bit worried about the shadow behind you? She refuses to speak about it. Maybe you can try talking to her, she might-”

“No,” he said simply. “We live our lives with shadows behind us on a daily basis, Camilla.”

“This is different. I don’t know how to explain it but I can feel it. There is something wrong and we need to-”

He cut me off with a soft kiss on my lips. It was at that moment I knew for certain that he was hiding something from me. There was a reason he didn’t want me digging into the drawing about him. There was a reason he wanted to brush it off- he knew it, Audrey knew it but I didn’t.

“Ryker,” I began but he took the drawing from my hands and folded it neatly into his pocket. “Are we really going to pretend like-”

“I have to run now, I need to meet with Riley. She was trying to get my attention before we left”

“Where did you go?” I asked and he stilled. “You haven't said a single thing about why you left. Did you find anything?”

His eyes gave it away but once again, he lied. He shook his head. “Nothing, it was completely empty. I just wanted to make sure of it.”

“Ryker-”

“I'll see you during dinner.”

Without waiting for a response from me, he walked out of the room leaving me in perpetual silence.

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CAMILLA'S POV

Ryker had been distant ever since that conversation. He was hiding from me and that alone was reason for concern because Ryker never hid. It was not in his nature to run from his problems. I knew I wasn't going to get any answers out of him when he didn't show up for dinner despite me knocking on his office door to remind him.

Juan avoided my eyes during the entire meal and I knew he knew something. The moment everyone was done eating I begged Christine to help me put the girls in bed and I rushed after Juan. He was walking fast, as if he were trying to avoid talking to him but I managed to catch up to him.

“Stop, please,” I called out and he stilled in his tracks. “Something happened when you went out and I am not getting any answers out of Ryker.”

“Maybe he just doesn’t want to talk about it yet” he shrugged and I narrowed my eyes. “If there is one thing I know, it is never to get between a mated couple. I have my own mating ceremony to plan.” I tried to feign shock but he rolled his eyes. “I know Christine told you, you don’t have to pretend. I told Ryker as well on our way back.”

“It's tomorrow, right?” I asked and a small smile grew on his face as he nodded. “I am happy for you two, you honestly deserve it. Will you be inviting Riley and Damien?”

“If she fixes her attitude then sure, Christine told me about what happened earlier. I don’t really give a shit who is there. I just want to get mated to her but I don’t want any trouble as well.”

“I'm sure she will be fine,” he started to leave when I realized that he had changed the subject and I wasn't able to get the answers that I wanted. I rushed after him and managed to cut him off. “Nice try, you cannot just change the subject”

“I actually did,” he shot back and I rolled my eyes. “Look, if Ryker wants to talk to you about it, then he will. I am not going to betray his trust by coming in between the both of you.”

“You aren't betraying his trust, you are calming the heart of a very worried mate,” he still didn’t answer so I decided to try a different tactic. “If something was wrong with Christine and I knew but didn’t tell you, wouldn't you hate me?” “Those are two completely different scenarios.”

“Are they?” I asked in a slow and soft voice. “Something is wrong with my mate and you are not telling me. How would you feel if you were in my shoes? Look, we just got rid of Reina and something happened to him out there. I just need to know that my mate is safe.”

He was quiet for a full minute. I could see the battle going on in his eyes. On one hand, he was loyal to Ryker as his friend but on the other hand, he could understand my stance as a concerned mate. He sighed after a long deliberation and pulled me towards a corner of the hallway. He first looked around to make sure that no one was listening before finally speaking.

“I don't know what's wrong with him,” he began and I opened my mouth to protest. “Let me speak first before you jump to conclusions. He didn't tell me why he wanted to leave, all he said was that he wanted to check things out and he wanted me to go with him. We got there and he just told me to look around. I found one of those dolls that she had hidden behind some bushes. He picked it up and there was this look on his face-”

“What look?” he looked a little annoyed that I had interrupted him but didn't say anything.

“I don't know how to explain it. His eyes went very dark, darker than I had ever seen them before and I swear I felt chills on my spine. After that, he acted like nothing happened and slipped it into his pocket. I don't know where he kept it when he came back but that is all I know. If I knew more, I would tell you or at least try to help him.”

“Thank you,” I whispered and started to leave when he grabbed my arm.

“I know that you are worried about him but you can't just jump to conclusions or try to force answers out of him. I told you this in confidence and if you misuse this information then he will not trust either of us again.”

I frowned. “What would you like me to do then?”©

“Wait it out,” he shrugged. It was like asking me to sit still while someone set a fire to the palace. Waiting things out was not my strong suit and he knew it.

