

## Chapter 113

The creature's weight pressed down on her, seemingly displeased at the sound she had just emitted. Fear clawed at her insides, tearing it apart to make a home for itself in every single vein and seemed to be the only thing flowing in place of the blood she could no longer feel flowing.

It was suddenly hard to breathe. This creature -whatever it was - was leaning in, bringing the darkness with itself. As it breaches more and more into her space, the darkness continues to envelop her, with the last bit of energy in her, she struggles, trying to claw at something, anything, in a desperate attempt to find the light, to survive.

Then, abruptly, she jolts back to reality. Marisol swallowed the thick lump of anxiety that had formed in her throat, her head snapping at her surroundings, only to find herself alone in her bed, sweat-soaked and disoriented, the remnants of what had been a nightmare clinging to her like a ghostly fog.

Still jumpy from the nightmare she'd only just awoken from, Marisol startles at the sound the door to her room makes as it swings open. Nicole rushes in, eyes scanning the room before speaking as her eyes landed on her, chest rising and falling rapidly.

"I felt your distress through the pack link, Marisol. What's wrong?"

Almost immediately, Liam dashed in and ran to her side.

"What's wrong, Mare?" He soothes, his voice taking on an affectionate tone.

Marisol looked from one parent to the other. Their presence was a welcome distraction that had taken her mind completely away from the panic and anxiety the nightmare had left behind, and she was grateful for it. But instead of closing her eyes and inhaling their scent and relaxing on it like she really wanted to, Marisol rolled her eyes.

"Are you both for real right now?" She hisses, looking between them. "Mom, Dad, I'm not twelve anymore. Why would you come running because of a dream?"

Nicole exchanged a look with her mate, who in turn opts to glare down at his feet, puzzled.

"Dad, are you going to continue running to my rescue at every slight chance?"

Liam sighs loudly, a hand going to ruffle the strands of his hair and render them even more out of place.

"But -" he began, taking a tentative step forward.

"But nothing. This is just both of you being overprotective and oversensitive."

"Are you sure you're okay?" Liam asks tentatively, his brows furrowed with worry.

Marisol rolled her eyes again, huffing. "Dad, it was only just a dream. Seriously, you're being overprotective, and you know I don't like you both hovering so much. I'm fine. Just leave me alone," she replies, her tone sharper than she'd intended, but they didn't seem to catch it, either that or they were doing a good job at pretending they didn't.

"We just care about you, Mare. If something's bothering you, we want you to know you can talk to us about it."

"And I appreciate it, mom," Marisol insisted. "But I'm not a kid anymore, and I'd like to believe I can handle something as simple as a dream on my own. Now, please, just leave me alone."

Her parents exchanged glances again, this time, heavier with worry and reluctance. They could sense fear and danger through the bond. It was why they'd come running in the first place.

'Are we being over-protective?' Liam asked his mate through their link.

Nicole shrugs, licking her lips, 'Maybe? She's an adult now, you know? And she's right. It was a dream, a bad one, no doubt, but she wasn't in any real danger.'

"Are you both really talking about me right in front of me like I'm not here? " Marisol whines loudly, gaining their attention again, "Just.... give me some breathing space!"

"Alright, okay," Nicole conceded, putting her hands in the air in surrender. "We'll leave now." She says, already retreating until she is at the threshold. Liam, however, refused to budge.

"If you need anything, you'll let us know, right?" He asked, eyes fixed on her.

"Have I ever withheld anything from you?" Marisol retorted.

"Okay," Liam nods, swallowing. He looks up at her again, lingering for a moment before reluctantly retreating alongside her mother.

Alone once again, Marisol breathed out a heavy sigh. Thinking back to her nightmare, she glanced around the room once again, half-expecting the distorted glimpses of the nightmare to materialize, finding a home in which the light from the lamp cast shadows in her room but thankfully, there was nothing of the sort.

Her parents weren't overreacting. She'd been extremely terrified. But there was no way she could tell them about her nightmares.

She wouldn't be able to stand their prodding and dramatic questioning if she did. Having spent every other day of her life with them, she was certain of the way they would react should she make the mistake of telling them about it, they would make a big deal out of it.

But thinking about it with a semi-clear head, was this not already a big deal as it stood? Didn't it deserve to be blown out of proportion, considering that this exact nightmare had become more frequent in the past few months and that she was always seeing the same creature in one bizarre scenario or the other?

Marisol lay back in bed, staring at the ceiling and trying to force calmness back into her body, which was still humming with traces of unease. The echoes of her dad's concern, visible in his expression and words, tugged at her conscience, but she resisted the urge to be vulnerable and give in to their pestering.

Instead, she pushes back at the fear and unease, burying it deep within and resolving to face it alone should it ever find its way to the surface again, as if challenging the shadows in her dream to another duel in the confines of her mind.

She felt tired and even drowsy, but she wouldn't dare sleep. Not when the possibility of having another nightmare still loomed. After a few minutes, she stretched and tumbled out of bed. There was a lot to do.