



NOTHING IS WHAT IT SEEMS AT THE

CARNIVAL OF CREEPS

JANUARY RAYNE

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FANGBANG ON FANGBANGERS.

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SHALLOW COVE™ DIMENSIONS SERIES ORDER

BOOK 0.5: ETERNALLY HERS

BOOK 1: ETERNALLY DAMNED

BOOK 1.5: CARNIVAL OF CREEPS

BOOK 2: ETERNALLY CURSED (COMING SOON)

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DEDICATION

TO THE CARNIVAL PHOTO I STUMBLED UPON WHILE LOOKING FOR HALLOW
PICTURES; THIS STORY IS YOUR FAULT. I HAD TO WRITE THIS, AND NOW IT'S A
MINUTE. I BLAME YOU, BUT I HAD FUN. I GUESS I DON'T REGRET IT. I'M A FRIEND
MONSTERS.

SO LET'S GET FREAKY.

DEDICATION

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PICTURES; THIS STORY IS YOUR FAULT. I HAD TO WRITE THIS, AND NOW IT'S ALL LAST
MINUTE. I BLAME YOU, BUT I HAD FUN. I GUESS I DON'T REGRET IT. I'M A FREAK FOR
MONSTERS.

SO LET'S GET FREAKY.

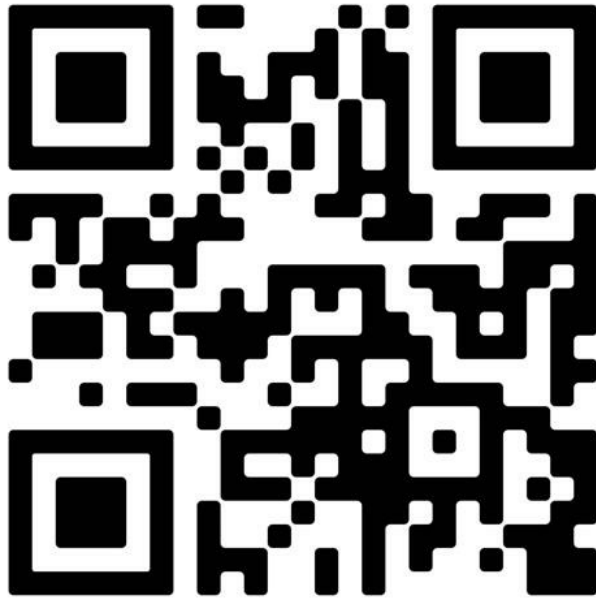
AUTHOR'S NOTE

THIS STORY IS TOLD FROM MULTIPLE POINT OF VIEWS.
YOU WILL NEED TO READ **ETERNALLY DAMNED** FIRST TO FOLLOW
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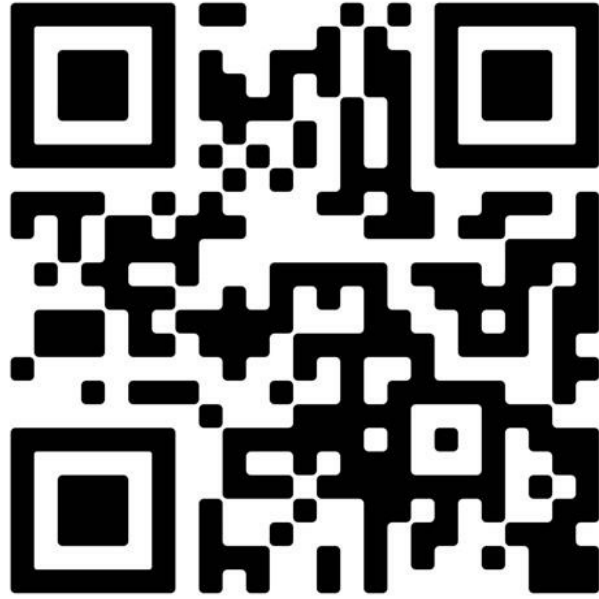
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SCAN FOR THE WARNINGS:



SCAN FOR THE WARNINGS:





CHAPTER
ONE
MAVEN

Vampires, Werewolves, Elves, Fae, Oh my!

They are all real, and it makes me wonder what else is real— who real? I’ve been in the library for ages. I’ve read every book and ever and I’ve learned we are definitely not alone, and there are way more creatures than I ever thought possible.

I place my hands on my stomach and rub small circles on it. Seven half months pregnant, I feel like I’m about to explode.

A gust of air sways my hair, and I sink my teeth into my bottom lip and smile.

“How’s my beloved?” Lex slides his hands around my waist, gliding his hands over my stomach. “And how are my babies?” He gathers my hair, slipping it over my shoulder, and his lips find my throat where my pulse is.

My eyes close, and the book in my hand slips free, crashing down on the floor. I don’t care. I lean my head against Lex’s shoulder and soak up his warmth.

attention.

“We’re good. I’m tired, but nothing new.” I sigh as his hands crawl up my stomach and lift it, relieving the pressure from my pelvis. “Oh my God, I can’t stop the moan that escapes me. That feels so good.”

“Beloved, you can’t make noises like that. Not when you know what it does to me.” He slowly lowers the weight back down.

I stare at the door, and it slams shut with a quick flick of my eyes. In a good measure, I lock it, keeping us locked inside the library where we had our first experience together. He was a ghost, and I was a human. It’s hard to believe how much things have changed.

Now I’m a coven witch, and he is a living, breathing vampire. I’m pregnant with his twins, children who are supposed to change the world. We have no idea how. We have decided not to think about that too much. I want to enjoy the pregnancy together and concentrate on the coven.

“Beloved,” his voice darkens. “Do you need me?” Lex’s palms cup my face, teasing his fangs across my neck. “Do you want my cock?” He rocks against me, his dick pressing against my backside.

My hands grip one of the shelves until my knuckles turn white with pain. My hand dips under the waistband of my maternity leggings and brushes my fingers over my clit. “Lex!” I whimper, the vines and roses conjuring themselves from thin air, sliding up the bookcase, intertwining themselves between the spines of books. They continue to take over everything, knocking over the table and then wrapping around our legs to lock Lex and me together.

Ever since I became pregnant, I’ve had issues controlling my powers. I’m not sure how to stop it. The black roses and vines, when they appear, always appear in multitude.

“I love it when you lose control,” he whispers, sliding his fingers t

my pussy, gathering the juices he causes me to create for him. “To kr
idle mytouch does this to you; it drives me wild, Beloved.” He sinks his
God.” Inside me, two at a time, and I gasp, standing on my tiptoes. “Still so
tight.” He pumps the thick digits in and out, the black roses nex
what it pulsating with every breath I take. “You’d think with how much I fu
you’d be looser, but no, you’re still as tight as you were when I claim
res. Forvirginity all for myself. Isn’t that right?”

we had “Lex—”

s crazy He grips me by my hair and yanks my head to the side, the sharp ti
fangs threatening my skin. I want him to. I want him to sink his teeth
re. I’mand drink. He doesn’t do it as much since I’ve been pregnant. He onl
rld, butwhen he needs to, but I want more. I miss it when he takes what h
ich. Wefrom me.

“—You smell so fucking good.” He inhales, scenting my skin as h
my tits,his hard cock against me. “So sweet.” His tongue flattens against my
againstand he licks me slow, from the base of my neck to my jaw. “I want to
eat you. I want to drain you of every last drop of your blood because
hen his—” an unstable breath leaves him, the kind where the words shake as
hes hisabout to lose control. “— I can’t fucking wait.” His talons rip thro
ig fromshirt at the same time his fangs sink into my neck viciously. With or
e spineson my head and his other arm wrapped around my waist, he keeps me
e lamp,close to his body.

Lex holds onto me desperately, trying to bring me closer as he take
ver. I’mdeep swallows of my blood. Like always, his bite leaves a warmth sp
ar, theythrough my body, pleasure roaring through my system, and I explo
orgasm exploding my power out of my body, and the roses grow to th
throughwe are cocooned in nothing but petals.

low my “Mmm,” he hums, gently removing his fangs, then licking the c
fingers from my skin. “I love how sweet you taste. Your blood while you or
fucking my favorite cocktail.” He slices my bra off next, then tugs my leggings
t to us “Beloved, you’ll have to tell the roses to go away; they are taking
ck you, much space. I can’t spread your legs to get to your wet pussy that I’n
ied that to taste.”

“I can’t. I can’t control it.” No one knows how much it bothers me.

happy to be pregnant with the twins and everything they represent, bu
p of his became a witch. I just figured out who I am and haven’t even touc
into me everything I can do. Now, some things get out of control.

y feeds Like my roses and vines.

e needs Don’t get me started on my emotions. Every time I cry, there’s a hu
whirling outside.

e rocks “Relax for me, Beloved. It’s only us here. Feel my touch. Feel my i
throat, you. Think of that,” he says into my mind. “Take a deep breath. Thin
fucking how much I want to lay you on your back, spread your legs, and sink r
I can’t so deep inside you, you’ll feel me for days.”

if he’s I do as he says, taking a deep breath, focusing on wanting him to
ugh my without interruptions.

ie hand “That’s it. What a good girl,” he praises me, running his palm do
e pulled bare back, and the sharp scratch of his talons drags across my skin.

I shiver.

as long, I love it when he praises me.

reading His lips find the back of my neck, kissing and nipping, then dragg
de, my tongue down my spine. His fingers wrap around my neck, the talons p
ie point against my windpipe as he yanks my head back. “You’re going to tak
damn drop, aren’t you? Every drop of my come, Beloved. And if an

droplets free, you better lick it clean. You know the rule. What is it?” His gasp threatens my neck again, and I whimper, wanting him to feed from me as he comes down. His hand flies down on my ass, and I groan, wanting more. His fingers push up to push between my legs, sharp talons threatening to break through the skin on my dying flesh.

He could tear my skin easily. All he has to do is tense his fingers and I’m so pressure, and I’d bleed out right here where he could suck my blood from every wound. Knowing I’m so close to danger, a being that could easily devour me, I shudder.

“What’s the rule?” he repeats, pinching my clit, and I cry out again as a thunder shakes the house and rain pelts against the window. “Tsk, tsk. How did I say about losing control of your power?”

“I can’t help it. I can’t think when you touch me.”

“Mmm,” he hums, a dark undertone cradling the baritone. “I love that you still haven’t answered me.” With his vampire strength, he picks up my cock and thrusts it to the chair in the corner, spreads his legs, and lies me down. My stomach hangs between the space he made with his thighs, and my ass feels like the air, swaying. “Do I need to punish you?” He slips a finger inside my pussy. My hand snakes around his leg, digging my nails into the skin. “I know how much you like it.”

“No. I’ve been good, Lex. I promise.” I sway my ass in the air, begging for more, hoping it will drive him crazy.

His hand smooths over my ass. “I don’t believe you. You don’t know how to bring yourself calm. It has rained every day for a week. Roses have stopped blooming many times from taking this pussy every night, and that doesn’t make me every very happy.” A loud pop rings through the air as he slaps my ass, and my cheek stings from the slap. “Do you realize how annoying it is

s fangsthrough roses the size of me every night? And they fight me back, w
again. me up in vines. Why is that?”

fingers “I don’t know,” I groan, pressing my cheek against his thigh. I really
ensitiveThe further the pregnancy progresses, it’s like my powers are amplif
on the fritz at the same time.

d apply “It’s because you don’t listen to me.” He spanks me again, and m
d fromjerks. Lex’s fingers slide through each lip of my pussy, soaking his
sily killHis talons scrape against my clit, and I whimper, my thighs shaking fr
touch. He lifts his hand and spanks me again.

just as And again.

k, what And again.

And like every other time, he lifts my hips and kisses the burning re
Shoving his fingers coated in my honey in my mouth, he bites my as
hat, butfangs piercing me easily. He moans, pumping his fingers in and out
me up,mouth until my saliva is dripping from my chin. My shouts are mutec
vn. Myfingers deep-throating me, my orgasms ricocheting off my bones.

ss is in With a growl and another blurred move that happens quicker than
ne, andof an eye, I’m on my back, rubbing against the soft plum-color
ow howcovering the hardwood floors.

His eyes are glowing red, his under eyes darkened by shadows, r
ack andveins surrounding the whites of his eyes are crimson too.

Those talons rake down the front of my body, not enough to break tl
’t keepbut enough to leave five red lines across me. I’m nothing but a blank
me toofor him to ruin.

ake me His nails even drift over my large stomach, his eyes zeroing in
and mymarks he has left over my belly. His nostrils flare, and without a w
to fightfangs sink into my chest, right where my heart beats. He wraps h

rapping around me, holding me tight against his body as if I'm about to run away. He growls, retracting his fangs from my heart, then licks the rivers of blood pouring from the wound.

I moaned and “So fucking good,” he mumbles, lapping at my skin.

My eyes flutter shut as if I'm being drugged.

My body “Look at me.” The grumbled words are rasped and hoarse. One hand presses against my bottom lip until I whimper with slight pain, from the tasting blood.

I can't look at him.

I'm too lost in my headspace, too lost in my pleasure, and he hasn't even fucked me yet.

He sucks my lip into his mouth, getting his craving there too, and he hisses, that something twisted and almost evil has my nipples pebbling in response to the taste of my blood. His black nail slashes across my left breast. “I said, look at me!” he hisses, showing his blood-soaked fangs.

My ears ring from his yell, my eyes snap open, and my chest burns with the pain he's inflicting.

“Good girl,” he says again, and my insides become heavy as I succumb to him. He slips his mouth over the wound he made, his pink tongue drinking up the blood. His teeth are stained red, and as he adorns the cut with his saliva, it disappears, healing itself completely. “Now, what's the number one rule for a girl on the skin, asks the question I completely forgot about.

Rivulets of blood drip from his chin, and he flicks his tongue out, lapping up those plump, gorgeous lips. His eyes glow the same color of red flame as the one he is waiting for me to answer. He drags his lips down my body, giving me a word, his ease of his touch. He kisses my round, protruding stomach, rubbing his arm against it, leaving his scent on it.

way. He He spreads my legs, and my stomach is in the way when I look c
f bloodcan't see him, and a whimper of distress slips from me. I need to see h

I must have projected my thoughts to him because his hands rub o
stomach and stay there. He lifts his head from between my legs. "I'
here, Beloved. I'm here with you. It's okay, my little witch. You're saf
e talon He vanishes again, but his presence in my mind eases my panic.

quickly The rough stubble of his unshaven face scratches against my inne
It's one of his favorite places to feed.

"I want you to feed from me more. You haven't fed as much sin
i't evenbeen pregnant," I admit my insecurity, and my chest feels lighter.

"It's because I haven't needed to. Your blood is heavier, sweet
e snarls,sustains me more since you're pregnant, but if you want me to, I v
e. argue, because I love drinking from you, Beloved."

e roars, I tweak my nipples and cry out when he bites into my thigh. He l
lower half of my body off the ground and wraps an arm below my
as fromholding me against him as he takes what he wants.

My hunger for him is insatiable, and I'll make sure his craving fo
bmit toalways satisfied.

renched Longer swallows fill his mouth, and another orgasm rips through
aliva, itvision blurring and my toes curling while pleasure shreds me.

ile?" he "Answer me," he says between licks, closing the wound, so I don'
out.

licking "What?" I slur, drunk from his bite.

s while "You won't get my cock until you tell me." He spreads my legs ap
ig me ateases my entrance, the crown of his thick shaft becoming drenched
ing hislust for him. "I won't ask again, Beloved."

"Your come," I gasp when he circles my clit.

down. I “What about it?”

im. “It belongs inside me. Always.”

ver my “Good girl, Beloved.” With a hard thrust, he fills me, stretching and
m rightup every inch inside of me. “You feel so fucking good. So tight for me
ie.” hand stays pressed against my clit, his palm digging into the sensitive
while the other gently cups my belly. With a slow drag, he pulls out, h
r thigh.rubbing against every spot that sets me off.