“Ryker will come to you when he feels comfortable to. As of right now, nothin

is happening, no one is getting hurt, allow him his secrets for as long as he needs to feel safe.”

I knew he was right. I didn't want to push Ryker away, neither did I want to force him to remain closed off. It was at this moment I realized just how he felt whenever I kept secrets from him. It was maddening wanting to help someone but not being able to.

“Okay, I'll wait, thank you, Juan.”

He gave me a small smile. “I have to prepare for my ceremony tomorrow. I'll see you there.”

I returned to the room and waited for Ryker to show up. I waited what felt like hours in bed before the door finally creaked open. It had to have been at least two hours since we had finished dinner. I heard shuffling as he stripped off and climbed into bed next to me. I waited until he had wrapped his arms around me before I spoke.

“Lots of work?” I asked and he stilled.

“Camilla-”

“I'm not pissed, I just want to know that you're fine,” he didn't respond, he just kissed my temple and I appreciated the fact that he didn't lie to me. I turned to face him, trailing my fingers down his cheeks. “Tell me what's wrong so that I can help.”

“Nothing is wrong,” he whispered into the darkness. “I just need some time to figure out something and until I am sure, I don't want to say anything and risk scaring anyone.”

“Is it about Audrey?”

“No,” he answered immediately. “I don't think Audrey's dreams are a cause for concern yet. Don't worry about that until we have a reason to.”

He kissed me softly and I sighed basking in the feel of him before speaking. "We have a mating ceremony tomorrow. Hopefully that is enough to take everyone's minds off things."

He hummed in response. "I'm happy for them. They both deserve it"

"Will Riley and Damien be in attendance?"

"I don't know, I told Riley about it but she didn't seem happy. Damien told me that you both had an encounter. Do you want to tell me what that was about?"

"Reina got into her head and fed her some lies, that's all. Hopefully, she is fine before tomorrow. I don't want anything ruining their day."

"I can talk to her if you want-"

"Tomorrow," I cut him off as I snuggled closer into him. "For now, I just want to lie here for as long as possible."

I felt him smile against my hair. He pulled me closer and trailed his fingers down my spine in a comforting manner. It didn't take long before the lull of sleep pulled me away.

I woke up to something being thrown on my face. It took me a second to realize that it was a cloth. Christine was standing at the foot of my bed with her hands crossed over her chest. She was still in her night gown and she didn't seem at all bothered that the fact that Ryker was asleep half naked in bed.

"I need you right now," she whispered and I sat up instantly. My movements roused Ryker who looked between us with sleepy eyes and a confused expression.

"Is everything alright?" he asked and she nodded. "Why are you in our room at an ungodly hour? The sun is barely up"

“You need to get out,” he was genuinely taken aback by her words. If it was anyone but Christine, the conversation would have ended differently. “I hope for my sanity that you are both dressed.”

She looked away as she pulled the blanket off and thankfully, Ryker was clothed. He muttered some expletives under his breath before standing to his feet and picking up one of his shirts.

“You are insane,” he whispered and she just shrugged. Once his shirt was on, he crossed his arms over his chest. “I’m decent now. Would you mind telling me why the f**k you’re in our room by this time?”

She ignored him and climbed into bed next to me, taking up the spot he had just vacated. She sat cross legged and wrapped the covers over her shoulders and around her entire body. She was acting very weird and very different. I glanced over at Ryker who seemed to realize the very same thing because the next time he spoke, he dropped his voice to a soft whisper.

“Are you alright?” he asked and she nodded. “Is there anything you need right now?”

“Right now, I need you to please go run with Juan so that I can talk to Camilla,” Ryker nodded and without another word, he made his way out of the room. He had almost shut the door when she spoke again. “Also can you tell him that I’m fine, he was worried when I rushed out of bed like a crazy person.”

Ryker smiled. “I’ll be sure to tell him.”

Once the door was shut, I turned to her. “What the hell happened?”

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CAMILLA'S POV

There was silence for two minutes before Christine spoke. "I don't like this feeling."

"What feeling?" I had an idea what she was talking about but I wasn't going to put words in her mouth.

She had always had an issue with expressing herself. It was easier for her to use logic, I think it was one of the reasons she got along with Ryker so well, they were two very logical individuals but this was something that even logic couldn't fix and she couldn't understand it. She was getting mated today and it was as emotion as it got. For someone like her who didn't put much stock on emotions, I could only imagine how different it was for her to wake up to the myriad of emotions in her chest.

"My chest," she touched her hand to her skin as if it would explain it. "It feels weird, I don't like how it feels. It's tight I can't breathe."

"Christine, I'm sure you can put into words how you're feeling or would you prefer if I broke down emotions to you the way I would with Audrey?"

