

Chapter 163

As Cedric woke up entangled in the sheets with his mate pressed tightly against his side, he couldn't help but think that this was life. For the first time in a long time, Cedric felt fulfilled. Everything was perfect. With Marisol by his side, he felt like he could do anything. He was happy, content, and peaceful. What more could a man ask for?

However, there was one thing that sat heavy on his mind, and that was Marisol's obvious turmoil regarding the decision she had to make. He was aware that she'd been in a dilemma for the last few days but had been pretending and even going as far as thinking only happy thoughts whenever he was around.

He wanted to ease her burden, and so a plan had begun to take root in his mind. He could make things easier for Marisol by relinquishing his position as Alpha so that he and Marisol could return to her pack.

All they needed to do was wait until the prophecy was fulfilled, and then they would leave.

The decision had put Cedric in a bit of a tight spot too, because not only did it mean he would be abandoning his birthright and his pack, but he would also be trapping his brother permanently in Redwood, but he was ready to do all that and more for Marisol. He didn't want a title if it meant his mate would be unhappy and unsatisfied for the rest of her days.

If they'd met under different circumstances, it would have been different. However, she'd been tricked and kept here like a prisoner. It would be too unfair to her to make another decision that would take away her right to choose and her freedom.

'It's better this way', Cedric thought with a determined nod. He couldn't stand to lose Marisol, and this was the only way to make sure of that.

As if sensing the turmoil in his mind, Marisol stirred, "Cedric," she murmured, and Cedric leaned closer to her, humming in answer.

"Why are you so restless?" She asked groggily, eyes still shut as she moved to rest her palm on his chest, "Your wolf..... it's so anxious about something." She noted, and Cedric's heart skipped a beat.

Sure, he'd made the decision, but his wolf wasn't in support of abandoning his pack and his position as Alpha to follow Marisol. It couldn't understand why Marisol couldn't just stay. They were meant to be together, but Cedric was also meant to be Alpha; that was all it knew.

"Are you doing anything later today? I have something to tell you." He settled down, and Marisol's beautiful hazel-blue finally fluttered open. Slowly, she propped herself up, and the worry in her features was evident as she tilted her head.

"Did something happen? My wolf is anxious and upset with you at the same time. And that's weird because, usually, we adore you to bits." She said it so easily, as if the confession didn't tug violently at Cedric's heartstrings.

He showed her a smile that didn't quite reach his eyes and pulled her into his arms, "We adore you even more."

Marisol let out a small sigh, "Give me a hint." She said before narrowing her eyes at him in accusation, "And don't try to distract me."

He couldn't stop the smile that slipped onto his face as he started to trail his fingers down her spine.

"I'll give you a hint only if you bribe me with something," he teased, not missing the way she melted even further into his embrace.

"And what kind sir, would that be?" she played along, and Cedric's smirk grew. He continued with his teasing, loving how she responded to his slightest touch.

"How about..... you offer me something, and let me decide if it's bribe enough."

Marisol let out a soft growl, and just like that, she had him falling back onto the bed with a small 'oof', and ground down on his crotch teasingly. A hiss left his lips as his hands went to her waist, controlling her movements as she claimed his lips in a hungry kiss.

"Damn, Princess," he breathed out afterwards, and she giggled against his lips, fingers reaching into his hair to tug at the strands roughly.

"Princess," Cedric growled, slowly losing his willpower.

"Is that bribe enough?" She whispered, with another roll of her hips.

"No!" He growled, and she let out a squeak as he lifted her off to throw his briefs off impatiently, her flimsy gown following in a minute, and they wrestled back into position.

The moment Marisol sank down and clenched around him, Cedric let out a low howl.

"Fucking hell, Princess."

He tried to concentrate and tease her breasts and his mark, but Cedric couldn't help but feel at a loss when she began to move at a torturous pace.

His fingers dug into her waist as he slowed her down with an animalistic groan before setting a pace he could control, helping her move up and down to meet him where it truly mattered.

Her movements grew more frantic and sloppy and knowing she was nearing her release, he flipped them over and finished up for both of them.

His sweaty back hits the bed, their chests heaving, both fully sated and ridiculously happy.

Marisol curled up in his arms seconds later, already knocked back to sleep.

Cedric knew he should get up, he had a handful of meetings lined up for the day and he also needed to supervise and evaluate the pack's progress in their training.

However, he couldn't bring himself to move. The moment was too beautiful to ruin. Besides, with what he'd told them about his supposed unpredictability, they should expect days like these.

'Let Caleb handle it. After all, he's about to become the official Alpha.' He thought to himself as he drifted off into light slumber.

'Danger!' Cedric jolted out of sleep about an hour later as his senses howled in alarm. His wolf was agitated. Something had crossed his border, something big and sinister and it was headed right for the pack.

'Caleb!' He called into the pack link. 'Something is coming. Gather the troops.'

He tapped Marisol awake, her eyes opening lazily, the afterglow still evident in them as she gave him a lazy smile.

"Back for more?" She drawled, in a sultry tone, and Cedric had to reel himself back when he jumped out of bed, grabbing their clothes off the floor.

"Hey, what's wrong?" She asked as he began to hastily dress her, her eyes searching for his.

Cedric doesn't reply as he moves to put on his own clothes. It wasn't that he didn't want to. He couldn't. A lot of things were running through his mind, his panicked thoughts mixing with fear.

The witch was right. Marisol was far from ready to face any enemy and if the force coming was as formidable as he'd sensed then there was no way he was thrusting her into that unprepared.