I arch my back, pinching my aching sore nipples and clenching my
ice I’vearound his girth. It makes him growl, and the tips of his talons sink i
skin. The bite of pain is delicious, and it triggers the tiny fangs in my
er, andto drop.

will not I’ll never forget when we mated for the first time, and my body ada
his. Now that I’m pregnant, I have to feed from him to give our c
lifts theproper nutrition.

breasts, “Oh, look at that. Do you need me, Beloved? I love it when you
come out. It’s so fucking sexy.” With the slow pace, he has swite
r me issomething needier and desperate. He pounds into me, relentless and u
of hurting me.

me, my I know he won’t. I love that he doesn’t handle me like glass. I won’t

“Yes, Lex. I crave. Please,” I whimper, the ache for his blood g
’t bleedstronger.

“Fuck!” He skips in rhythm, and his eyes roll to the back of his he
mouth drops open, and I can see the red tint covering his teeth still, m
part anddried on his chin. “You feel so goddamn good. I never want to lea
l in mycunt. All mine. You were made for me and only me. You’ll only t
cock. Tell me, and I’ll give you what you want.”

“Oh, God. Lex! Lex, more. Harder. Faster,” I beg him; every hard p

his hips has his cock reaching deeper inside me.

He shoves his wrist into my mouth while he uses his supernatural strength to takefuck me like a true vampire fucks his mate.

“One” Holding onto his arm, I bite his wrist, moaning as his blood flows into my nervesmouth. I feel the twins relaxing, their hunger for blood dissipating with his cocklong swallow I take from Lex. I can barely see him; he’s nothing but a

shadow, a quick haze, his red eyes the only thing apparent amidst the flicker of my pussy. I drop his wrist and scream, another orgasm contracting every muscle into my body.

I don’t have time to enjoy the bliss of what an orgasm does to my body and mind because Lex is relentless; he somehow moves faster, slamming his cock into my pussy with every ounce of vampire strength he has.

It hurts.

I want less.

I want more.

Oh my god, I’m about to come again.

“Lex! Oh, fuck!” I explode again, clenching around his cock, acting like a piston.

Another orgasm hits me.

And another.

Then another.

The space between us dripping with my come, and even through my bloodthrusts, I can hear the sickening sound of it.

It’s disgusting.

It’s erotic.

And I never want it to end.

Lex curls over me, slowing to a normal speed, and slices his fangs into my neck.

my mating mark for the last time, taking one last hit of the blood laced speed tooxytocin. It's his favorite time to feed when I'm freshly buzzed and from his passion.

With a snarl against my neck, he comes, filling me to the brim with every warmth.

"You better take every last drop like the good girl you are, Mavog." groans, sliding out before pushing inside me again.

"I want it. I want it all." I grip his ass and pull him forward, wanting an inch of him inside me while he comes.

He pulls free, still hard, and his come still pulses from his slit, down his veined shaft. He wraps an arm around my waist and forces my knees. "Oops," he says with an uncaring tone. "Lick me clean, Beloved."

He gathers my hair in his hands and forces me forward, shoving his head into my mouth. I gag from the intrusion, but I love it. I moan around his crown, lapping my tongue over the slit and gathering a creamy drop of come.

"Such a good Beloved. Your mouth is fucking heaven."

I work his cock up and down, stroking the base as I milk him. Slipping my cock from my lips, I lick up the long, impressive length, tracing the shaft to the head, making sure to get every single drop as he instructed.

I want to be good to him.

"That's it. Such a good fucking girl not letting a drop go to waste."

I dip my hand between my legs, gather his come, and stroke his cock before sucking him back into my mouth.

He hisses. "Filthy girl," he moans in appreciation. "I fucking love you." He watches as I suck his cock and his hands hold my face while I bob my head through

ed with down. He throws his head back, moaning, his hips flexing to see
l drunk friction.

Focusing, my mind thinks about a vine wrapping around his l
with his slithering between his legs. I see it out of my peripheral vision a
around his cock.

en,” he “Oh, fuck, yes, Beloved. Yes, it’s been so long since you’ve done th
spreads his legs, and I tease his hole, forcing the vine to circle the star.
g every I’m going to come again. You better swallow every drop, you hear me

I nod, looking up at him through teary eyes. I slip the vine insid
ripping hitting his prostate expertly. Lex shouts, curling over me in defeat,
s me talons drag up my back. His body trembles, his strength all mine now.
oved.” “Fuck, Maven. There. Right fucking there.”

s length I peg his prostate over and over again, enjoying how he can’t s
is thick control any part of his body.

o of his It’s all mine.

“I’m going to come,” he warns, sagging against the bookshelf. “I’n
to— Maven— fuck!” he roars, pushing his cock into my mouth until
ing his breathe. He comes, and it drips down my throat, nearly overflow
vein to mouth.

I slip the vine and my mouth free at the same time to take a breath, l
lips, then dive back in to clean up the mess he made.

His knees buckle, and his mouth seeks mine. His tongue lazily
is cock against mine, no doubt tasting himself, and he pushes me back down
the rug, breaking the kiss as he lies next to me. He rubs his hand o
ou.” He stomach again, and he sighs.

up and “You make me eternally happy, Beloved. You are my sunset and s
my night, the stars, and I’ll love you after the world fades and wh

born. You are mine through all the changes and shifts this plan through, but one thing will always remain the same.” He turns my hand and fingers under my chin, and forces me to look into his gorgeous blue eyes. Outside, rain falls; the relaxing tune is the same heartbeat beneath my chest. “I am yours, Maven. Through the pain and destruction of this world, through life, from happiness and peace, through it all. I’m yours.”

“Fuck, I place my hand over the mark I’ve seared onto his chest and smile at him. “And I am yours, Lex. I always have been, I always will be.”

He kisses the top of my head, his hand drawing small circles on my stomach, and I fall asleep, finding the peace that only Alexander McQueen can give me.

seem to

isn't going

I can't

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lick my

slides

against

over my

sunrise,

when it is

reborn. You are mine through all the changes and shifts this planet goes through, but one thing will always remain the same.” He turns my head, fingers under my chin, and forces me to look into his gorgeous blue eyes. A light rain falls outside; the relaxing tune is the same heartbeat beneath my chest. “I am yours, Maven. Through the pain and destruction of this world, through life, from happiness and peace, through it all. I’m yours.”

I place my hand over the mark I’ve seared onto his chest and smile, lying my head against his shoulder. “And I am yours, Lex. I always have been, and I always will be.”

He kisses the top of my head, his hand drawing small circles on my stomach, and I fall asleep, finding the peace that only Alexander Monreaux can give me.



CHAPTER

TWO

LEX

A knock at the door awakens me from my sleep, and I'm up, standing in front of the door a second later. "Yes?" I snip, hating my lazy day when my pregnant beloved is interrupted. The library is our safe place, where we have our first experiences together, and when we are here, it's like all the responsibilities in the world disappear.

Unfortunately, being the Coven Master means the responsibilities do not disappear, and with Maven being the Coven Witch, a step above me, I do not get rest.

"Just checking in, Master. It's been hours." Drayce, the new vampire who came through the portal with my lost father and sister, whispers on the other side.

"Because he and his mate are mating, idiot," Alastair, another member, says, a vampire with a different appearance than I've ever seen. Pure black eyes, rows of sharp teeth.

“I don’t think Master Monreaux will appreciate you talking about your pregnant mate and their mating,” Tala, a female vampire drawls.

“Well, maybe they shouldn’t fuck so loud for the entire cove to hear.”

I swing the door open and bare my fangs at Finnick and his damn mate. The man has been nothing but a pure grouch since they arrived. In a flash, I wrap my hand around his throat and slam him against the wall, lifting his feet. “You’ll do well to remember not to speak of my mate and the noises I have her make. This is my home, and if I want to fuck my mate, she screams my name, I will. Do I make myself clear, Finnick?”

“Yes, Master Monreaux. Apologies.”

I toss him across the room, and he smashes against the front door. I look in fine.

with my “Does anyone else have any snide comments they need to make?”

we had “Only that I wish someone would fuck me like that,” Tala sighs, a look drifting across her face.

do not “You just say the word, and I’ll give you what you want, Tala,” flirts, and Tala rolls her eyes, uninterested.

itle, we “Not today, tomorrow, or in your lifetime, Zaffre.”

ire who Zaffre feigns heartbreak, placing a hand against his chest and stumbles backward. “You’re a cold, cold woman.”

ie other I enter the library again and close the door, leaving the new members to their bickering.

er new “You are testy,” Maven says, lying on her side, propping her head on her hand. The blanket covers her top half and stops at the very top of her thighs.

er seen. “And you are beautiful.” Blurring to her, I bend down and lift her from the ground, making sure she’s covered.

“Sweet talker.” She lifts her hand to her mating mark, then leans her head

out his against my chest. “I wish you’d bite me more. It makes me happy.”

“I’ll bite you every day, then. Your happiness is all that matters.”
I knock the door again and sigh in relief to see the hall empty, making Maven
attitude. “What?”

In a blur, I “They aren’t that bad,” she whispers. “You’ll get used to it. You’re
him off great.”

Whatever “Only because I have the strongest witch in the world by my side.”
bite until she can say anything, I speed to our room so we can get ready for the c

“A witch that can’t control her powers right now.”

“Because this witch is growing my children.” In the safety and pri
I’ll be our own bedroom, I place my hands on her stomach again, something
seem to get enough of. “A job that doesn’t come easy, but damn, you
look so fucking good.”

dreamy “You are insatiable.” She laughs again, playfully shoving against m
before turning around and walking to the bathroom, leaving me the be
Zaffre in the house.

My fangs itch to sink into the meaty flesh again. I lick my c
suddenly thirsty, and on her again, lifting her until she’s sitting on th
umbling and then I yank her head to the side, striking her jugular vein. I tak
tasty swallows, her blood rich and sweet, more filling and addictin
coven she’s become pregnant.

What’s amazing is that I can drink what I want without her be
l in her weak. Her blood replenishes automatically.

ighs. Her body jerks and she moans again, her nails raking down my arm:
off the comes, dripping her essence all over the vanity.

Maybe I should have her lick it up for leaving the counter such a me
er head “Yes,” she moans. “More, more, Lex.”

I do. I give her what she wants. I bite into her neck harder, forcing my fangs deeper, and I flick my gaze to the mirror behind her, hanging about a foot above the sink. My eyes are crimson, blood drips down her shoulder, and the skin around my mouth is stained. The beast inside me marvels and becomes more demanding. I wrap my arm around her, holding my mate tighter than I have in months. I didn't realize how thirsty I was. Before I have been denying myself. I thought I was taking plenty, but now that she is here, surpassing my initial hunger and going deeper, I've had nearly as much of her blood.

I stare at myself in the mirror, watching blood drip down her bare back. I can't resist, so deadly, and I'm transfixed.

She's shouting again, another orgasm rushing through her to give me a delicious dose of oxytocin. The taste triggers my own, and I come, every inch of my chest landing on her stomach. I'm in bloodlust now, wanting to drink everything she has in her veins, but I'm left with the safety net of knowing that I can have as much as I want.

I scoot her off the sink and slide in again, groaning as I drink. I'm barely aware of what I'm doing. My mind is muted with a constant buzz. All I feel is her pleasure and my own. She loves this. Her thoughts echo since much she wishes I had done this earlier.

Angry at myself, I growl into her neck, bite harder, and a gush of blood comes flowing down my throat, feeding my primal craving. Her cunt is warm against my cock, once again pulling another orgasm from me as she fills her again, my come dripping from her cunt and onto the floor.

Finally, I pull my fangs free, staring at the monster in the mirror. Blood is smeared over my chin and cheeks. My cuspids still drip with thick droplets.

ing myred, and I watch her blood pour from the wound, flowing freely do
ove thebody, making a mess.

sides of I run my finger through it and bring it to my mouth, groaning, and
greedy,head back in pure ecstasy. I lick my lips, then suck the blood off my
while Ilean against her shoulder, taking a moment to calm down because rig
I reallyI want to ravage her for hours at this point. I've never had so much
t I haveI'm trembling.

owhere I lick the pinpricks on her neck so they close. "You are fucking delic
She doesn't answer me. I pull away, concerned that I went too far,
ack. Sofind her eyes glassy, riding the same high I am.

I finally pick her up and carry her to the shower, leaving a mess
me thatfloor, a mixture of blood and come. It looks like someone died. The
very jetsmeared in red; the counter has a large puddle flowing off the edge, d
ry dropto add to the mess on the ground.

can't. I I feel closer than I ever have to Maven.

"Thank you," I say to her, turning on the shower to wash us clean of
1 so far"I didn't know I was so hungry. Did I hurt you?"

it buzz. She shakes her head, placing her palms against my chest as he
ho howgreen eyes blink at me. I must look like a mess. My eyes are still r

fangs are still descended, and the blood is still on my face, but she isn'
f bloodof me.

nd wet. "It was just what I needed, Lex. Feel free to do that more oft
n me. Iofficially wrecked."

A large grin stretches across my face, showing my teeth, and she l
blood isher fingers down each fang. I purr in pleasure, my cock rock solid agai
plets of "Your stamina is mind-blowing."

"I'm fueled by your blood, Beloved. I could fuck you all day and n

own herdays and never waiver.”

“Lex,” she moans, tilting her head back, so the water wets her hair. I tilt my “I think you want that too.” I pull her close by gripping her ass, teeth. My stomach presses against mine, reminding me our bodies can’t align. “Right now, leave Luca in charge so I can fuck and feed from you, Beloved. Let me use your energy. what I want.”

“Yesss,” she hisses, gripping my cock with her hand. “Take all you want. I’m yours.”

“Mine,” I snap, falling to my knees, and I lift her leg over my shoulder. “I’m going to feast.”

I eat her pussy, tasting myself from moments ago.

And then I eat *her*.

Between her thighs is my favorite place to get lost in.

of blood.

in the forest

and, my

not afraid

when. I’m

brushes

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right for

days and never waiver.”

“Lex,” she moans, tilting her head back, so the water wets her hair.

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CHAPTER
THREE
LUCA

One day later.

“Hey, check it out. The sunflowers are gone, and it’s nothing but pumpkins,” Dottie shouts from the front door.

The lot of us head outside, the moon is shining brightly, and it’s pouring light across the field where rows upon rows of pumpkins now lie.

“Well, it’s perfect for this time of year,” I say, scratching the back of my head. “I mean, all that fucking they are doing, her powers have disappeared somewhere, right?”

“Why are they lost in the bedroom? I feel like that has never happened before,” Dottie asks.

I honestly have no idea. Luckily, their room is soundproof, but Luca sent me a message through our bond telling me to take over for a few minutes. He wasn’t going to say no, but I wonder why the sudden need to ravage him. At this rate, he will fall back into a coma with all the exercise they are

“It’s the full moon since it’s so close,” Luna the Fae sitting on the swing, informs us, staring off into the field. “Mated pairs have to release their energy and release it during sex. Vampires tend to need more blood, and they need to have sex. He will be a few days. It’s almost like a mating dance that repeats over again.”

“I want a mate. That sounds fucking awesome. When will it be my turn?” I pout, sitting on the swing with Luna.

“Your time will come, my friend.” Her hand, soft and delicate, lands on my lap, patting it lightly. “Patience.”

“I don’t want a mate.”

I roll my eyes when I hear Finnick’s voice.

“You lie, vampire,” Luna calls him out. “Lies do not become reality, especially when your anger is just a mask for the truth and what you want out of life. It’s okay to be angry. You’re justified.”

“You don’t fucking know a thing about me,” Finnick sneers, taking a step forward as if he’s about to attack, but before he can, he is transported.

“He bothers me,” Reuel sounds bored as he sighs the words.

“What the hell!” Finnick shouts from a distance.

We all turn our attention to the pumpkin field— patch? And Finnick is in the middle of it, arms spread wide, and all of us laugh in unison.