She rolled her eyes and flipped me off. "You know what I mean."

"I do, but you have to say it out loud or I will continue to pretend like I don't. You woke me up at an ungodly hour of the morning so you better believe that we are going to have this conversation whether you want to or not"

She made a show of exhaling loudly before lying back in bed. I honestly thought she was going to ask me to forget about the entire conversation and try to leave but instead, she spoke with a voice softer than a feather.

"I can't pinpoint exactly how I feel. I feel too much and I don't like that. It's easy to deal with one thing. maybe two but this is a lot more than that. To avoid an

incomplete reading experience, visit Jobn'i'b.com. It feels like an entire box of emotions just exploded in my chest.”

“Do you want to go ahead with this?” I asked and she didn’t hesitate before nodding.

“Of course, this is all I've ever wanted. Why would you even ask me that?”

“So that you would know the answer to whatever question brought you here,” I dragged myself out of bed. “You want this, so you don’t have to worry about anything else. It is normal to feel emotional and you're pregnant no less, I would be surprised if you don't end this day in tears.”

She looked horrified by the mere thought. “That will not be happening.”

“We'll see about that,” I mumbled before going back to the original conversation. “You'll be fine, you have an entire t yourself to take your mind off things. The ceremony isn’t until the evening so relax and take things one step at a time.”

She nodded slowly. “Okay, I like the sound of that. What's the plan for today then?”

“I am going to be making sure everything is perfect while you are going to go back to your bed and you are going to fall asleep,” she started to protest but I held out a hand to stop her. “That was not a request, it was an order as your cousin and as your Queen.”

She mumbled something under her breath about abuse of power but at the end of the day, she dragged her feet out of bed and left.

By the time I was done with breakfast and the girls, I was pulled into a handful of meetings. Christine didn’t want anything over the top and that was fine but we still needed to make a little decorations and that was proving to be just as difficult as if the ceremony was large. I didn’t mind the stress, it was going to

be worth it at the end of the day when I saw how happy she was, what I did mind was the fact that Riley walked up to me when I was talking to the decorators.

“Can you excuse me for a minute?” I announced once I had noticed her standing by the door. They looked at me with concern. “I think we have gone over everything major. I will come to check on it outside once you start setting up but don’t forget, Christine is not to see it until it is done. I don't care if you have to call Juan to drag her out of there but make sure she doesn't see.”

They filed out after that and I waited until the door shut behind them to look up at Riley. She didn’t speak, she just stood there fiddling with her fingers. I realized she wasn’t going to speak first so I leaned back into my chair.

“Is there something I can help you with?” I tried to keep the annoyance out of my voice but it was not very easy. Our last conversation had ended poorly and it wasn’t something that one easily forget. “There is a chair if you want to-”
“No,” she cut me off. “Why didn’t you tell Ryker about our conversation? He came to me last night, he didn’t know a thing. I thought for sure he was going to rip me a new one and ask me to leave. You could have gotten me out of here if you had just told him.”

“I don't need your brother to kick you out. I can do that on my own if I wish. That sound be an indicator that I don't want you out of here. I told you before and I will tell you again; the idea that everyone is against you is insane. No one is trying to keep you out of anything.”

“So you want me at the ceremony?” content.

“It isn’t my ceremony, it is Christine's and yes, she asked to invite you as long as you don’t make a ruckus. She just needs some peace and stability in her life right now and this is it”

She sighed. "I'm sorry that I was rude. I just- I think it would be better for us if we left after this. Anytime we come here, it always ends up badly. I think we should just go."

"Riley, no one is-

"I know," she cut me off. "This is my choice. Besides, I have a pack to run with Damien and we have left them unattended for too long. I need to go back. I just wanted you to know first."

"Thank you for telling me."

The room went silent and the air stretched thin between us. I could tell there was still so more that she wanted to say but she decided against it. "Is there a dress code?"

"No, just wear something cute but casual. I know if Christine had her way, she would be in riding gear." She snorted a that. "Now that would be a sight to behold."

After Riley left, the rest of the day went by smoothly. The decorations were perfect, it was a simple arch situated right at the center of the little path behind the palace. There were flowers thrown all around the pathway Christine was to walk and there were six little chairs for us. It was the definition of simple and I knew Christine was going to love it. Tiny unlit candles surrounded the little area and I could only imagine how beautiful it was going to be when the sun went down.

I was grinning from ear to ear as I walked through the walls of the palace and I was so happy that I didn't notice Ryker walking up to me until he was standing directly behind me. He placed a hand on my shoulder and I nearly jumped.