With both of them dressed, he hurriedly pulled her out of bed and, with quick steps, they moved into the depths of the hidden castle, Marisol's questions carried away by the wind.

"Wait." She tried again, "Listen..."

He couldn't afford to listen. His wolf, who'd never felt an ounce of fear, was trembling and it was all because it feared for her safety. He needed to keep her safe before anything else.

'Where are you? They're close. Nothing is stopping them, not even Leticia's magic. I think it's out of her control too.' he heard Caleb's panicked voice in his head.

'Who are they?' Cedric asked.

'We don't know. We're blindly navigating a sudden haze as it is.'

"Cedric, w-"

Cedric shut the door before Marisol could finish.

"I love you." He muttered against the wood before turning around and letting his wolf take over, the sound of its footsteps echoing through the empty corridors.

As he burst outside, the chilling sight before him sent shivers down his spine. A formidable figure stood at the edge of the boundary, a massive black wolf exuding power and dominance. Beside it, a pure white wolf with blood-red eyes paced restlessly, emanating a menacing aura.

The ground seemed to tremble as the black wolf released a bone-chilling roar, the sheer force of it rattling Cedric to his core. It was the roar of another Alpha, a force to be reckoned with, more powerful than anything Cedric had ever encountered.

Instinctively, Cedric's own wolf growls in response, battle-ready, but its voice is drowned out by the overwhelming presence of the newcomers. With a sense of foreboding, Cedric transformed into his human form and approached cautiously, his eyes fixed on the imposing figures before him.

"Who are you?" Cedric demanded, his voice tinged with a mixture of fear and defiance. He couldn't show his fear, not when he was supposed to be the protector of his pack.

The black and white wolves prowled menacingly, their eyes ablaze with fury. They seemed to communicate silently, their intentions unclear as they sniffed the air, their senses on high alert.

Finally, one of the other wolves in their company shifts into human form, his voice filled with urgency. "Where's Caleb Coveton and where is Marisol?" he demanded, his tone brooking no argument.

At the mention of his name, Caleb's wolf whimpers in fear and tries to retreat. Before Cedric could react, the black wolf lunged forward at lightning speed, seizing Caleb in its powerful jaws. Panic surged through Cedric as he watched helplessly, his mind racing with questions and a looming sense of dread.

Then, the white wolf shifted way too quickly and easily for it to be normal, a woman who bore a striking resemblance to Marisol now standing before them. Just as quick as she appeared, she disappeared into thin air, only to materialize right in front of Leticia, her fingers pressing into the witch's throat as she held her in a chokehold.

Cedric's breath caught in his throat as realization dawned upon him. These were Marisol's parents; leaders of the powerful Dark Moon pack, and the threat in their every step and demeanor was owing to their missing daughter that was traced back here, to Redwood.

"Where is my daughter?" the woman yelled, her voice laced with raw emotion.

Cedric's mind raced as he struggled to process the situation. Marisol's parents had come for her, and they were prepared to do whatever it took to take her back home.

"You're the witch who trapped her!" The woman accused, her fingers not letting up around Leticia's throat.

The looming threat to his pack and his people triggered Cedric's wolf and, in the blink of an eye, he'd shifted back into his wolf form. This did not go unnoticed by the Dark Moon parents, and, taking it as a challenge, they descended upon Redwood with savage ferocity, their strength overwhelming Cedric and his allies. Cedric fought valiantly, his heart heavy with the knowledge that he was fighting not only for his pack but for the woman he loved.

Cedric's thoughts were consumed by Marisol. He couldn't let her parents take her away, not when they had only just found each other. He still needed to tell her so many things and he doubted her parents would let that happen, or even believe him not after Redwood had deceived them once already. With every ounce of strength he possessed, he vowed to protect her, no matter the cost.

They were losing heavily. The black and white wolves were a formidable force, especially together. They moved like ghosts, effectively knocking out everything in their path. The army that followed them was even more deadly. Redwood had nothing on them. It was almost too easy for them.

Amidst the chaos, Cedric realized that Liam Hallows, the imposing black wolf Marisol's father, was intent on razing the entirety of Redwood to the ground. His heart sank as he surveyed the scene. The battle had taken its toll, leaving him and his allies battered and bruised, with no hope of victory.

Despite his injuries and knowing well that they were fighting a losing battle, Cedric fought on, his determination unwavering.

Desperation claws at Cedric's chest, watching Redwood's Army dwindle by the minute, his mind racing for a way to turn the tide of the battle. He knew that if Liam succeeded in his ruthless onslaught, there would be nothing left of Redwood but ashes and ruin.

Just as Cedric receives a blow that almost sends him tumbling to the floor, a loud voice pierces through the clamor like a blade. "Stop!" The command in her voice rang out with an authority that effectively silenced the battlefield.

Time seemed to stand still as they all turned to look at Marisol, their expressions a mixture of shock and awe. Even Liam, the fierce Alpha of the Dark Moon pack, halted at the sound of his daughter's voice.

Cedric felt a surge of pride and admiration swell within him as he watched Marisol stand tall amidst the chaos, her eyes blazing with determination. She had always possessed a strength and resilience that amazed him, but in that moment, she seemed to shine with an otherworldly power.

As the echoes of her command faded, a tense silence enveloped the battlefield, broken only by the sound of labored breathing and the distant rumble of thunder. Cedric held his breath, his heart pounding with anticipation as he followed her every move.