“What the hell, Reuel?” Finnick stomps through the pumpkin field, huffing, and puffing.

“You annoy me!” he shouts at him. “You’re pissed off all the time. I can’t stand it.”

“I’m going for a run,” Finnick yells, turning away from us until we are looking at his back, then stalking through the field and dodging.

benchpumpkins. “Don’t expect me back for a while!” his voice reverberates through the field.

and they “He’s a brat.”

heat all “Reuel, be kind. He’s had much pain. Let him be angry, but don’t do it personally,” Luna chastises the elf in a kind, gentle manner. She turns her legs to rock the swing, and her tone is at ease.

“All of us have reasons to be angry, but that doesn’t give him the right to treat everyone around him like shit.” The werewolf, Aziel, is sitting on the bottom of the steps, leaning back, his elbows propping him up as he looks at the sky. “We’ve all been through hardships, pain, agony, and blood. Darkness is still darkness, even when light is shined upon it, because the light you see goes out, and we are left with the nightmares that plague us. Even if you want to treat the ones around you as if they are the monsters doesn’t make you any better than them.”

“That’s dark, wolf.” Gullivere pats Aziel on the shoulder. “But he is right. We are all we have now. We are a family. We are a coven, and we are a pack.” He squeezes Aziel’s shoulders to reassure him that he and his brother Anwyll are part of this family. Packs are important to werewolves and packs are an odd one for them to have, what matters, is that they have one.

“Why is it that Luca likes to crack jokes? Or Severide spends most of his patch, days in the night of the catacombs? Why is it that Dottie cries when the mysterious creature takes over? Anger comes in all shapes and sizes, and I can’t handle it differently. Finnick is family, grouch or not; he is ours.”

“And family teases family,” Reuel states, guilt eating away at his voice. “They are all planned on bringing him back. He’s the one who wants to go for a long time, but he was only going to leave him out there for a second.”

“Do me a favor; go get him, okay?” I ask Reuel. “He needs to be taken care of.”

berates before the sun comes up. We don't want anyone to get hurt."

Reuel's piercing white eyes glow as he nods. "Of course, I'll bring you back." And in the next instant, the elf has disappeared into thin air.

I take it "I should go with him," Alastair says. "Everyone deserves to have someone's back." The vampire is unlike anyone I've ever

Demonic eyes, the color of coal, and his teeth are all pointed, made right to bite into flesh.

I gasp at the "I'll go with you." Aziel stands and transforms into his werewolf form, a terrifying sight.

I'm always in awe at the size of the werewolves.

"Brother, I don't think that's a good idea," Anwyll whispers in my ear. "Please, don't go. I have a bad feeling."

Aziel's giant paw lands on his brother's arm.

Anwyll nods, accepting his brother's decision.

"It's okay; we will come for you if anything happens, ya?" Drayce says. He is next to Dottie, leaning into her, and his eyes close as he inhales her scent. The glow around Dottie pulsates, and the blurred figure of her brother emerges. "Why hello, gorgeous," Drayce practically purrs, his charm pouring from him while tilting his head back to stare up at the creature. It towers over all of us.

Whatever she is, I'm thankful she's here. Between Maven and her brother, we should always be safe.

"Has anyone seen Greyson?" Rarity pops her head out of the hole. "I can't find him anywhere."

"He's probably in the city feeding. He'll be back soon." My best friend likes to disappear from time to time, feeding on humans with AB-negative blood type. Not only is it rare, but it takes time for him to sniff it out

don't care what blood type it is as long as I get to sink my fangs into
ng him I'm partial to O-positive, though. "Where's Severide?" I realize everyone
is out here but him.

o have "He's with Atreyu." Rarity frowns and closes the door, heading
er seen inside.

to tear A weighted sigh leaves me, and I'm left placing my elbows on my
thinking about how to convince him that his son isn't going to w
wolf, an Severide lives in the catacombs, barely eats, and all he does is read to
who is still in a coma from a werewolf bite.

"We should get a scarecrow," Drayce suggests. "This is the time
nto his when we don't have to hide; we might as well go all out."

"Yeah, let's lift some spirits around here and carve some pump
Dottie bounces on her heels from the excitement.

"I'll use my talons to gut them." Alaric flashes his talons and pl
standsteases Amberella, who has been sitting there quietly. She bolts onto l
r scent and runs away at vampire speed with Alaric hot on her trail with his
reature extended.

pouring "Yeah, that sounds good. We need some good to happen around her
ers overgather some pumpkins."

In a giant group, we all head toward the field. I jump from the por
badass Drayce at my side. I turn to look over my shoulder, and I'm happy
Anwyll following us with his hands tucked into his pockets.

ouse. "I The wind blows, carrying crisp air, but something about it does
right as it drapes over my skin. There's more than cold, more th
t friend promise of winter, but the vow of something sinister.

egative Or maybe Finnick's attitude is rubbing off on me, and everything
t. Me, I hunky-dory.

a vein. I'm going to go with Option B.

one else I don't have the mental capacity for Option A just yet.

g back

r knees,

ake up.

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I'm going to go with Option B.

I don't have the mental capacity for Option A just yet.



CHAPTER
FOUR
REUEL

“Powerful wizards and naked shapeshifters dance in the tulip’s affa sun bores down, and the witches frown, awaiting the moon’s flare. Va in shadows and werewolves all howl as the sky fills with stars. Demo for the violence of fate to send them a soul to scare. Fae see futu quickly become rumors but please everyone’s delight. Angels they w they aren’t seen, and humans remain in fright...” I sing the tune I lea a little elf as I continue on my journey to find Finnick.

He's gone far, and I'll be honest, I don't know where he is. I've c the tree line at the end of the field, staring into the darkness betw fingers of the branches. It's still our territory, but I don't like that h into the woods alone; no one ever truly knows what lies in the corner night, waiting to take you when you least expect it.

“He went straight. He’s still here.”

Alastair’s voice doesn’t take me by surprise. The unusual vampire to me, and I don’t mind having him at my side. He is genuine. His

kind, a bit damaged, but kind nevertheless, and that's all anyone could
when choosing a friend.

"I know," I say without turning back to look at him.

"I can still smell him."

The deep boom of Aziel's voice has me turning. I did not expect
him. "That's good. It means he is close. We will grab him, and I'll tr
us back to the estate. I would have been fine on my own. I have abilitie

"I won't leave a friend behind." Alastair stands beside me, and Azi
my other side, standing tall in his werewolf form.

The moment I step into the woods, a sound I've never heard befor
in the distance. "What is that?" I ask, taking another step, and the
autumn leaves and pine needles crunch under my bare feet. I hate v
air. The shoes, but I think that's because of the type of elf I am.

empires
ns wait
res that
eep for
rned as
That is the sound of a carnival." Aziel shifts into his human form a
would know. I killed a hundred people at a carnival once when I was
When I sleep, sometimes I hear the carousel spinning, and that dan
never stops playing," Aziel whispers, horrorstruck by his past.

I take his hand and focus on what I want to make him feel, but I can
if he isn't feeling a small amount of hope, happiness, and a spark of v
a different future than his past.

ie went
s of the
It's there, a light barely lit, and it's muffled by the dark, but I latch
breathing into the flame, and watch it explode. Dropping his hand, he
staring down at me with a smile.

"Thank you, Reuel."

is kind I give a small head bow. "Anything for werewolves. I'd give my life

heart is "Why is that?" he asks.

I walk forward, heading toward the music filtering through the woo

ask for branches hang low, heavy with leaves that need to fall, and the air is quiet.

Too quiet.

“Because werewolves gave their lives for me. As an elf, loyalty is not to see high regard, and I will remain loyal to the very end for them.”

transport “Can I ask why?” Alastair walks alongside me.

as too.” “You can, but I won’t answer. It’s very personal, and like many of my el takes a time in my life I don’t wish to discuss.”

“I’m glad there were good ones of us out there. I’m glad they didn’t get captured by Brenden.”

fallen His name drives a spike of sadness through my heart. “He is the one who killed them.” I barely utter the words before I wish I could take them back.

“I’m so sorry, Reuel.”

gain. “It was before your time, Aziel. There is nothing to apologize for.” I try to change the subject from me to something else as we walk. The music is louder the further into the forest we travel.

“Alastair, do you mind me asking what kind of vampire you are?”

“I don’t mind at all. I was wondering when someone would get around to wanting it. It seems everyone is scared of me,” he frowns. “I am a rare specimen.

inspired one of the original tales of vampires.” He turns around and backs onto it, walking backward, smirking before huge black wings sprout from his back. I gasp, his entire body morphs into a bat.

I gasp in shock as Alastair lands directly in front of me, towering over me. His body is covered in a dusting of black fur and leathery skin, his wings are tucked in a few places. I make a note to ask Luna to heal them later.

“You’re a vampire bat.” I pet his nose, almost not believing what I’m seeing, and he backs away, shifting into his vampire form.

als are “Ta-da,” he bows. “I am a vampire bat.”

“How rare are you?” Aziel asks.

“I’m the only one left that I know of.” Alastair saddens and runs his hand through his hair. “Unlike most of you, my kind wasn’t killed by a warlock, but a plague. It infiltrated my realm and poisoned all supplies. I was traveling through the portals, and when I got home, I found you, it’s only one alive, so I jumped back into another dimension, and then it was trapping me.”

“Maybe you aren’t the only one left.” I want to give him hope.

“Maybe,” he gives me a slight smile, his rows of teeth not so intimidating when he is happy. “Yeah,” he says, realizing that maybe he isn’t the only one left. “Maybe I’m not.”

“I don’t smell the territory line anymore, which is weird because I want definitely still in our territory.”

The music is loud, as if I’ve turned up the volume around me, asking standing in the bathroom singing my favorite tune.

“Welcome, welcome!” A high-pitched voice laced with old age sounds around turning to the left.

Aziel roars, shifting into his werewolf form, and Alastair hisses.

She snaps her fingers, and out of thin air, an entire carnival comes into view. Huge red, yellow, and white tents are in front of us, and a man walks awkwardly, waving at us with a huge smile.

The old woman with grey hair snaps her fingers again, and suddenly a sign is torn in a red ticket booth. She’s wearing a long silver necklace with a sapphire onyx gem hanging between her breasts. The song still plays loudly, and that I’m mind begins to buzz.

“Nothing is what it seems at the Carnival of Creeps. Come in, exp

the unknown, and you'll never want to go." She tilts her head back and laughs, a cackle similar to a mad witch.

I find myself stepping inside with my friends, and as I stare at the lanterns, flashes of her face play with my mind.

She's old, she's young, her teeth are rotten, and her cheeks are sunken, but then she's gorgeous with plump red lips and big blue eyes.

"I've never been to a carnival," I say in awe, not knowing where to go.

There's a popcorn cart to the left and cotton candy to the right. The scene is amazing.

"You have all the time in the world," the woman says, guiding me toward a nearby tent.

All the time?

That sounds nice.

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y, she's

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erience

the unknown, and you'll never want to go." She tilts her head back and laughs, a cackle similar to a mad witch.

I find myself stepping inside with my friends, and as I stare at the lady who let us in, flashes of her face play with my mind.

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"I've never been to a carnival," I say in awe, not knowing where to begin. There's a popcorn cart to the left and cotton candy to the right. The smells are amazing.

"You have all the time in the world," the woman says, guiding us to a nearby tent.

All the time?

That sounds nice.



CHAPTER
FIVE
FINNICK

Nothing is what it seems.

That's what the woman said when I entered the carnival. I thought it was a Halloween fair, something close by, and I wanted to check it out and tell everyone at the estate. I want them to become my family, but I don't know how to let people in.

I don't know how to love anymore, but I know how to hate.

And that's so much easier.

"Daddy, daddy. Come play with me. Daddy."

"Daddy!" my son cries for me repeatedly in my mind.

"Stop! Stop, please, stop!" I scream, beating the silver bars with my shoulder. It burns so bad, but I need to get out of here. I want to go home.

"I won't stop replaying your worst nightmares until you cry."

I shake my head, not wanting to give this monster a damn thing. At first, he's a pure, hate-filled monster. He's huge with large black horns curling over his head, red eyes, a thick frame with muscles, and hooves as feet.

He's a demon. That much, I know. And this carnival isn't for joy.

It's a prison for paranormal creatures that they use for financial gain

"Cry, vampire. Cry for me, and I'll let you go."

"You aren't going to get a damn thing from me." I shove my back against the bars again, and my flesh sizzles as it burns.

When I first entered the carnival, a young lady at the front entrance; everything inside seemed so alive. Clowns were on unicycles, acrobats were being played, balloons were popped, and a Ferris wheel was full of people with a long line of others waiting for their turn.

And then a bag made of silver draped over my face, and I was thrown into this cell.

"The show starts in an hour," the demon leans in, the ring on his nose burning a bright red as smoke drifts from its nostrils. "And you will be here if you don't want to die, Vampire. So cry. I know the value of your teeth." "And you will not get them. I'd rather die," I reply, leaning against the cold concrete wall.

"You just might by the end of the day." The beast's laugh is deafening, bellowing down the empty tunnels and his hooves click against the floor. He walks away, his tail whipping behind him.

A chain rattles and the sound of something dragging has me turn my head, wincing when the burnt flesh on the side of my throat stings.

"You might as well give him what he wants."

Moonlight drifts in from a small window, and I inch closer to the ceiling, careful not to touch them so I don't burn. "Who are you?" I ask, shifting my eyes red to get a better view of whom I'm talking to.

"I'm Raladriel," he answers, his voice tired and forlorn. "And you?"

"I'm Finnick." I kneel to the ground and scoot closer to the side of the

he seems to be on. The man's arms are spread, each wrist chained in
looks like gold. He has a little slack. He can move if he wants to,
seems too weak. "How long have you been in here, Raladriel?"

weight "I don't know," he answers, head hanging in defeat. The oily strand
hair hang in waves down his shoulders and skin, a golden-tawny color
ice wasseems to glimmer in the moonlight through the window. "All the day
gamestogether. They will be getting me soon for the freak show to hang me
full ofspread my arms wide."

"Why? What are they? What do they want?"

wn into "They want creatures. They thrive off the pain. I was sent to stop them
I was too weak. This... carnival pops up twice a year, and so
is noseparanormals go missing. Eventually, when you die, they sell your
part ofhell."

ears." "I'm only a vampire," I whisper. "I can't offer them much."

inst the His chains rattle, and soon, he is in front of me, his eyes matching the
of his skin. He looks desperate and panicked, and his arms are stretched
s loud, behind him as he tries to reach me. "Your tears are more valuable than
floor assoul, Finnick. They will keep you here forever if you don't go."

My heart slams in my chest at the thought. "And you? What do they
ing myfrom you?"

"They already took them," he mumbles, scooting back until he has
slack again. He turns, reaching for his shoulders, and there, I see two
all wall, dried with blood, but the bones are showing, and it looks painful. "Th
ing mymy wings."

"Oh my god. What did they do with them?" I grip the bars, for
' about the silver, and the sizzle in my palm has me yanking my hand
he wall "Can we get them back?"

in what “They hang them next to me so everyone can see them flap and try
but heWhen I’m close to them, they want to return.” He lifts his eyes to mine
tear drips down his face. “I’m only half angel, but do you know how
s of hishurts to feel them so close? My bones twitch with the need for them.”
lor that “Half... angel,” I say with awe.

s blend “My other half is a vampire.”

up and “But you can only be one or the other, never both.”

“Not when you’re an angel. Angel blood is very powerful, Finnick
leans against the wall and clicks his tongue as a man would if he is
em, but“You’ll die here, Finnick.”

o many “We aren’t going to die. My family will come looking for me. And
soul toget your wings back, Raladrial. I swear it.”

“If your friends enter this carnival, they will be dead too.”

A whipping sounds down the hall, the snap of leather popping in
ie colorfollowed by a loud scream that draws my vampire to the surface.

retched “What the hell is that?”

an your “A banshee,” the angel replies. “The wailing woman calls
paranormals to inform us of danger, if she needs help, or even i
y wantmourning. So many will come here to answer her call.”