"I'll take it from that smile that everything is going according to plan," he mused and I nodded. "I think we all needec this, something happy and fun to combat everything that had happened."

I nodded in agreement. "It just feels right. I can't wait to see them get mated. You should see the decorations, it looks perfect."

"I can't wait to see it but I think you are heading in the wrong direction," his hands on my shoulders stopped me in my tracks and he turned me around so I was facing the other way. "That is where you should be going."

"I have to get the girls ready."

"I am sure it is a feat I can pull off on my own. What you need to do is to be with Christine so that you both can get ready together. She needs you today."

"But-" I began but he cut me off.

"I can do this, Camilla. I can handle our daughters, go and be with Christine right now."

I waited one minute to be sure that he was going to be fine and then I rushed over to her room. My knuckles had barely hit the wood when she pulled the door open and dragged me in. Her dress lay on the bed, it was an off white color and I knew it would look gorgeous on her. Right next to it was my pale pink dress, I wasn't sure how it got there and she must have noticed me staring at it because she spoke.

"Ryker brought it a while ago," she explained and I couldn't help but shake my head with a small smile. "I tried to keep my mind occupied but Camilla, I couldn't. My heart feels like it is about to beat out of my chest but I am excited at the same time."

I led her to the bed where she sat down. "It happens, you are excited but you are also nervous. It is a nerve wracking experience to stand in front of people and mate with the person you love."

"That's why I wanted a small ceremony. I couldn't imagine doing it in front of the whole world. I don't know how you managed to do it"

I led her to the bathroom where her bath water sat untouched. “Today isn’t about me, it is about you. You are going to go out there and officially be mated to Juan, are you ready?” She didn’t hesitate. “Yes, I am.”

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RYKER'S POV

Juan was trying to act unaffected but every few seconds, he would glance at the entrance. He stuffed his hands in his pockets trying to hide how much he was twisting his fingers. I could almost smell the anxiety rolling off him in waves Aurora and Audrey were seated next to Damien. He was pointing out clouds to them and every other second, they would giggle loudly. Riley was seated on her own with her legs crossed and her hands folded in front of her. I could sense something was wrong with her but I couldn't put my finger on it. There was just something off, something dark and twisted that I could feel inside of her. I tried to ignore it but my eyes were drawn back to her each time. Whatever it was, it was bad.

“You look more worried than I feel,” Juan murmured and I snapped my eyes back to him. “You look pale and sick to your stomach.”

I snorted. “No one can look worse than you today, I assure you. Have you seen what you look like?”

“I'm just excited, it feels like I have been waiting for this for years,” he whispered. “I'll get to finally say that she's mine and she is carrying my child.”

I resisted the urge to tell him that she was carrying his children, not his child, but I couldn't say that without telling him how we came about it which would

therefore mean that he would fixate on the shadows that Audrey drew behind me. I knew what it meant, it was whatever I got from Reina, I just wasn't ready to share it yet.

Juan suddenly stilled. "She's coming."

I turned in time to see Camilla and Christine walking down. They both looked gorgeous and it might have been my bias but I was unable to pull my eyes from my mate. Her eyes were brimming with happiness and pure glee, you could have argued that she was more excited than the actual couple. She walked Christine down to the aisle where the priest was waiting and after a tearful hug, she came over to where I was so that we could take our seats.

"This is beautiful," she whispered to me. "It came out even better than I expected and Christine loves it so it is an added bonus."

"You did an amazing job," I assured her. I wasn't sure how she managed to pull it off in less than two days but she did. "You look gorgeous."

"Thank you," she turned back to Christine and Juan with a smile on her face. The priest was wrapping their hands with the scarlet thread now and giving them the goblet to drink from. "I'm just so happy for them, I don't even have the words for it"

She continued speaking but I couldn't hear her anymore. It was like time slowed down for me. I could hear the pounding of my own heart in my ears and I felt a strange wind brush over me. I looked around trying to see if anyone else might have felt it but no one else did. Their eyes were fixed on the happy couple. It was at that moment I noticed something weird.

I could feel their life- not their hearts, the very essence of their life inside of them. It was different, it looked like colors shaped over their bodies. With Camilla, it was a soft blue color, it reminded me of the waves, gentle but they had the option to be brutal. Audrey's was pink, soft and gentle, Aurora's was

grey, there was something off about it, i almost felt unnatural but I couldn't put my finger on it.

With Riley, it was red, but there were traces of black in it. I knew instantly it was that darkness I felt inside of her. I managed to tear my eyes away from them to Christine and Juan but my eyes fell on Christine. Hers was a vibrant orange pulsing with life but right over her stomach was pure white, only- one was fading. As soon as I noticed it, everything went back to normal and I had to clutch my chest to catch my breath.

Camilla turned to me. "Are you alright? They just finished the ceremony. Did you hear the vows they said to each other, it was-"

I couldn't wait to hear the rest of what she had to say. It was probably disrespectful and I knew I would have to eat my own hand later to apologize but there were more important things at stake. I rushed over to Christine and grabbed her arm. She turned to me with concern.

"Is everything okay?" she asked but I couldnt respond to her.

"You need to see the physician right now," I told her and she looked taken aback. "I cannot explain it but something is wrong with one of your children."

"One of my-" she glanced over at Juan. She was trying not to panic but I could see the worry in her eyes. "What are you even talking about?"

"I'll explain later, do you trust me?" she nodded.

"Of course I do, you know that, but this is absurd."

"Just trust me on this one too," I whispered and it looked like she was going to refuse but at the last minute, she nodded. She pulled Juan with her as they rushed over to the physician. I could feel the stares of the others on me but I couldn't focus on it, there was something else I needed to do. "Damien can

you please watch the girls, Camilla you might want to be with Christine right now, I'll catch up."

"Ryker, what is going on?" even Camilla looked spooked and uneasy. I realized I had acted like an insane person and needed to offer up an explanation and I planned to, I just needed to do this first.

"I'll explain later, just go."

They all rushed out leaving just Riley and I. She sat cross legged and unmoving in her spot. "Am I not important enough for you to give orders to?"

"That's not it," I moved over to sit next to her. Sometime during the panic, the priest had disappeared too leaving just both of us. I held out my hand to her and she hesitated first before taking it.

I could feel the darkness in her thrumming alongside the darkness in me. They wanted to connect, like kindred spirits and I wasn't sure how I knew, but I knew it would hurt. I wrapped my arms around my sister, making sure she was completely leaning on me before dropping my voice to a whisper.

"I'm sorry," I told her before willing the darkness to me. I wasn't sure how I knew what to do, it just felt like second nature. She jerked against me trying to get free but I refused to let her go. No sounds left her lips, only small groans of pain until suddenly, she stopped.

I felt the darkness slide out of her and into me and once again, I was able to see the shimmering color around her. It was a vibrant red once again, as I knew it should be. I made the mistake of looking down at my hands and instead of colors, there were shadows swirling all around me, just like in Audrey's image.

I closed my eyes willing the image gone and thankfully when I opened them again, they were but Riley was passed out in my arms. I lifted her gently wondering how I was going to explain to Damien what had happened. This

entire day was taking a drastic turn, I didn't plan to explain anything to anyone for the next few weeks but here I was throwing it all to the wind because I wanted to help everyone.

I carried Riley back to her room and when Damien opened the door, he looked between the two of us in confusion before asking. "Do I want to know?" "Not really," I said and he sighed.

He gently took her out of my hands. "I know you won't hurt her and that is the only reason I'm not saying a word. Something is going on here and I cannot believe I am about to say this but I am glad that we are leaving tomorrow so I don't have to watch it unfold.

He slammed the door in my face and I exhaled deeply before making my way over to the physician's quarters. Camilla was pacing outside and when she saw me, she rushed over to me.

"I have been waiting for you," she whispered harshly. "What the hell was that outside?"

"How is Christine?" I brushed off her question because I truly didn't have the answer to it. "Is she alright? How is Juan?"

"I don't know, the physician says that something was wrong and he is trying to fix it but don't ignore me, Ryker. What the hell happened out there?"

"I don't know."

"How did you know that something was wrong with her baby and why the hell did you tell her that it was two?"

"I don't know," I sounded like a broken record but I didn't know what else to say. "I just saw it and I knew." "What do you mean you saw it?" she asked but I remained silent.

She grabbed my arm and pulled me towards a secluded corner. If I didn't want to go with her, I would have fought but I was too tired to fight with her. I wanted to make sense of things as much as she did, I just didn't know how. Once she saw that we were alone, she turned to me with her arms crossed over her chest.

"Ryker, I need you to explain this to me."

"I saw something wrong with her baby and I saw something wrong with Riley. I knew if I didn't speak, it would get worse so I did. I didn't think about it, I just told her"

"But what did you see, Ryker? I need you to help me understand because right now, you are on a little island on your own and I don't know what is happening so if you could please help me understand so that I can-"All

"I saw their life force. I saw their aura and one was dying, okay? That is what I saw."

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CAMILLA'S POV

None of what Ryker said made sense to me and the more I tried to make sense of it, the more it felt like my brain was being fried. I opened and closed my mouth a few times trying to make sense of what he had said but I got nothing. After a long two minutes of silence, I let out an exasperated sigh.