Dread holds me in place. “And that’s how they will get more paran
enoughhere. To trap them.”

vounds, Another murderous scream echoes, pouring into my soul, a
ey tookanimalistic roar tears out of me. All I want to do is help her.

“The feeling will fade when you realize there is no saving her.”

rgetting The drag of the cell door on the other side of me echoes as it open
l away.in there, Elf.” The hooves pounding on the floor tell me the demon i

“And you can’t transport. These bars are warded against the use of ma

to fly. An elf?

and a “What the hell is this place?”

much it Reuel. Even when he tries to sound angry, he’s fucking calm.

I turn around just in time to see him grip the bars, and instead of looking at him, as they do me, they bring him pain. He shouts in agony before falling to the ground.

“Reuel?” I slide across the floor to the other side of the cell. “Are you okay?”

thirsty. He groans, and his pointed ear is bleeding from a ripped lobe.

“Finnick?” He lifts his head, and those pearly irises sear me through the darkness. “Is anyone else with you?”

He nods. “Aziel and Alastair.”

“We’re across from you,” Aziel snarls.

the air “Alastair?”

“He’s knocked out,” Aziel answers, a grim hue to the words.

“Does anyone else know you’re here? There are other paranormals in the building. We have to get out of here and save them.”

if she’s “Finnick, we were looking for you. No one else is coming,” Reuel reaches toward his ear and hissing. “They don’t know this is here.”

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and an Not like my old master did.

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Someone will come. Someone will save us. Master Monreaux won’t let anything happen to his coven.

Not like my old master did.



CHAPTER
SIX
RALADRIEL

I'm dragged away from my new friend, stumbling down the hall Azazel, the goat-like demon tugging me toward my fate.

I look left and right, passing different creatures, a few I even helped in my thousand-year existence.

I pass a harpy; her wings are clipped and bleeding, so she can't fly. There's a mermaid in the next cell, her water filthy and her scales peeling. It looks so painful. Then in the last corner, there's a minotaur; its gorgeous ivory horns have been cut to the skull, probably sold to an underground dealer who will sell them for a pretty penny.

"Do you know how amazing it is that a demon like me was able to help you?" Azazel slams me against the wall. The bones that are usually attached to my wings rub against the hard concrete, and I cry out from the pain as my wounds open up again, and the blood begins to drip. "I've been hunting for so long, Raladriel," he whispers, his nostrils flaring when he sees my blood.

His forked tongue flicks out, slithering down my back to lick the
from my shoulders. Flames burn bright in his eyes, and his skin glimm
mine for a moment before fading to its natural color.

Angel blood gives strength and lust, but enough of it, and he can d
of my immortality, taking it for himself.

“I know you have,” I say gently, not wanting to give him the satisf
seeing me angry. He will see me tired, sad, and defeated, but he will
me rise in anger.

Azazel thrives off anger, typical since he is someone who used to w
Lucifer, but even Lucifer cast him out of Hell because he wouldn’t fol
rules. Azazel is greedy, power-hungry, and always wants more,
doesn’t care who he has to kill or torture.

The mirror image of his human form glimmers in front of me, the
uses to trick the humans that pay to get into the fair to see the freak
Carnival of Creeps.

His demon form vanishes, and a deceiving smile tilts his lips. “A
ready to put on a show, Raladriel? Your wings have missed you.”

And I have missed them, but I won’t ever admit that out loud.

He pushes me toward where the flap separates us freaks from the c
can hear them cheer and clap, wanting more of the magical experier
gets at a carnival. I don’t blame the humans. They are under the imp
that this is just a show. That’s what’s so beautiful about humans. The
who have outgrown the childish fantasies still come to carnivals and p
in. The non-fictional aspect of what they see to the back of their minds, war
ing you believe that what they are experiencing is real.

Children are so lovely; they always see what is real because they
been jaded by the world yet. Their hearts are pure, and their souls ar

are blood and gentle. They haven't been taught not to believe in magic because there are like magic all around them.

Children aren't allowed at this carnival.

rain me Too many crying children would be bad for business.

Not even Azazel can stop children from seeing the truth here. A collection of clueless humans, through no fault of their own, are paying for our crimes. When Halloween is over, and the carnival disappears, those here will come with us. We will go to hell. Then next year, the same cruel cycle will start all over again.

low the The tent's flap lifts, and I'm shoved forward, stumbling until I fall on my hands and knees.

My breath catches when my shoulders begin to twitch. I don't want to be thrown into a pile and see my wings. A piece of me dies every time.

s at the "Ladies and Gentlemen! Are you ready to see one of the world's most terrifying creatures?"

Are you No one can see me yet as I'm ripped from the ground and tossed into the air. Hooks the size of my hands are forced through the holes protruding on my shoulders, and I muffle a scream, the pain sending me to the ground. I struggle through my veins and the little power I have left out.

nce one If I did and sent my angel light from my body, everyone would die. My expression would turn to ash, as if they never existed, and I can't do that to innocent people in good conscience.

ush the Even if it means my choice ends up killing me.

ating to I'm suspended in the air, the hard cranks of the machinery next to me begin to turn together as the wendigos crank the lever, sending me higher into the air. I'm in the center of the tent. Their skinny frames with long skeletal faces stare at me as if I'm the most interesting thing they've ever seen. Their wolverine-like teeth chatter together as they speak to each other.

they see language only they understand. It's clicks and grunts, nothing about the language, but I do not believe they are bad creatures.

Isn't that something?

I've had my wings cut off my body. I've witnessed other creatures; these abused by these... evil things, yet I believe not all creatures are bad. demise. No.

lie, and Creatures are like humans. No one is inherently bad. Creatures do all over they are taught, do what they must do to survive.

The Carnival of Creeps is an environment some of these creatures I to my only ever known. It's a sick, twisted little family— but it's nevertheless.

to look How beautifully broken is that?

The wendigos stop cranking the lever, and I'm hanging in the air, not as rare twitching and flexing as my wings get closer.

The black sheet is unveiled in front of me, dropping to the sandy ground behind and I'm left looking at the fascinated expressions staring back at me. From bones of all shapes, sizes, and color point and whisper as they stare at me.

ing fire Azazel struts down below, his uniform as fake as the magic he uses human form. His pants are white, his coat is red, and like a magician, he. They tail flapping in the back. His dark hair is greased back, looking like he innocent showered in days.

Sinister, wicked, and evil.

I've never met a soul that isn't worth saving, but his soul is gone. He grind isn't a thread of it left, and I feel bad for him, knowing he's living a height empty life. I should hate him for what he has done to me.

I rise. I do not.

er in a His soul is lost.

peeling How can I hate a man who is lost?

“An angel right before your eyes! Look at his golden skin.” The spotlight shines on me, and I wince at how bright it is. It burns.

ures get They probably think I’m painted in gold, but my skin is my halo, vampire inside is my horns.

“Don’t believe me yet?” his voice darkens, and they spin me around to show the crowd my back.

My back muscles constrict, and the bones begin to ache as my wings are lowered beside me. I look at them longingly; white feathers are spread, showing the impressive wingspan.

“Watch as the wings long for their master,” Azazel announces into the microphone, and my wings begin to flap, sending a strong breeze through the crowd.

My breath hitches as I see them struggling, flapping in agony to get to the ground, but they are also trapped.

Humans All I can do is grit through the pain.

Even if tears do fall along the way.

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. There

such an

How can I hate a man who is lost?

“An angel right before your eyes! Look at his golden skin.” The large spotlight shines on me, and I wince at how bright it is. It burns.

They probably think I’m painted in gold, but my skin is my halo, and the vampire inside is my horns.

“Don’t believe me yet?” his voice darkens, and they spin me around to show the crowd my back.

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Even if tears do fall along the way.



CHAPTER
SEVEN
ALASTAIR

“Interesting little setup they have going on here. It’s a little too g
my taste, but to each their own, I suppose,” I say, standing in the muc
they tossed me in. They could clean. It wouldn’t hurt them. I have sor
gooey on the bottom of my shoe, making me cringe.

“Really? That’s what you have to say?” Aziel gripes from the oth
“An interesting little setup? We are in a paranormal jail. When th
angel comes back, who knows whom he will take next to get the c
rocks off.”

“It won’t be you,” a soft voice followed by a splash of water answe
the other side of Aziel. “You’re too new. He will train you first.”

Aziel drops to his knees and grips the bars, roaring so loud that th
of the cells vibrates. He rips his hands away, and smoke rises fr
cooked skin. “Silver,” he growls.

“You won’t be able to leave. Mine are laced with fresh water.
saltwater siren,” she answers, lying her arms across the silver basin s

She has tiny blue fins on her forearms and her skin, if I'm not mistaken, is a pale pink.

She's beautiful.

Her hair is bright blue and curly, and crabs crawl along her head as if they were a crown.

"So he uses you for your voice? To entrance the audience?"

She nods, lying her cheek on her arm. "If I don't, he threatens to take my voice away from me."

"Monster," Aziel grumbles. "I've known too many men like him who want to kill him."

"Good luck," she says. "He is a product of Hell. Only something that can defeat Azazel. I am sorry you and your friends are here. It will be over soon. I hear tomorrow is Halloween, and after that, the carnival disappears."

"And so do we," Finnick says from the other side of the room. "I'll do what Raladriel said."

"Raladriel is the angel he took, right? Can't he... I don't know, do some angelic magic and get us out of here."

"His magic lies in his wings, I think, and Azazel cut them off."

The siren gasps. "Oh, the pain he must be in. That would be like someone cutting off my tail."

"Poor guy," I say, running my fingers through my hair as I try to think of a way to get us out of here. "I mean, they have to have rides and stuff, right? Humans have to take a break from the show. We will get a chance to think of an escape."

"I don't know," the siren says sadly, her tail flapping in the basin that is so small for her. She must be so uncomfortable. "I've only got an hour between shows. It's a constant cycle to perform."

en, is a “Maven and Master Monreaux will come for us.”

“And they will be trapped here, you fool,” Aziel hisses at me, slapping his shoulder against the cell wall separating us, uncaring about the pain if they wound on his shoulder. “Maven is pregnant. Imagine what he would do here. We can’t let that happen.”

“I know, but they are our only chance.” I lean against the bars, and make my sporadic frequency rings. I cover my ears and swing my head, wailing at the top of my lungs from my eardrums pulsating. “Fuck! Make it stop. I can’t take it, and I stop!” I swing my head back and forth, and Aziel reaches through the bars, his skin red and burning as he grips my arm and bites through the pain. “Look at me. Look at me.” He grips my arm so much it hurts. “No one is overhappening. You’re okay. You’re fine. You’re with us, remember?” I clutch his arms, my talons lengthening and digging into his skin, and he stosses his head back but holds the pain inside.

I’m swaying, dizzy, but eventually, the frequency vanishes. “He knows how to use his bars with high-pitched frequencies of echolocation. How does he know I’m a vampire bat?”

“He knows everything.” The siren dips under the water and swims in someone in the basin, only able to swim in small circles.

“Get up!”

I lift my head and watch as the angel stumbles down the walkway here, drenched in sweat and tears on his face. Raladriel is tossed into his cell, and the chains magically wrap around his arms, the bracelets locking around his wrists.

“Are you okay?” Finnick asks Raladriel, which surprises me because he’s not between such an ass.

“Leave him be, vampire,” the man in charge spits.

Literally, I see his spit fly from his mouth.

Humming “You should be ashamed of yourself,” Reuel begins to say. “The burn would do this to another paranormal, you should be ashamed.”

Go to her “You think I care, little elf?” Azazel tilts his head left and right, smiling at Reuel. “You think I care about your feelings? How about you come out a loud, I’ll give the audience your ears.”

Looking at the He goes to unlock the cell door, and I reach through, tapping the goat on the shoulder. “Excuse me, but maybe pick on someone your size. Leave his ears out of it, yeah? What do you say? It’s been a long time.”

“We can start the torturing tomorrow.” I grab his attention, and he spins around slowly, his shiny black horns clinking against the floor, the small bush at the tip of his tail dragging across the wet floor.

Smoke drifts from his nostrils; he slips his nail into the lock and opens the door.

Without missing a second, I charge him, shifting into my bat. Quickly he bends down and rams his horn through my shoulder, then lifts me up around his feet.

“Alastair!” Azazel and Finnick call out my name.

I’m whipped from left to right, slung off his horn, slamming against the wall.

“Question me again, and I’ll make sure you never leave your back to me again. Now you’re useless to me. The only way that can heal is hellfire.”

“It was nice knowing you,” the ringmaster sings, whistling as he walks down the hall, opening another cell that contains the banshee.

I groan, holding my hand to my shoulder and then holding it above my face. “Well, that’s not good.” The blood is black and hot.

“A wound from Azazel is poisonous,” the siren informs.

I chuckle. “Yeah, I’ve gathered that.”

“You’re going to be fine, Alastair. You’re going to be just fine. V
tudyingget out of here.” Aziel is nice, but his attempt to make me feel better
it next?work.

Instead, I think about my life at home, my home before the Mon
demonwhere my kind flourished, and I was able to fly the skies and hunt v
ur ownfamily. “Rebellia,” I whisper my sister’s name as her face forms in t
ng day.me.

“He’s hallucinating. The poison is acting quickly. He might or
hoovesanother day,” the siren warns. “I’m so sorry for your friend.”

“My friend isn’t dead.”

I want to laugh at Aziel because death has to be kinder than this. I
ens thechance to be with Rebellia again.

And I won’t ever turn that down.

“Rebellia,” I whisper as my eyes close and fade into an old,
off mymemory.

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“A wound from Azazel is poisonous,” the siren informs.

I chuckle. “Yeah, I’ve gathered that.”

“You’re going to be fine, Alastair. You’re going to be just fine. We will get out of here.” Aziel is nice, but his attempt to make me feel better doesn’t work.

Instead, I think about my life at home, my home before the Monreauxs, where my kind flourished, and I was able to fly the skies and hunt with my family. “Rebellia,” I whisper my sister’s name as her face forms in front of me.

“He’s hallucinating. The poison is acting quickly. He might only live another day,” the siren warns. “I’m so sorry for your friend.”

“My friend isn’t dead.”

I want to laugh at Aziel because death has to be kinder than this. I have a chance to be with Rebellia again.

And I won’t ever turn that down.

“Rebellia,” I whisper as my eyes close and fade into an old, distant memory.



CHAPTER
EIGHT
AZAZEL

Azazel

I climb up the steps, closing the tent for the hour break we have decided to go see the fortune teller. I want to know if my future is even I've been working towards.

I want to rule this planet. I want more than to rule Heaven or Hell, the fucking world. I want the humans on their knees working for me, praising me, begging me to let them live. I want one sucking me off while I head off another.

I'll burn this planet and rebuild it from the ashes.

With my hoof, I kick an empty popcorn container. It rolls until it hits the wall of the wards the old hag put up so no one can sense we are here. It is hidden in plain sight. The skies rumble above us; the clouds roll in preparing for rain and thunder.

I hope so.

The rain will drown out the screams.

I snap my fingers, and my human form takes the place of my Hooves become feet, and the hair all over my body disappears. I human, the dumb creatures, and tilt my top hat to them.

“Are you having a good time?” I flip a gold coin in the air, and a man snatches it with his hand.

He is marked now. When he turns twenty-five, his soul will be mine

“The best! This carnival is great. We’re going on the He Rollercoaster next.”

“Ooo,” I say, trying to be spooky. “Be careful. I hear demons try to you and drag you into the hellfire. I’d hold on to your seats if I were warn them, being the good man I am because demons really do try to you from your seats.

ve, and My employees need to feed.

rything And what better way than to let humans have the time of their life being dragged to hell?

I want “Awesome! That sounds sick,” he says, high-fiving one of his friend they run in the direction of the rollercoaster.

leasing cut the “See you soon,” I say darkly, chewing on a harpy bone I kept a few ago.

uits one I head through the main tent; the empty benches have my palms sv for more money. The next act is a huge aquarium for the kraken shifte We are able to snag from the coast of Ireland. If he wants to keep his mating to he’ll do what I say when I say it.

omising I pull out a cigarette, the one humans made that I like, and light it, t long drag before blowing it out. The damn carousel song plays on repe it drives me mad, but humans like it because it keeps the aesthetic carnival.

demon. Like, I give a fuck.

pass a “Are we ready for our haunted house tonight?” I ask, Bones
shapeshifter who can take any form.

young “We are putting up the decorations now, Mr. Azazel. We will be ready
“You better be. Tonight will be a big night; if you want a bonus
have it done.”

llbound “Yes, sir,” he says, splashing real blood onto the side of the tent.
We have to make the Carnival of Creeps as realistic as possible.

snatch Blood.

you,” I Bones.

snatch Screams.

They all come together and form my favorite thing.

Death.

before Speaking of Death, he and I also have business to attend to. Not
knows that, but I want to make a deal with him. I can sidestep him and
ids, and one of his reapers whenever I drag someone down to hell.

He’s got to have questions. If he and I go into business together, in
years all the money we would make, all the souls we could take; we could be

Screams from the rollercoaster have me putting a pep in my step, and
weating pass one of the wendigos, I extinguish the cigarette onto his arm,
or I was makes him chirp or whatever the fuck he does.

entacle, I stop outside the fortune teller’s raggedy tent. Beads hang in front
opening, and as I step inside, it’s dark, smelling of burnt roses and oranges.

aking a She’s under my control too. She’ll give me what I want, or I’ll take
eat, and sight. I don’t have a problem carving her eyes out. It’s been a while since

of the grilled 20/20 with a side of blood. I love the ways the eyes pop in my
as I chew.

“Azazel, I’ve been expecting you. Take a seat, and please, drop your glamour. Whatever you want won’t work if other magic is involved.”

Katarina comes from the shadows, her long dark hair reminding me of a soul river in Hell. It’s so black that I can almost hear the souls calling from the strands. Her eyes are the color of an eclipse, the irises so dark I can’t see anything but them.

She’s beautiful in a way I don’t deserve to want.

But I do; I want her.

And I always get what I want.

Her lips purse as she sits down, gathering the hem of her long red dress. She tucks it to the side. Long crystals hang from leather straps around her neck.

Katarina gathers the long strands of her straight hair and places them on her right shoulder. “What can I help you with, Azazel?”
I drop my glamour as she instructed, letting my demon be set free to know my future.”

“I’ve already given your future.”

I snag her wrist between my fingers and squeeze, reminding her of a king and as I charge. “I don’t give a fuck what you’ve done already. Futures can be changed, which and I want to see mine, damn it. Do not...” I lean forward, then yank her closer until the tip of her soft nose brushes against mine. “Mmm,” I mutter, wanting to taste her sweet cherry mouth. “Do not test me,” I finally manage to say. “You’ll give me what I want. You’ll give me everything I want.” I rumble, licking my lips as my eyes drift to her breasts. They are pushed up by a corset, the swell the perfect size for my large palms.

She yanks her hand away from me, rubbing her irritated wrist, and says, “I will give you your fortune, but rest assured, you won’t be getting a

up yourself from me, *goat*.”

I lift my hand and let it fly, smacking her across her flawless cheek. “I want to know what you made me do.” I grip her chin, and she fights me, trying to pull herself out of my grasp.

In the dark, I like it when they fight.

My cock hardens, and my knot swells.

“I don’t want to hurt the prettiest face I’ve ever seen, but I will, Katarina. I’ll hurt you, and I won’t hate it because I love inflicting pain, but you are something that should not be ruined.” I brush my knuckles over the growing bruise on her cheek, but her eyes remain strong and resilient. “I’ll get what I want from you, Katarina. Maybe not today or tomorrow, but maybe you can look into our future and see what it holds after you lose me.”

She tugs her chin away from my grasp. “I need to prepare for the night.” “I want to know what you’re doing tonight. Am I doing this or not?” She reaches down and grabs the crystal ball, setting it in the middle of the table covered in pure gold leaf picked from the trees of her home planet.

“We are.” I lean back, placing my palms on the table. I watch the leaves change, glow as if they are kindling in a fire.

Slowly, the embers trace the veins of the leaves and make their way to my hand, Katarina. She places her fingertips at the table’s edge, the trace of magic finished soaking into her veins. The veins in her hands, arms, and neck illuminate. “I want,” her eyes turn from a sultry brown to a canvas white. Her hands clasp the crystal ball, rubbing it between her palms.

The smoke inside swirls and sparks.

“I scoff. When she speaks, her voice resonates, and it seeps into my blackened soul. “You are a powerful king, Azazel,” she begins. “Even if I can’t do anything to relax me.”

you've worked for has promise.”

“Look I smirk, knowing I'll get everything I want.

to jerk The crystal ball turns from a snowy white to a void of black. “But king has their downfall, and yours is coming. You will fail in all things you want. Something more powerful is coming; someone holding more secrets than you could ever possess will be your ruin.”

atarina. “What! Who?” I growl.

our face “I cannot see the person's face, but you will flee, and in time, you will never know that you have a new partner, someone who enjoys pain and suffering just as much as you do.”

“I will do. It will take time. He is in a coma right now, on an unknown location, but buried six feet under.”

look into “I'll have to start over?” I sneer at the question.

“You will start a war.”

taunted “Will I win?” I lean forward, waiting as seconds pass for her to answer.

abs her “That I cannot see.”

she leaves “Bullshit!” I roar, slamming my hand against the crystal ball, breaking my concentration. Her eyes return to their original shade, and the ball rolls across the floor before changing course to return to its master.

“You cannot be mad at me for giving you what you wanted, Azazel. I gave you exactly what you asked. Please, leave.”

my DNA “You better hope you're wrong. Your life depends on it.”

ate, and “I hope I'm wrong, too, because the world has no future as long as you exist,” she spits at me, and I fight the urge to hit her again.

No one dares to ever speak to me in that manner.

Futures aren't set in stone, and fortune tellers do not know all.

and heart I'll create my own future.

everything And if destruction follows, well, then I'll gladly leave a mess.

it every
ings you
strength

will find
ust like
planet,

ver.

ing her
s across

! I did

you are



CHAPTER
NINE
LEX

My lust is under control, and Maven is still sleeping. She has finger and bite marks all over her body. I love how they look. She's sex she's covered in my marks. I kiss her shoulder and get out of bed, stomach, and then focus on my coven.

Immediately, something is wrong.

I can't feel all of them.

I shrug on my shirt and pants, then swing the door open.

They must feel the urgency in the bond connection because those standing at the bottom of the staircase. Luca is concerned, Greyson grim frown on his face, and Rarity is chewing her nails.

I study them, immediately noticing who is missing.

"Where is Finnick, Reuel, Alastair, and Aziel?" My feet pound against steps as I hurry down them.

"We don't know," Anwyll says. "We knew we couldn't bother you-

“Of course, you should have. If my coven members are missing, I be informed.”

“You would have killed us if we interrupted you, Master. Your n your mate is all that matters,” Luna explains, and I sigh, pinching the of my nose as I take a deep breath.

“I’m not going to apologize for what happened between my beloved me. What happened? Tell me everything. Now.”

No one speaks.

“I said now!” I roar so loud that my eyes shift to bright red, showing my patience is wearing thin.

Luca steps forward and clears his throat. “Finnick and Reuel got a little spat because Finnick was being...”

bruises
y when
rub her
“Finnick,” Luna finishes his sentence.

“Okay, so he was being an ass. What next?”

“Reuel transported him into the pumpkin patch.”

“We don’t have a pumpkin patch,” I say, my nerves on fire at this point.

“We do. It replaced the sunflowers... when... you know...” Luca raises his brows while he pats the top of Whiskey’s head.

left are
n has a
“She’s having issues controlling her powers right now with the tv the way.”

“We love the pumpkins!” Alaric rushes to say.

“Aye, we do,” Drayce confirms.

inst the
“Anyway, Reuel transported him into the field, and Finnick ran away the brat he is, so Reuel went after him.”

—”
“Azriel and Alastair followed, but they haven’t been seen since yesterday Anwyll explains, dropping to one knee as he speaks to me.

Greyson helps him up before I can say anything.

need to I run a hand over my face and focus on their bonds. I try to commu
but I feel nothing. “Something is wrong. I can’t feel a damn thing. I ca
eed forth their presence in the bond; I can’t communicate with them.”

bridge “Lex?” Maven’s sleepy voice comes from upstairs.

She’s dressed in those maternity leggings I love so much
red and comfortable shirt, her stomach protruding as she wobbles down the
blur to her side, helping her, so she doesn’t risk falling. I don’t know v
do if something happened to her under my watch.

ing them “What’s wrong?”

“Reuel, Finnick, Aziel, and Alastair are missing. I can’t feel them
t into abond.”

“Since when?” she gasps in horror.

“Yesterday.”

Maven’s color vanishes from her face. “Oh my God, while we—”

“Stop. No. Nothing could be done about that. I would have killed
oint. who tried to stop us.” I hold her face in my hands and kiss her cheek
wiggles we have to find them. It will be dark in five minutes. We will go look
as we can.”

wins on “I can go now. I’m the only one who can go into daylight,” Anwyl
bravely. Since the coven decided to swear their oath to me, their ab
walk in the sun has to be forfeited because of the werewolf bite I r
many years ago. It took away my ability to walk in the sun and any v
ay like who joins my coven.

The only cure is in the hands of a man I forced into a coma.
erday,” And now, we are creatures of the night, and the only protection v
are the werewolves. Ironic, isn’t it?

“I appreciate that, but I can’t have you go alone in case you go miss:

unicate, We will all go together.”

in’t feel “I can try a locator spell?” Maven suggests. “I’d need something p
with their DNA, hair, a toothbrush, something important.”

“I’ll get it for my brother.” Anwyll climbs up the stairs to sea
and abrother’s room.

steps. I “I’ll grab Reuel’s toothbrush,” Luna explains, following Anwyll.

what I’d “I’ll look in Alastair’s room.” Alaric is gone in a blur.

No one speaks up about Finnick because no one knows him. He
allow anyone to get to know him.

1 in the “I’ll get something from Finnick’s room,” Gullivere offers by rais
hand. “He isn’t that bad, guys. He has a past like all of us. Maybe be
to him even when he is at his worst because maybe, he has never expe
kindness before.” Gullivere climbs up the steps and shakes his h
disappointment.

anyone “Dottie, I’ll need you to help me hone my power. It’s everywher
s. “Butnow.”

as soon “It’s what I’m here for, babe,” Dottie winks, staring up at her c
when it emerges. It must have heard Maven needed her. “I’m dying t
l offerswhat you are,” Dottie whispers, almost sounding sad, and her c
ility toengulfs her in a hug, her eyes glowing a neon yellow as electricity
eceivedthrough her body.

vampire “Help me to my spell room,” Maven holds out her hand to me, and
in mine, bringing it to my lips to kiss.

“As you wish, Beloved.” Snagging her in my arms and with a b
ve havespeed, I have her in the room she’s made her own to practice her magic

The walls are a dark deep earthy green, the color of moss after a s
ing too.rain, with bushy, overgrown ferns in every corner and a fountain in a

so she can draw energy from them since she's an elemental witch. Personal watching her practice. She's amazing in my eyes, and even though she her powers are on the fritz, I think they are more powerful than ever. rich hisnow, and I have a feeling we will need them.

Sage hangs from the ceiling, and an assortment of herbs in glass jars her desk. The desk I made with scraps from the house as we renov carved our mating mark on the very front, the W in front of the M, e won't vines and roses wrapped around the letters.

"I need a map of Salem."

sing his "I have one in the library. I'll be right back," I say, kissing Maven kindercheek, then run to the library next and think about where the hell I p rience dmap. I remembered years ago, we had borders around the property, read in marked them so no one could pass.

I rummage through a few nightstands and come up with nothing, t re right about where the hell I put it. It's old, made of animal skin, telling me to buy a new one. I slam my fist against the wall, and a book falls fr eatures shelf to the right.

o know That's when I see the folded paper against the back of the shelf. creature through the hole and pull it free, carefully folding it open to see the r pulses father's father had.

The animal skin is aged and yellow, but the black script of the ink I take it bold.

"Everything okay?" Luca asks me, poking his head into the room. ourst of ready."

3. "Yeah, I just got caught up in looking at this old thing. Let's go." I summer patter across the floor, and I have to turn my upper body to walk thro mother,

A small crowd gathered in her spell room. “Here you go, Beloved.” I carefully think lie the centuries-old map down.

Her right Dottie begins to light four candles since my beloved can’t seem to fire right now and places each candle at each corner of the map.

She sits on “Give me all the personal belongings.”

Wanted. I “I have Reuel’s toothbrush,” Luna says, handing it over, and Maverick and I place it on the edge of the map.

“I took one of the pictures from Finnick’s vanity. I’m not sure what it is but it looks important,” Gullivere gives Maven the small black and white photo of a small boy who can’t be older than seven, maybe eight years old. She places it on the right side of the map.

and we “Alastair’s hair from his comb? It’s the only thing I could find,” she says.

Thinking “It’s fine. A link is a link. That’s all I need.” Maven sets the wad of hair on the top.

From the “And for Aziel?”

Anwyll hands over a leather necklace with a claw hanging from it. “That was mine.”

nap my “I need it to be his—”

Anwyll stops her before she can finish. “ – It was the first baby claw I had because I shifted into my werewolf form for the first time, and Aziel was very proud of me. He wore this around his neck until, well...” he places the claw into Maven’s palm. “Aziel taught me how to change into my werewolf form.”

My feet “I see,” Maven says, cupping the side of Anwyll’s face. “We will get through the back.”

Maven slices her palm, and my fangs descend when I smell her

carefully “Easy,” she smirks. “I need your blood too.” The red pools into her
small crimson puddle that has saliva pooling in my mouth.

conjure My eyes flame to red, and our eyes meet, her heartbeat increases, pe
beneath her breast, and I’m taken back to the last few days when I
directly from her heart. It takes so much trust, and that alone has me v
1 place to lie her down on this fucking desk and make her take every fucking
my come.

10 it is, What I’d give to breed her all over again.

1 white I bite into my hand, and her lust permeates the air. I step closer
old. holding my fist tight above her palm, watching my blood drip into her
whisper, “I’ll let you sink your tiny fangs into me later, Beloved. You
’ Alarichungry.”

“Famished,” she winks, then with her free hand, she brings my palm
hair at mouth and licks it clean.

I can’t hide the growl that escapes me. It’s fucking erotic seeing her
my blood.

t. “This “Jesus, I can’t believe we get this for free,” Luca mumbles, which
taking a step away from Maven.

I slap Luca on the back of the head, and he snickers.

v I shed “Okay. Okay, I can do this,” Maven whispers to herself, and Dotti
iel was Maven’s arm, so they are connected.

ices the The lights dim in the house, and everyone turns their heads, feel
erewolf buzz of magic.

Dottie’s creature grows, encompassing both of them, and lightning
get him outside the window. We all walk around the desk to have a front-row
what is happening.

blood. Dottie’s eyes are golden, electric currents pulsing in her irises, and

palm, atakes a step forward.

“Don’t break their connection,” I warn, tugging him back.

ounding “Sorry. She’s so fucking amazing,” he says.

’ve fed I look at my mate and nod, “She is.” But I know he is talking about

wanting “Flame to flame. Water to water. Earth to Earth...” Maven begi
drop ofwater droplets from the fountain float into the air, traveling to her palm

soil from the ferns does the exact same. The flames grow higher, t
tall, and Luna takes a step away from the chaos as it brews.

to her, “Flame to flame. Water to water. Earth to Earth. Blood to blood. G
s, and Ito the lost, and let us bring them home. Use this blood to find our
ou lookMaven’s eyes open, and her greens are glowing brightly. The bloo
from her palm, and the fire merges with the red, searing the paper as t
n to herprogresses.