"What do you mean by you saw their life force?" I asked slowly, not sure if I wanted to hear the answer or not. "How does one see that? What the hell is going on?"

"I don't know," he sounded just as confused as I was and that made me even more worried. "Something happened to me, I don't know what it was but I feel different. I could see her child dying and I could see the darkness that was inside Riley."

"What darkness?"

I was having a migraine already and he hadn't even started explaining. I ran my hands through my hair trying to get semblance of sanity but it wasn't working. Ryker dragged me over to the nearest bench and all but pulled me into it. He ran his fingers through my hair until I had calmed down considerably and it didn't feel like I was about to go insane.

"I'm sorry," I mumbled after a beat of silence. "This entire thing is just very overwhelming. Now can you please explain and start from the beginning," he seemed hesitant to do that. I crossed my arms over my chest and looked at him despite the fact that he wasn't looking at me. "Ryker, what are you hiding?"

"When we killed Reina, she did something," he began slowly and my spine straightened. "I started having these dreams after of this darkness, it would speak to me. It felt evil, like death itself"

"That was why you asked Juan to go back there with you," I deduced and he nodded. I tried to hide my annoyance that he hid this from me so I cleared my throat. "What else has been happening? What did you find there?"

"I found one of her dolls but it was of me. Don't ask me how I knew, I just touched it and I did. I think she planned to die there and whatever she was working with, whatever magic she had, it came into me. I know it sounds insane but Audrey confirmed it too."

This had my eyes widening and I shot to my feet. "Our daughter knew?"

“Please calm down,” his voice was soft and patronizing. “I didn't tell her, she told me. She said the dark magic was inside of me.”

“You didn't think to tell me about that?” I asked and his face fell. “Why wouldn't you tell me about this? It could be dangerous for her to know. What were you thinking?”

I didn't want to yell at him but the thought of Audrey knowing and having to hold this secret to herself was mind blowing. She was a child and she already had so much to worry about. The last thing she needed was to panic about the newfound dark magic that her father had. At least Ryker looked guilty.

“I didn't want to tell her, Camilla, she just knew,” he whispered but that didn't make it any better. “I'm sorry for not telling you. I wanted to but I couldn't. You were happy and for the first time, there was peace. I wanted things to go back to normal.”

I crossed my arms over my chest. “You have Reina's magic. There is nothing normal about that. Do you remember what she did with it?”

“I remember, but I also know that Reina was a terrible person. I don't think the magic in itself is inherently bad. I haven't felt the urge to do anything bad-”

“Yet,” I cut him off and he frowned. “Don't look at me like that, you don't know what is coming.”

“Can you try to trust me at least?” he sounded a little annoyed. “I pulled out whatever darkness Reina had planted inside of Riley today and I might have just saved Christine's child. This could prove to be a blessing. So far, it has been of help to us.”

“It's dark magic, Ryker,” I deadpanned.

“I don't think magic is inherently dark or good. I think it matters how the person uses it,” I snorted and this seemed to annoy him even more. “Is it the magic you don't trust or is it me?”

“What are you talking about?”

“Do you believe that I can't handle this?”

Yes. “That's not what I said.”

“Your wall is down,” I rushed to check and sure enough, in my panic, I had forgotten to put up my wall. I opened my mouth to apologize but he held up a hand to stop me. “I would have loved to know that you at least supported me on this. When you got healing powers out of nowhere, I supported you.”

“I do support you. This is just-” I was at a loss for words. “This is just different and hard to get used to.”

He said nothing. I knew I had messed up and it was going to take more than that to get his trust back. I took a step towards him but the door to the physician's quarters opened and our argument was forgotten as Juan rushed out. He seemed in a daze, like he wasn't quite himself. He was even stumbling lightly. We rushed over to him and Ryker put a hand on his shoulder. For a full minute, there was no movement and then without warning, Juan threw his arms around Ryker and embraced him.

I watched the interaction with wide eyes and I could hear Juan repeating the same words over and over again “thank you. Ryker's eyes met mine and he had a look that clearly told me “this is what I was talking about!

Juan released Ryker after what felt like hours and cleared his throat. “I apologize for springing on you like that but you have no idea how grateful I am.”

“What happened to her?”

"I don't know," his voice was hollow. "The physician said that she was weak and he couldn't hear the baby as usual. He was able to stabilize her and-" he trailed off with a sigh. "Thank you. I don't know how you knew but thank you because if you didn't warn us then she could have lost the baby."

"I'm just relieved that I could help. How is she?"

"She's good, she is resting. The babies are fine too."

"Babies?" I asked and he nodded.