Once the last drop of blood leaves her palm, the candles extingui
er drinkthe smoke billows from the wick. The wax drips from the black cand
pooling in the holder.

has me Dottie breaks the connection, and Maven sways.

I’m at her side in a second. “Beloved,” I shout with worry, hold
close. “Someone get a chair.”

ie grips “I’m fine,” she sighs. “I’m tired. That’s all.”

Greyson slides a chair over, and I tuck it under her so she can sit dov
ing the “Are you okay?” I push her hair behind her ear, dragging my finge
her jaw. I need to touch her. I need to make sure she’s okay. “Are you
; cracksI take her palm in my hand and breathe easier when I see the cut has
seat to “Is it the babies?” I palm her belly next, hanging my head in relief
hear their heartbeats.

Drayce They are okay.

“Lex, I’m fine. It took a lot of energy. But I’m okay. Dottie helped channel what I needed to. Thank you, Dottie.”

“Always.” Dottie squeezes her hand.

Dottie. “You are so intriguing. I’m obsessed.” Drayce places his hands on her shoulders, and Dottie slaps it away.

Drayce. “Doesn’t give you the right to touch me.”

Dottie. Drayce grins and bites his lip, closing his eyes as he reels himself back.

“You’re right; apologies, my lady,” he says.

Dottie. “I am not your lady.”

Drayce. “Not yet,” Drayce says with confidence, and it has Dottie blushing.

Dottie. “Help me up. I need to read the map.”

Drayce. I grab her hands and lift her to her feet, wrapping my hand around her torso so I can take most of her weight. She studies the map, and I wish she would just tell me what she needs. She traces the burnt blood to each corner and then follows the line to a certain point.

“That can’t be right,” she mutters, her brows furrowing. “They are not my property according to this.”

Dottie. “That’s impossible, Maven. I can’t feel them.”

Drayce. “Spells don’t lie. The only thing I can think of is that they are protected by a ward, but the only way to know is to go and see what’s going on.”

Dottie. I shake my head at that suggestion. “No. Fuck no. Absolutely not.”

Drayce. “Lex—”

Dottie. “—You’re pregnant, Maven.”

Drayce. She gasps dramatically, hand to her chest. “I am?” She looks down at her belly. “When I look at that. I had no idea. Thank you for informing me.”

Dottie. “Beloved, that’s not what I meant. I can’t put you and my children at risk.”

Drayce. “What other ideas do you have? I’ll be damned if I let you go by yourself.”

ped me “You’re going to have to because you aren’t going.”

“Yes. I. Am!” She slams her fist against the table, and the candle again, flames licking the ceiling and strong gusts of wind circling around her room. Thunder rolls outside, and rain batters the roof.

“You’ve pissed off a witch,” Luca whispers into my ear. “You’re a Nephew.”

self in. “Beloved.”

She marches out of the room, slamming the door in my face with a violent motion of her hand. I grip the handle and hiss when my palm burns. “She laced silver.”

“You can’t tell Maven what she can and can’t do. She’s the Covenant leader. If there’s one person who has the ability to bring our friends home, it’s her. Watch as Dottie opens the door without flinching because silver doesn’t affect her. I talk to her without demanding anything.”

Whiskey barks at me from where he is lying, and his paws move as if he’s on the trying to stop me from going to Maven, but he won’t get up.

My beloved is fierce, strong, and resilient, but I have a fear of losing my family again, and it’s rooted in my heart.

ected by

“Well,

at risk.”

yourself.”

“You’re going to have to because you aren’t going.”

“Yes. I. Am!” She slams her fist against the table, and the candles ignite again, flames licking the ceiling and strong gusts of wind circling around the room. Thunder rolls outside, and rain batters the roof.

“You’ve pissed off a witch,” Luca whispers into my ear. “You’re an idiot, Nephew.”

“Beloved.”

She marches out of the room, slamming the door in my face with a wave of her hand. I grip the handle and hiss when my palm burns. “She laced it with silver.”

“You can’t tell Maven what she can and can’t do. She’s the Coven Witch. If there’s one person who has the ability to bring our friends home, it’s her.” Dottie opens the door without flinching because silver doesn’t affect her. “Go talk to her without demanding anything.”

Whiskey barks at me from where he is lying, and his paws move as if he is trying to stop me from going to Maven, but he won’t get up.

My beloved is fierce, strong, and resilient, but I have a fear of losing my family again, and it’s rooted in my heart.



CHAPTER
TEN
MAVEN

I take a deep breath when I step outside as the babies kick and flip stomach. The rain eases, and the leaves stop rustling as I calm down. stand it when he does that. I mean, I love it sometimes, but this is not those times.

I walk down the stairs, holding my stomach as I wobble and attempt trip. Not being able to see my feet sucks at a time like this. I'm something bad is happening. I can feel it, but I can't go in alone, and not even paranormals can stop whatever is happening to them.

I stop in the middle of the yard to take a break from walking and c around these pumpkins of my own. The grass is wet, reflecting the s to the side of the trees is a rainbow, promising beauty and hope, but last thing I feel.

“Beloved.”

My chin wobbles when I hear his voice.

“I’m sorry.” He wraps his arms around me, and I sink into his embrace, leaning my head against his shoulder.

“I am too. I love you. I’m so sorry. I’m worried about them too, can’t have them be left without some type of power—”

Screams in the distance cut me off, and I tense in Lex’s arms.

The front door opens, and the rest of the coven spills outside. “What the hell was that?” Greyson asks, pounding down the steps.

“I don’t know,” Lex says, taking my hand as he strolls across the side of the house so he can see the road.

Everyone stands behind us, and Lex searches the field. “Maybe nothing. Anwyll, do you smell anything?”

Anwyll inhales a long deep breath and shakes his head. “Just pumpkins.”

“Well, let’s go inside and form a plan—”

The screams sound again, echoing through the air.

“Those are people screaming, Lex. Oh my God! I can’t tell where they’re coming from.”

The grumble of motorcycles sounds, but the murderous, painful screams are louder. Chills run over every inch of my body as they get closer. The pitch of the cries for help varies in depth, height, and range. Some are low, a baritone of sadness, while others are high, trying to speak through pain.

“Did you see that?” Zaffre points to the road, squinting his eyes. “I just saw—”

A group of motorcycles appears before disappearing again.

“Who the hell are they?” Luca asks the question we are all wondering.

The motorcycle gang reappears, a figment of smoke and illusion.

nbrace, can't tell if I'm dreaming or witnessing them.

“Oh, shit, they just turned down the driveway.” Greyson uses his voice to get ahead of us, and as we walk across the yard and to the driveway, the unbearable sound of screams gets louder. My ears begin to ring. Whiskey howls on the front porch from where he lies on the bench. As we wait in the driveway, the bikes vanish and reappear at intervals, and the closer they become, the more I realize how oversized they are.

The bikes are as tall as me, and the... things riding them are bigger than any creature I've ever seen.

When they come to a stop, there are ten of them, and that's when I get the good look at their bikes. They are made of bone and metal of some sort. One gets off his bike, and on his leather vest is a patch that says, President. He looks human enough, but I know better. His face is too angular, I can almost see something beneath the skin, something... sinister.

Large wings spread from the man's back, and we all take a step back. Lex takes a protective step in front of me. The wings are black leather-filled, the tips have long claws, while the bones growing through the wing are almost seem indestructible.

“Where is Maven Wildes?” The man's voice is a deep rasp as if he has been on the road for a long time, followed by shots of whiskey.

“Who is asking? And why are you on my property?” Lex questions, protecting me at all costs.

Out of the corner of my eye, I see Alaric walk up to the stranger's back, reach to touch it, but the man grips his wrist just in time. “I wouldn't touch if I were you,” he warns.

“Apologies. Never touch a man's bike. I forgot for a moment.”

“You don’t want to touch these bikes, Alaric. They are made of h
vampire and you will turn to ash on the spot, then your soul will belong to r
iveway, explains.

ng, and Alaric takes a comical giant step back. “Say no more, my guy.
more.”

ifferent “Is that why your bikes scream?” I step around Lex and show myself
ed they “Ms. Wildes?”

“Mrs. Monreaux,” Lex corrects him, and I spin around, slapping
er than shoulder to shut him up.

“I’m Maven Wildes.” I hold my stomach protectively, and his eyes
I get it. “Don’t even think about coming near me.” A strike of lightning lan
t. Only to him.

lent. He smirks. “I am not going to hurt you. We are Hell’s Har
r, and I Lucifer’s elite paranormal... outlaws.”

One of the men chuckles behind him.

k while “You’re exactly who we are looking for.”

ier, and “And I have a feeling saying that you’re outlaws is a nice way of
re thick what you are. Why do your bikes scream?” I ask again.

“Because we don’t run off fuel, little lady,” one of the men explain
smokes run off the bounties we kill. The screams are their eternal entrapment i

He pats the side of his bike.

estions, “Shit,” Luca coughs. “So, you’re bounty hunters?”

“Bounty hunters, cops, saviors, whatever needs to be done, we do
like and Abaddon.” He holds out his hand for me to take. “Behind me are Deat
do that Famine, Morgiz, Bael—”

“Wait, wait, wait. Death, War, and Famine, like the Four Horsemen’

“We won’t talk about our brother, but yes.” According to his pat

helliron, War that speaks.

ne,” he “Why are you here?”

“We have been hunting Azazel for quite some time. He’s a dem
Say noused to work for Lucifer before he went rogue. He moonlights at a c
stealing paranormals and using them to make money. A few have di
f. we are here to bring him back to Hell where he belongs.”

“He isn’t here,” I say defensively.

ing his “He is close. I feel him. And my hellfire doesn’t lead me in the
direction. He is here on your property. Let me guess; you can’t fe
drop to coven members anymore? Correct? The bond is cut.” Abaddon’s ste
ids next eyes pause on a few coven members before returning to me. “We do
many opportunities. Azazel only pops up his damn carnival for two
vesters, year, on Halloween. We’ve hunted him for ages. This is our chance,
can’t do it alone. We need you.”

“She’s pregnant.” Lex stands next to me, defiant once again, but
agree with him this time. These guys are demons. Demons can’t be
putting right?

“I see that, but that doesn’t mean she can’t help us. She’s the st
is. “We witch in existence. We need her.”

n hell.” “But you’re demons. I mean, you have Death, War, and Famine. Is
enough?” I feel like I sound pretty reasonable.

“Demons aren’t affected by other demons. Yes, we are stronger, so
it. I’m more powerful in that sense, but we need magic. Plus, he has a hag v
h, War, for him, creating a ward so the carnival is hidden and the illusion th
real carnival numbs the mind. No one will be able to see the hag. S
?” cloak herself as someone else.”

ch, it’s “If you know all of this, then why haven’t you been able to do a

about it?” Lex stands in front of me again. “You have all this information that even seem to stop him? Are you out of your mind?” he roars so loud that my eardrums shake.

ed, and His talons have lengthened, and his fangs are bared.

“Because one of us got captured on purpose. We were able to get inside details.”

wrong “Who was it? Are they okay?”

el your “You’re talking about our brother Conquest. And no, he isn’t okay. He died, but he is being reborn in Hell right now. It will take a few days, but we have to take over his tasks.”

days a “How was he able to get the information to you?”

but we “We’re the Four Horsemen, duh.” Death stares at Lex as if he’s stupid.

“Right.” Lex sounds exasperated. “I don’t know.”

I might “I want to do it. They need us, and honestly, we don’t have a plan. It’s good that they are here. We need all the help we can get if we want to get our friends back.”

rongest “If anything happens to my Beloved, I’m going to send you to Heaven. I hope you turn to fucking dust like hell.”

n’t that Abaddon lifts a ridged brow but concedes. “That’s fair. Who’s staying? Who’s going? It isn’t worth the risk of having everyone go. Some should stay just in case.”

vorking Just in case.

at it’s a I don’t like the sound of that.

he will “Me, Maven, Luna, Dottie, and Greyson. Everyone else stays.” Alaric exclaims.

nything “Why, Luna?” Alaric asks, and Luna gives him a dirty look with no

ion andeyes. “I’m just wondering.”

s, can’t “Because she can heal, and with Maven, if anyone is hurt, they will
oud myto help with their combined strengths. Apologize to Luna, Alaric. Th
dumb of you.”

Alaric bows his head to Lex and turns to Luna, taking her hand in
: all thekissing it. “Apologies, Luna. I meant no offense, but I see the error
ways now.”

“It’s fine.” She gently peels her hand away. “If you had gone with
ay. Hewould have died anyway.”

r years, Alaric coughs, wide-eyed from the shock, and the demons laugh,
bellow that echoes through the air.

“Why is it that you hide?” Luna walks up to one, tilting her head
id. studies him.

According to his patch, she’s talking to War.
an. It’s “I’m sorry? Little Fae, I don’t think I understand you.” He says, fur
ant ourhis brows at his brothers.

“Why do you hide your form when it’s so much stronger than the c
ven andpretend to have?”

“You can see him?” Abaddon snips, but it’s more in shock.

ng, and “I can see him. Can’t everyone else?”

ld stay, I shake my head along with all the other coven members.

“Abaddon, I can’t tell in this form. I need to—”

“No,” Abaddon cuts him off. “We have a mission first. After that,
revisit this. No distractions. Do you understand me?”

,” Lex “Yes, Prez. I understand.” But War doesn’t take his eyes off Luna,
can’t seem to take her eyes off him.

urrowed “Whoever is going, follow me. I’ll be able to track him because I c

Azazel. The closer we get, the stronger the connection will become.”
be able “Wait, didn’t you say we would be confused at the border? Because
hat wasHag?” I ask as he takes a step forward toward the pumpkin patch.

He turns to look over his shoulder and the smile gracing his face is :
his andbut sinister. “I did say that, didn’t I?”

of my

us, you

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one you

we will

and she

can feel

Azazel. The closer we get, the stronger the connection will become.”

“Wait, didn’t you say we would be confused at the border? Because of the Hag?” I ask as he takes a step forward toward the pumpkin patch.

He turns to look over his shoulder and the smile gracing his face is nothing but sinister. “I did say that, didn’t I?”



CHAPTER
ELEVEN
ABADDON

I'm a demon for a reason, and there are parts of me that are deceitful. Deceit when the end result means I have good intentions?

With my helliron dagger I keep in my waistband, I slit my palm open and black blood oozes from the wound. Vanishing into smoke, I'm behind her and reappear, placing my hand over her mouth, so my blood drips down her throat.

Her mate's eyes are red, and he launches himself at me, but I'm gone again, forcing my blood down the throats of the others coming on their journey.

When I reappear, I wipe my hand on my pants, and Maven's vampire picks me up and slams me against the ground. Talons are wrapped around my throat, and his fangs are lengthened. Not many creatures can overcome a demon, but vampires have uncanny strength. Right now, he's strong because he is protecting his mate.

“Tell me why I shouldn’t kill you right now,” he hisses, pinching his fingers around my windpipe; my men inch forward to pull him off me, but I hold my hand to stop them. “What will your blood do to her? To my children?”

“Let’s go, and I’ll explain,” I say carefully. “Nothing bad will happen to your mate, vampire. I promise.”

“Promises from a demon,” he scoffs, his crimson eyes burning at me every second. “They mean nothing to me.”

I vanish into smoke, leaving him grabbing at nothing before he looks back at me before him. “I don’t care what they mean or don’t mean to you. No one would willingly take my blood, and my blood is the only thing that will ensure you are not hypnotized or put under a spell when we get to the ward. Your children will be safe.”

“And will your blood forever be with them?” Maven places her hand on her stomach, worry and guilt eating away at my demon’s soul.

Yes, demons have souls.

They might be small, shriveled, and dark, but they are there.

“Only in the best way. They will never be able to have their mind altered. I realize I should have asked, but your mate wouldn’t have allowed my blood inside you. I know how personal blood sharing is between mates, but this is the only way everyone is protected. And if anything ever happens to you, I’ll feel it if you’re in danger. I’ll be able to protect you.”

Maven’s mate tries to attack me again, but one of his members wraps his arms around him to stop him. “You son of a bitch! You’ll be able to protect your mate? At all times?”

“Yes, but I won’t be able to feel her pleasure if that’s what you’re thinking. You can calm down.”

“Let’s go get my family back. The sooner we do that, the sooner you can go home.”

s talons get out of here.”

hold up “We won’t be going anywhere. War and Luna have things to discuss?” might be stuck with Hell’s Harvesters as new coven members.”

ppen to He snarls, trying to break free, and I smirk, walking toward the patch. I like it here. It’s pretty. The acreage is large enough for Lucifer won’t mind if we work on top instead of below.

My demon is telling me to stay here anyway.

standing And if there’s one thing I always do, it’s listen to my demon.

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e Hag’s

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get out of here.”

“We won’t be going anywhere. War and Luna have things to discuss. You might be stuck with Hell’s Harvesters as new coven members.”

He snarls, trying to break free, and I smirk, walking toward the pumpkin patch. I like it here. It’s pretty. The acreage is large enough for us, and Lucifer won’t mind if we work on top instead of below.

My demon is telling me to stay here anyway.

And if there’s one thing I always do, it’s listen to my demon.



CHAPTER
TWELVE
LUNA

War's demon is interesting. I walk next to him as we slice through the pumpkin patch, unable to stop analyzing his features. He's a giant, so I have to tilt my head back to look at him, and he keeps staring at me, curious and unsure.

I don't know why.

His demon is unlike anything I've ever seen. Large wings protrude from his back, and his arms are muscular down to the long fingers with sharp claws. A third of his face is monstrous, his mouth stretching to his ears with sharp teeth, but one section of his face, one eye, is human. His eyes are the color of flames, and he has two swirling horns on top of his head.

He's fascinating.

But if there is one thing I will never do, it's begging for a man's attention, so I walk ahead, passing War to leave him with his brothers.

"What's going on with you and War?" Maven whispers as we walk through the thick vines and orange pumpkins.

“Nothing. He won’t talk to me, and I’m not the kind of woman around to beg for attention. I can see his form, and he’s bothered by think it’s because I’m Fae.”

“Can you see any of the other forms?” she asks, tripping over a vine before I can catch her, Master Monreaux wraps her in his arms, saving her from falling.

“Beloved, don’t scare me like that.”

Being Fae in a vampire coven isn’t what I thought it would be. I’m here. I enjoy this coven, and I don’t miss home at all. I was nothing on my planet, and my parents liked to remind me of that every day. I’m appreciated here, and I’ll happily do what I can to save my new family.

ugh the Abaddon stops in the middle of the woods, and I almost slam into him.

r one. I “Do you hear that?”

confused We remain silent, and Maven grins, her eyes drifting off into memory. “It’s carnival music.”

“We’re close.”

le from “You need to pretend you are captivated. The Hag will sense if you pointed This isn’t about going in and attacking. This is about rescuing who v and then we hunt for Azazel.”

irs with Everyone nods in agreement, and we follow the sound of the carnival music. It’s so loud it feels like we are standing in the middle of it.

are the The entrance to the carnival appears, the ticket booth red and white. An old woman sitting in it, but I remember Abaddon’s words. To everyone’s attention, she’s gorgeous and young. In reality, her nose is long and huge, almost like a hook, and her hair is a tattered mess. Her teeth are rotted, and there’s a large mole on the side of her face.

stomp “Welcome. Welcome,” her voice cracks as she speaks. “Nothing is

to stickseems at the Carnival of Creeps, and you've come on the best night
7 that. Ithe haunted house, my pretties." Her laugh cackles like a corrupted
and we step inside the barrier.

ne, and The carousel is old and worn down, but someone spelled it, and it pi
ing herlooks brand new. The horses on it are skeletal with black eyes and
hooves. Every time the carousel spins, the horses change positions.

To the left and right are two huge tents. They are red, yellow, bl
[like itwhite, dirty from years of abuse. People scream, enjoying the roller
specialand the Ferris wheel in front of us slowly spins.

ay. I'm In the middle of the entrance is a person chained, unable to w
without being pulled back. She has stripes of white in her hair, an
im. filthy. Probably hasn't had a proper bath in days. She almost looks
zombie, which is good for the customers.

an old Abaddon walks up to her, and she flinches, eyes wide and full of tea
trembles.

"We are here to rescue you," he whispers. "I can't right now. Y
aren't.have to wait but play your part here. We will be back."

we can, "H—how are you here?"

"Don't think about that, but your time here is up. I swear. I'll be bac
val until She nods, swallowing, and drags her feet across the dirt. Her toen
embedded with grime and soil. Her knees are scratched and bleeding
with anshe inhales a deep breath and screams at the top of her lungs, but it's
ne else,I've never heard before.

st like a It echoes a call of sorrow and pain.

a huge And we are here to answer.

"Why can't we help her now?" I question, hating to walk away from
what it "Because there's no safety for her now. We leave as a group," A

. Enjoywhispers as we pass a cart with black popcorn, and humans are gob
l witch,up.

The creature serving it is a gremlin, its eyes too large for his head,
robablysmiles, showing his pointed teeth.

l silver Something swipes at my legs, and I look down, another gremlin is
its head at me, and yellow eyes reflect the carnival lights.

ue, and As we walk, a screech causes me to jump, followed by clicking so
oasters,skull head rears back and clicks again.

“What the hell is that?” I whisper.

alk far “A wendigo, and by the smell of it, he’s just eaten someone,” W
d she’swalking next to me and taking my hand.

s like a Is he trying to protect me?

The wendigo falls to his hands and knees, beginning to crawl
ars. Sheground. One drops from the tree branch, its skull right in front of m
and screeches. I stumble backward, and War catches me.

ou will “Laugh it off, or they will be onto you.”

I force myself to chuckle even though every inch of my body is sw
My heart is pounding, but I'm calm when War takes my hand again.

k.” What does that mean?

ails are

g. Then

a sound

her.

baddon

whispers as we pass a cart with black popcorn, and humans are gobbling it up.

The creature serving it is a gremlin, its eyes too large for his head, and he smiles, showing his pointed teeth.

Something swipes at my legs, and I look down, another gremlin is tilting its head at me, and yellow eyes reflect the carnival lights.

As we walk, a screech causes me to jump, followed by clicking sounds. A skull head rears back and clicks again.

“What the hell is that?” I whisper.

“A wendigo, and by the smell of it, he’s just eaten someone,” War says, walking next to me and taking my hand.

Is he trying to protect me?

The wendigo falls to his hands and knees, beginning to crawl on the ground. One drops from the tree branch, its skull right in front of my face, and screeches. I stumble backward, and War catches me.

“Laugh it off, or they will be onto you.”

I force myself to chuckle even though every inch of my body is sweating. My heart is pounding, but I’m calm when War takes my hand again.

What does that mean?



CHAPTER
THIRTEEN
MAVEN

“What the hell is that?” I whisper, clutching onto Lex’s arm as something that reeks of death does a cartwheel in front of us.

“A ghoul. They eat their victims and take their form. Probably in humans,” Death explains.

“Come inside and get your fortune told. See the rewards of your life there is pain.” A fortune teller gestures her finger at me. Her gorgeous hair sways in the breeze. While her voice is confident and full of secrets, her eyes plead for help. “Come closer. Come inside,” she whispers, further into her tent.

I follow her, and the group is behind me, not wanting to leave me alone.

The beads I walk through drape over my shoulders and tickle down my back, adding to the shiver drifting down my spine.

I don’t even sit down before she grabs my hand, and her eyes turn desperate. “You are our hope. I’ve been waiting for years. You are the only one who can defeat him. Please, please, don’t go.” Her desperate cries cause sp

shoot from her crystal ball. “The witch who can save us all. Azazel but he is untouchable, but with your help and the demons at your side, he stopped.”

I try to pull away, but her hold tightens on me. “Your future is pro Your children will be safe, but only if Azazel is sent to purgatory. You have an hour, or it will be too late.” She sits in her chair, and a teardrop falls down her cheek. “If not, I ask for one of your demons to kill me because I can’t live like this anymore.”

“I won’t let it come to that,” I say confidently. “Maybe it’s time to stop tiptoeing through the carnival and take what’s ours.”

“No, you must be careful. Monsters are everywhere, but I know where they are here for your friends. They are through the next tent.”

“We will come back for you,” I promise, backing out of the tent.

“I know,” she nods, then plastered on her carnival smile. “Come get your fortune told; see if you’ll have everything you want. It’s painless... for she teases, spinning in a circle as if she’s dancing. Her dress sways in the same direction as her hair.

“Come enjoy the show! We have mermaids, elves, werewolves, and ghouls. Come see the unseen, and you’ll never want to leave!”

“That’s Azazel,” Abaddon holds out his arm to stop us from walking. “One of the wendigos is following us, clittering and clattering their jaws. You can’t enter the tent,” he informs, eyeing the monsters following us. “The wendigos are the creatures they kidnap, so if we enter the tent, we will be screwed.”

“Then what, we get captured?” I ask out of nowhere, not knowing what else can be done.

The wendigos are closing in, and the ghouls are licking the blood from their lips, staring at us as their heads sway left to right.

believes “I... I don’t know,” Abaddon admits, scratching the back of his head. The crowd can be corralled into a tight circle.

To the right of us is a ride called the Haunted HellPath, and it reminds me of the large haunted houses you see at the fair. You get into a small cart, and you only move through the house as clowns, serial killers, and whatever else jumps at you.

Because I Gremlins and Wendigos lurk from the inside and on the balcony. The walls are covered in blood, and a Gremlin is gnawing on an arm.

As we stop An innocent soul dead.

It’s lit up with red, blues, and yellows to match the carnival tent. The lights flash at the same time, lightning veins across the sky, and I know Dottie building her strength.

I can form a hurricane, and she can soak in the power of the storms. I get your She’s the best familiar a witch could ever ask for.

For now,” “Okay, well, waiting around isn’t going to solve shit.” We are all squeezed in the back-to-back as the monsters close in. “Get ready for war. Dottie,” I tell her, and she calls onto her beast, thunder and lightning swirl above. A lightning bolt strikes her, power pumping into her body. “We are here, and I’m not going to let these creepy mother fuckers take anything from me.”

As we move on, Dottie places her hand on my shoulder, and I hold my palms out, feeling the energy flow. “We onto the wind, water, earth, and any fire that might be around.

We are Rain begins to pour, and Death gasps beside me, his veins glowing. I siphon his hellfire for my own personal use.

As I dig what A wendigo lunges at me, and Lex grabs it around its throat, tossing it to the side. Then I release the energy inside me, the ground rolling with thunder. The roots from that spear the surface. Clutching my fists, the roots stab the creatures, pulling them tight into their grasp before creeping back down into the earth.

d as we The lights begin to flicker, and Dottie absorbs the energy from the
energy sparking all around her for me to use.

nds me I'll kill every monster here.

part and I'll send them all to Hell.

nps out And I don't care who I have to burn, drown, or bury to do it.

Ghouls

ne neon

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The lights begin to flicker, and Dottie absorbs the energy from those, too, energy sparking all around her for me to use.

I'll kill every monster here.

I'll send them all to Hell.

And I don't care who I have to burn, drown, or bury to do it.



CHAPTER
FOURTEEN
FINNICK

Thunder rolls outside, and rain slaps against the tent, but the free must go on regardless of the weather.

Azazel has gotten in my head. He has won.

“Daddy, stop it!” my son giggles as I tickle him, then blow a raspb his stomach. “Daddy!” he laughs, causing my heart to soar. He isn biologically, but my brother’s and his mate’s. When they died, Carv just a newborn; I’m all he has ever known.

“Okay, I’ll stop.” I pick him up by his arms and spin, letting through the air as we gain momentum, going faster and faster, hi taking over his entire face.

“Ladies and gentlemen. In one corner, we have a vampire—” that the crowd ‘Oooh and Ahhh.’ “And you will see what happens when y one vampire tear tonight.”

I’m lying on a bed of silver, my skin burning, and I can hear it drop thick chunks onto the floor. Not even the pain will make me cry, b

keeps manipulating my mind and bringing my son into this, I'll shed tears he wants.

He was yanked from my arms as soon as the portals closed. I have where he is now. It's been years, and he probably doesn't even miss me miss him every fucking day.

He's all I think about.

I was only good at one thing my entire life: being Carver's father.

I failed my brother at keeping him safe, and right now, I wouldn't Azazel killed me.

I hope he does. Put me out of my misery and let everyone else be a sight of relief that I'm no longer around.

k show "In another corner, we have a siren, and in the same aquarium, we have a kraken." His tail to his uniform flips as he runs across the soaked floor, plastering on a charming smile as my fucking back gets grilled. I can't see my flesh, and I begin to tremble, holding in my pain, so he doesn't get the satisfaction of seeing me scream. "And in this corner, we have our elf at those ears! They say an elf's magic lies within their ears, and we are here to see if it's true tonight!"

him fly The crowd screams, and above me, the gremlins swing from side to side, doing flips in the air while the wendigos scare the audience.

s smile Those people have no idea they are never leaving this place. They're making meals, and the more afraid they are, the faster their blood will pump. You have quicker the wendigos will lose control.

"And finally, we have our own werewolf and a minotaur. Who is stepping in? Who will win the battle?"

ut if he Aziel is in his shifted form, drugged with a purple herb. He isn't looking at There's madness in his eyes, and the minotaur looks resigned, as if he

all the care if he dies or not.

I've kept my eyes peeled for Raladriel, but he isn't here. He hasn't been in his cell for hours.

"I wonder how they do this. Is it animatronics? People in costumes? By far the coolest carnival I've ever been to," one of the humans says from the stands.

I focus on him. Dirty blonde hair. Curiosity in his eyes. A smile that says he doesn't care. He has an entire world to see, and he won't be able to. His life is here.

His heartbeat is quick but with excitement, not fear.

"I don't know, but it's wild. I've never seen anything like it," his friend replies, staring at Azazel, the ringmaster.

"Where should we start first?" he announces, throwing his arm to the ground. "The Kraken and the siren?"

The crowd cheers and claps.

"The werewolf and the minotaur?" he asks, moving his arm in the same direction, and Azazel is foaming at the mouth, digging his feet into the ground to break the chains so he can attack.

The crowd cheers louder, and their feet pound on the bleachers.

"Or maybe the vampire and the elf?"

What could I possibly do to Reuel? The poor elf is here because of me and the

"The minotaur and werewolf it is. We have to give the crowd what they want!" he shouts, and the audience celebrates in return, whistling and clapping their happiness.

The minotaur lowers his head, his hooves stomping against the ground. He shifts into his full form, the human head disappearing until the minotaur doesn't

takes its place. Aziel roars so loud the silver bed under me shakes, been in piercing grumble.

The chains are released from them both, and the minotaur breaks This isone around his hooves with a hard snap. A chunk of the silver cha ys fromthrough the air and lands on my stomach, burning a hole in my skin. I as I watch my flesh burn, my blood dripping from the wound. I thi on hiships and manage to get the silver piece off me. fe ends I groan, gasping for breath, and my lungs fill. Spit dribbles from th of my mouth, and sweat drips into my eyes. Turning my head, a par scalp peels away, sticking to the silver. Aziel swipes his claws, and th s friendon the minotaur's cheek. Blood flies and my fangs lengthen, even tho never feed from a paranormal unless they were my mate. I strictly : he side.humans.

The minotaur lowers his head, and his horn slices through Aziel which has him gripping the minotaur and throwing him across the te in theirminotaur slams against the cage Reuel is in, and I try to break fre groundwhere I am, but the more I try, the more the silver melts my skin.