"Ryker was right, she's having twins. The physician said he could hear two heartbeats."

We stayed with Christine for a while and kept an eye on her for about half an hour. Ryker was the first to leave, he made an excuse about having something to do and walked off. I watched him go with a sigh because the entire time we sat with Christine, he barely even looked at me.

"Are you going to go after him?" Juan asked and I turned to him. "It's clear that something happened."

"I just didn't understand and I didn't support him when I should have," I said softly.

"I am assuming this has something to do with the witch," I turned to him sharply and he laughed softly. "I am many things, Camilla, but stupid is not one of them. Ryker has been acting weird ever since Reina died. He went back to her death spot, he found the doll, which I am assuming you know about now. It isn't difficult to put two things together and know that whatever happened out there has something to do with this."

"I just don't see how Reina's powers could be used for good. I don't get it. She was evil."

“She was yes,” he paused before adding. “But Ryker is not. He saw the baby dying and he helped us. Reina would have killed it. You just have to trust him.”

“I do trust him, with my life even.”

“Then tell that to him because right now, he probably feels like you don’t”

Without another word, he turned back to his mate. I knew he was right and that was why I rushed to my feet and went after him. I followed his scent all the way to our room. He was shirtless and had his back to me. He didn't acknowledge my presence but that didn't deter me.

“I should not have been on the defensive when you told me,” I said loudly but he still didn't turn. “You were right, you have supported me at every turn, even when I didn't deserve it and I should have awarded you the same decency. I don't understand what is happening and I seemed to forget that neither do you. You need someone to help you navigate this and I am willing to be that person.”

I waited for him to speak but he didn't.

“I was a terrible mate and I am sorry but we can do this together if you would let me,” he still didn't acknowledge my presence and I was tired of waiting for him so I stormed over and stood in front of him. “Why aren't you-”

My words died on my throat when I saw his eyes. They were pitch black, there was not even a sign of light in them. I couldn't even see my own reflection in them. It was him but not him, I felt shivers run down my spine. I knew this was the embodiment of whatever power was inside of him. I could feel it despite him not doing anything and I couldn't imagine how he felt with it inside of him.

I suddenly felt a new wave of guilt for not supporting him earlier.

“Ryker,” I probed and he slowly turned his head to me. He fixed his eyes on me but it was like he was seeing through me and not looking at me. “What’s going on? Why are your eyes like that?”

He just smiled, a dark and wicked grin. “Hello, Camilla.”

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CAMILLA'S POV

I tried to hide the fear that crawled up my throat but it proved difficult. Shivers ran up my spine because that voice, I was cold and it sounded like death itself. Still, I squared my shoulders and gave a small smile.

“You’re the one inside my mate,” I said simply and Ryker- he- shrugged.

“I’m not inside of him, I am him. He is just refusing the bonding process but it won’t take long now,” I watched as Ryker took a seat at the edge of the bed. “I am not all that evil, even though you would never believe that.”

“You don’t know what I believe.”

“I do, actually, Ryker has only scratched the surface of my powers. I can see auras but I can also tell when people are being truthful and when they are not. I can also sense emotions of sorts and I can see your distrust. You don’t like me very much.”

“I don’t like the idea of you, yes, but I trust my mate and I know that you cannot make him into what he is not” Ryker laughed. It wasn’t his usual laugh, there was something dark about it, something almost sinister, it had my skin crawling and it made the room feel almost colder. He had an amused grin on his face and his brows were cocked as if he was mocking me.

“I have no intentions to change him,” he said. “I only bring out that which is buried beneath. You have this misconception that dark magic is evil, but it is not. I simply draw from what you are. I break down walls, I pull down the

pretense and I show what truly hides beneath. You cannot fight yourself, Camilla.”

“You made Reina bad.”

“Reina was a power hungry witch who wished she could be the goddess. She wanted the power over life and death, she wanted to rival the goddess and I gave her that. I gave her exactly what she wanted. I did not make her into anything”

I frowned. He seems genuine but then again, I didn't know what I was talking to. It could have been lying to me, it could have been trying to deceive me and make me trust it. I wasn't sure what I could believe, especially considering that it came from Reina. Nothing that came from Reina could be trusted.

“Why did you choose him?” I asked finally.

“I didn't, she did. She gave me away. She knew she was going to die, everything comes with a price, especially magic, but you would know all about that, wouldn't you?”

I kept my expression stoic. “I have no idea what you are talking about.”

“Oh, Camilla, don't play dumb. You healed those people at your own detriment. You gave up your powers to save your daughter and to save yourself, the spell over your other child's powers were broken.”

“How do you know that? My life had nothing to do with Audrey's powers.”

He chuckled. “There is a lot you are yet to learn, Camilla. Have you ever asked yourself what the consequence for your daughter coming back was? You were to lose your life but you didn't. What do you think was taken instead?”

I couldn't respond because the honest truth was that I didn't know what to say. My powers were taken, that was the price, he was trying to rile me up, that

had to be it. Nothing else was amiss. Everything was fine and Aurora was alive He was just trying to send me into a panic.

“I don't want to talk to you anymore, just leave my mate alone,” I spat and he sighed. content.

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Before I could say anything, Ryker's eyes closed. I stood there staring for a full minute waiting to see if anything was going to happen but there was nothing. One minute, his eyes were closed and when he opened them, he was himself again. He looked a bit confused and disoriented.

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"Isn't it?" he mused. "The merging has already started. I guess you will get to see what kind of man your mate truly is."

Before I could say anything, Ryker's eyes closed. I stood there staring for a full minute waiting to see if anything was going to happen but there was nothing. One minute, his eyes were closed and when he opened them, he was himself again. He looked a bit confused and disoriented.

"When did you get here?" he asked but I couldn't respond. It was clear he didn't know what had transpired in the last few minutes. "I sat down to rest my head for a second and now you're here. Did something happen?"

I shook my head. I couldn't tell him what had just happened. I didn't know how. "Everything is fine. I just came in here to apologize for what I said earlier. I do trust you and I know that you can beat this."

He gave me a small smile. "Thank you, that means a lot coming from you."

I couldn't tell him that he truly didn't have a choice. He had to beat it. If that thing was telling the truth, then it had already started. I trusted Ryker, he was the best person I knew, the kindest and the most amazing. If that thing was telling the truth then I had nothing to worry about. If it wasn't, then we could potentially have another Reina case on our hands.

I felt warm hands on my cheeks and looked up at Ryker.

"Is everything okay?" he asked and I nodded. "We don't lie to each other, Camilla. Tell me what the problem is."

I forced my lips to curve up into a smile. "Can we talk about it tomorrow? Today has been such a good day.

I just want to remember it this way?"

He frowned but nodded. "Of course, anything you want."

I could barely sleep at night. I was up long before the sun was with images of Ryker's dark eyes in my mind. He was still fast asleep when I got out of bed and I was relieved that at least one of us was able to rest. I pulled on a wool cloak and made my way out of the room.

The guards looked surprised to see me out so early but I didn't pay any attention to them and found myself in the garden. I sat in front of the fountain,

it was one of the few places I could think. I moved the water in front of me in patterns hoping it would distract me but it barely did.

"I didn't think I would see you out here so early," I nearly jumped when I heard Juan's voice behind me. "Sorry to scare you, Ryker is the one who wakes early and even at that, you are about an hour too early. Are you okay?"

I hummed. He didn't say anything at first and then he sat on the floor next to me.

"You don't have to do this," I began but he shrugged. "I'm serious, all is well."

"I don't know if I should be insulted by the fact that you expect me to believe that," he mused and I couldn't help but smile. "I presume it has something to do with Ryker and what happened yesterday. Do I want to know what it is?"

"I will tell you, I just need to tell him first."

His brows furrowed at my words. "He doesn't know."

"He doesn't know the extent of it," I sighed. "I don't know how to explain without giving it away but we could be potentially facing another Reina issue or things could be fine. I don't know if I should worry him about the potential or if I should just watch things unfold."

"You're worried," he deduced and I nodded. "What are you going to do?"

"I don't know," I whispered. "I don't make the hard decisions, he does."

Juan chuckled. We sat there in silence for a minute before he spoke again. "I don't know what you are going through, but I know that if I were in this position, I would want honesty." "Why? It would only make you panic."

"Maybe, but I would be able to prepare and put things in place should I go off the rails," he slowly stood to his feet. "I think no matter what, you will do the right thing." "Thank you."

He helped me to my feet and as we walked back to the palace, I saw Ryker making his way out. When he saw me, he let out a sigh of relief.

"Where did you go?" he asked as he rushed over to me. "I was worried that something had happened and your wall was up."

"I just took a walk and I met Juan on the way," he placed a kiss on my forehead. "Do you want me to walk you back? Are you alright?"

"I'm fine," I told him and I wasn't lying either. "You should do whatever it is that you do. We can talk later."

That had him stilling. "We can talk now. The run can wait, you know that. If it is-"

I rolled my eyes and cut him off with a kiss. It took him a second to relax against me and when I pulled back, he had a small smile on his face. "Go, Ryker, I'll be waiting." The conversation could wait, he deserved one normal morning.