“Reuel!” I shout for him. “Are you okay?”

“I’m fine, but I’m afraid Aziel might kill that minotaur,” he says. “ we might die here.”

ne. I think he may be right, but I don’t voice that out loud.

what it I watch as Aziel throws the innocent beast again, slashing his talons ng andthe minotaur's chest.

“Oh, the werewolf is winning!” Azazel announces, the face paint c nd, andin the wrinkles of his skin. The demon twirls on a pole, watching th inotaurwith a big smile. His lips are painted black, smeared from wiping hi: on his face.

a loud, The minotaur falls to his knees, surrendering, and Aziel lifts his
give the final blow, but he freezes, lifting his snout and howling,
the lastsounds more like a savage, lion-like roar.

in flies And a second later, another answers his call.

scream The audience gasps and they all turn their heads in the direction
rust mynoise.

Aziel falls to all fours and another werewolf bursts through the tent.
ie sides Anwyll.

t of my Hope blooms in my chest, and damn it, if the tears don't threaten.

ey land I can't let them fall.

ugh I'd Anwyll growls, tackling Aziel to the floor, then knocks his brot
stick tocold.

"You're done here, Azazel." A flaming whip cracks the air and
's arm,around Azazel's neck. A group of men I've never seen before come o
nt. Thethe shadows, drenched in blood, and they reek of rotten flesh, but that'
e fromI see Dottie, Maven, Lex, and Greyson.

They are all covered in horrible rancid goop.

"Finnick!" Maven calls my name when she sees me and twirls her
'I thinkthe air, gathering wind, then throwing the force at me, which rips me fi
bed of silver. I scream in agony when I hit the ground. I'm breathin
can't move.

s across I'm too weak.

I stay on my stomach, feeling my skin, muscles, and tendons try t
reasingtogether. It will be slow going since I need blood and can't have it.

ie fight Lex is at my side in an instant, that curious kid with dirty blonde hai
s handsgrasp. "You'll be fine. You won't feel a thing. You didn't even cor

paw tonight, and the last thing you'll do is scream." He mystifies the I
which hands me his arm.

Without question, I sink my fangs into the wrist and immediately sp
as my mouth burns. "Fuck!" I cry, watching as blood and spit drip fr
of the mouth.

"He laced silver in everything." Lex is horrified, pushing the human
The audience begins to scream and run, but the wendigos and g
pick them off one by one, snatching a victim to eat.

Azazel pulls at the fire-laced whip around his neck, breaking it unt
free. "Well, well, well. Abaddon, long time no see."
her out "Not long enough." Abaddon cracks the whip again, along with
other men like him at his side.

I wraps "You think you can stop me? You weren't able to then; why wou
ut from think you could now?"

's when Maven conjures a ball of fire, tossing it at a wendigo, and he catch
running frantically through the tent. It screeches one last time before
on the tent's material, sending it up in flames.

arms in While the demons can't burn from fire, the rest of us can.

rom the Dottie's creature bursts from her, still a blur, but her eyes are g
g, but I white, and she grips a wendigo by his throat and electrocutes him on t
until it's nothing but bone. Dottie places her hands on the metal bleach
sends a wave of current through them, electrocuting any gremlins,
o stitch and wendigos.

Maven holds her stomach as she runs by me. "Are you okay?"
ir in his "I will be," I groan, staring as the fire engulfs another side of the ten
ne here Maven stops in front of Reuel's cage, and roots travel through the
and wrap around the cage until Reuel can no longer be seen.

kid and “I’m going to get you out of there, Reuel.”

“Maven!” I try to get to my feet, my flesh reminding me why I can’t
sit it out “Maven!” I call her again, but one of the gremlins has wings and snatches
her from my off the ground. “Lex!” I shout for him just as he rips a heart out of a
then tears its head off for good measure.

away. I point to where Maven is, and he blurs until he is in the middle
of the arena. “Beloved! I’m here.” He tugs at the strands of his hair, and his eyes
become glassy with an opal hue.

Until he is I manage to push to my feet, smoke still swaying from my back. The
heat from the flames of the tent is barely manageable, but I push through
it. A few tentacles are dripping with sweat. “Lex, she’ll be okay. She’ll be fine. She
can take care of herself.”

“The babies. Oh, god, the babies.” He tilts his head back, watching
Maven kick and try to punch the gremlin.

“Maven,” I call out, wincing when I bend too far, but she can’t hear
me. She presses her hands against the underbelly of the gremlin, her lips
and its mouth opens, water spewing out.

The gremlin’s stomach opens up, pouring its insides over her. Her
face is black from the contents, and Lex and I stumble back as it screams
like a tornado ripping through its body, through Maven, and it hits the
ground, tossing sand into the air.

It releases Maven, and she falls, stomach first. Lex is there waiting to
catch her, so much fear trembling his body.

“I’m here. I’m here. I have you,” he chants to himself, but then one
of the demons flies through the air, flapping its leathery wings, and captures
her mid-fall. His wings reverse their motion, and he slowly lowers them

the ground. Lex is there instantly, snatching her from his hold, and they move each other so tight.

He shakes her. His shoulders shake, and that's when I see the tears on his cheeks. The ghoul, "I thought I lost you. I thought... I didn't know if I was going to see you." His palm cups her stomach, and he doesn't care that she's covered in the gremlin. He holds out his free hand. "Thank you for catching my beloved. I owe you my life. You're welcome to stay and be in the coven. You're honored. And I'm forever in your debt."

He heats her. "Let's survive this first, and then we will talk," War says, rolling her back over his shoulders before launching into the air to help Abaddon.

She says, "I need to get Reuel out. He's the only one who can transport the injured to the estate," Maven says, wobbling over to the root-twisted cage.

Maven says, "I can't walk anymore. I fall to my hands, the pain blurring my vision. I need to ensure Reuel is free."

Carver says, "Daddy! Look what I can do." Carver holds his hand under his nose, bending his arm, and flapping it up and down like a chicken wing. It makes a disgusting sound, but it makes him laugh, and that's all I care about.

The roots explode, and the cage falls to pieces. Reuel is free, and he runs towards me. The first thing he does is run in my direction.

My eyes roll to the back of my head, and the last words I hear are the ones that have ever brought me peace.

"I love you, Daddy."

I love you too, little man.

One of the

loves her

both to

the ground. Lex is there instantly, snatching her from his hold, and they hold each other so tight.

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"I love you, Daddy."

I love you too, little man.



CHAPTER
FIFTEEN
REUEL

My hand lands on Finnick’s shoulder, and I transport us back to the falling into the middle of the living room.

“Oh my god.” Tala rushes to my side, and her hands reach to Finnick’s back, but she stops herself. “What happened to him?”

“He was forced to lay on a bed of silver. He needs blood. I have back. There are more.”

“Aye, is Dottie okay?” Drayce asks, pressing a bag of emergency into Finnick’s mouth.

“She’s badass.”

“Yeah, she is,” Drayce smirks, but it fades when he realizes the blood pooling on the floor.

Finnick isn’t drinking.

“Oh, come on, you mean bastard. You can’t die without mouthing off

“I have to go,” I say reluctantly. “There are so many other parasites there that need help.” I transport back, staring at the carnage of the car

The tent drifts into the wind, on fire, peeling away as it disintegrates. The tree bursts into flames from the debris, and I can see the filthy aquarium siren and kraken are in. The kraken uses his tentacles to splash water burning fire around them since they are the closest. I press my hand against the aquarium and drop us in front of the estate.

“Where are we? Where did you take us?” the Kraken yells at me, standing in front of the siren who looks ill. Her scales have lost color, and her skin has a gray tint.

“You’re safe. You’re out of the carnival.”

“More?” Amory hurries out of the house, jumping down the steps. “It doesn’t look good.”

“It’s the water. It isn’t salt. It doesn’t bother me like it does her. Help her first.”

“It won’t be permanent. We can do more later, but I have a huge tent and we can put salt in it?” he offers.

“That’s fine.” The Kraken steps out and shifts into his human form, carrying the siren out of the water. They carry her inside, the Kraken underweight and malnourished, but we will fix that in time.

I pop into the carnival again, remembering Azazel and the minotaur fight. A loud rumble sounds when the two demons bump shoulders, twisting and turning in the air.

Azazel is putting up a good fight, but so is the other.

The flames of the tent are hot against my back, and I crawl along the ground. When I get to Azazel, I look up in time to see Anwyll killing the ghoulish creature, ripping its head off with his jaws. I swallow, hating all the blood and death. Elves are creatures of life and nature. Anything evil turns our stomachs, and if an elf ever turns dark, they will never see the light of hope again.

es. The The minotaur groans and I lie my other hand against his leg, trans-
ium theus to the house again. Luca is waiting by the steps for me, and without
: on thea word, I leave Aziel and the minotaur by his feet before disappearing
l to the Only this time, I remember the banshee and transport to where I s
last.

tanding I'm standing next to the carousel; the skeletal horses spin arou
:kin hasaround, the music slow, dragging on and adding to the eerie effect
forward, and they turn their necks, watching me with empty eyes
hooves hit the metal of the carousel, and I stumble backward as they
s. "Shethemselves from the ride.

They take a step down, their hooves imprinting on the ground, and
Please,begin to divide, spreading like webs through the soil.

I've heard of the undead horses through stories, but I've never see
:athtub,in person. The legend has it that anyone who is innocent that sits up
backs, dies instantly, and feeds their bones. A sinner, a demon, or
pullingwith a rotten soul will be able to ride them.

ght and Without wasting another second, I transport again just as they begin
toward me. I pop right in front of the banshee and the tent next to her
ighting.with the forest's trees burning bright, the flames becoming higher and l
ing and "I'll get you out of here, okay? Do you trust me?" I ask her. "I will r
you."

She nods, shaking a few tears free, and then her eyes widen. She l
ong thehand, pointing behind me and I turn, the horses gallop toward us with
anothermanes.

ood and Gripping her shoulder, I try to transport us, but I can't. The chains
omach,me. I don't have enough time, but the banshee inhales, and her super
l. scream is felt in the marrow of my bones. She throws her han

porting redirecting the frequency, and it slams into the horses. Each one is
saying through the air; some smack against the trees and others get lost
again. wildfire consuming us.

saw her A loud creak has us looking up, and the Ferris wheel leans, the
melting as the fire consumes it.

nd and “You won’t be able to unlock her chains without this.”

. I step The old hag dangles the keys in front of her, laughing hysterically,
s. Theiranger gets the best of me.

remove “And you won’t be able to decipher what you feel anymore.” I h
face in my hands and twist her emotions together, even when she wa
l cracks and pure, melting her mind as her memories consume her. Her heart
with agony as love, hate, fear, and guilt wrap around her heart, roc
n them place, so they never leave.

on their I snatch the keys from her hand, and she cries, gripping her h
anyone insanity takes hold. Jerking her head left and right, she runs from
doesn’t watch where she is going. She slams into a firey wall, and the
n to run spew black and blue as they eat her rotten soul.

r, along Good riddance.

higher. I unlock the chain around the banshee’s ankle and take her home, di
not hurter at the steps where Luca is waiting. I don’t say a word and thin
where Azazel kept us.

ifts her I’m back in the dark tunnel where the cells are and run for Alastai
n fire as not well. His veins are turning black, and his breathing is shallow.

through the bars, but I can’t touch him. He’s so close, but so far.

prevent “Alastair, I need you to roll to me. If you touch me, I can get us
natural Come on, please,” I beg him, hoping he can hear me. “Alastair! Roll
ds out, Right now. It’s the only way I can help you.”

tossed He groans, stretching his uninjured arm, and our fingertips touch. I
in the need. I take him home, and Alaric is on the steps instead of Luca.

“What happened?” He hurries to Alastair’s side.

metal “Azazel stabbed him with one of his horns. Only hellfire can sa
now. I have to go. I’m sorry.” When I transport back, I happen to ap
front of Luna. “You have to go home. There are so many there wh
and my you.”

“Take me,” she says without question, and I do, but I don’t sta
old here enough to answer any questions.

as good I rescue another, a mermaid, not a siren, and then a nymph. I
pound exhausted from using so much of my magic in so short of time. There
oting in one more.

The angel.

read as I stand next to Dottie, watching a wendigo crawl and screech as i
me but slow, painful death from the fire eating away at its body.

flames I’m sure there are good wendigos, gremlins, and ghouls, but I’d be
if I never saw another one for the rest of my life.

War, Death, and Famine join bodies now that they aren’t fighting th
ropping forming a giant demon who towers over everyone.

k about “Holy shit,” Greyson mumbles, wiping his forehead of sweat.

The demon is impressive as the three horsemen morph forces. Its
ir. He’s large, the color of coal, and embers of hell flickering under its skin, a
I reach bellow, a growl of heat showing a black tongue and long fangs with
made of the same hell iron that makes their bikes.

; home. They snatch Azazel from Abaddon and vanish into the earth, hc
to me, placing Azazel where he belongs.

Abaddon drops to the ground, exhausted, his wings torn from the fi

t's all I as soon as I see them, I watch as the holes stitch together.

“Where did he go?” Maven asks, leaning against Lex.

“Purgatory. Think of it as a prison for our kind,” Abaddon explains as he looks around.

The last of the tent drifts away, and Maven gasps when she notices the forest. She closes her eyes, the wind picks up, clouds build, and the tent rolls again before a downpour of cold rain hits her skin.

The hiss and sizzle of the fire going out are beautiful. All around, the smoke takes the orange flames' place. While it rains, the ground around the tent sways, heals. Gone is the burnt bark and charred ground.

“Are we ready to go home?” Lex asks, kissing the side of Maven's head.

“Not yet. We're missing Raladriel, the half-angel, half-vampire. We need to find him and his wings,” I say, and everyone nods in agreement. “No one is to be left behind.”

Maven doubles over, and Lex catches her.

“Beloved? What's wrong?”

“One of the babies is pushing—” she moans in pain. “Outward. It's labor pains.” She lifts her shirt, and all of us can see the baby pushing against her as if he or she is trying to tell her something.

“That's wicked,” Greyson says in awe.

She walks forward and takes a breath. “I think... I think I need to go home.”

“You think your unborn child is trying to guide you?” Abaddon's words are broken by unsteady breaths. He's exasperated from the fight.

“I do,” Maven treads slowly, Lex at her side, stepping over the carnage, helping her through it all.

“Well, let's not question the most powerful witch of all time,”

following after her.

The entire carnival is in ash, but I know the creeps are far from dead
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CHAPTER
SIXTEEN
MAVEN

I follow the tug inside me, letting it lead me across the field. “The teller,” I remember, sidestepping to go in her direction when I remember I didn’t rescue her, but my child pushes against my stomach again, taking my breath away.

Pausing, I gasp for breath. “Someone else needs to go. I can’t. I can’t go where they want me to,” I explain.

“I’ll go,” Greyson volunteers by stepping forward. “I’ll find you. The tent isn’t that big.”

“I’ll go with him just in case more wendigos are around.” Anwyll steps forward after Greyson going in the opposite direction.

“Are you okay?” Lex asks me.

“I’m fine. The pain is taking my breath, but I understand. I just need to listen,” I reply, the pressure in my stomach getting worse the closer we get to the other tent.

Half of it is burnt to a crisp, while the other half is untouched. A u
sits to the left against the unbothered side, the wheels melted into the g

A rustling in the woods causes me to jump, and Abaddon holds his
“It’s just me.”

“God, could you not? It’s too soon to be stealthy with those
around,” I grumble, entering the smoky tent.

“That’s fair,” Abaddon chuckles.

I groan again; this time, my child kicks me in the side, rolling to th
and I dig my nails into Lex’s skin from the agony.

“I don’t understand why we are here. There’s nothing,” I say, only
bleachers and dead bodies of wendigos.

fortune An arm shoots up from ash and debris, followed by a whimper.

iber we “Raladriel.” Reuel runs to the outstretched arm, and my child finall
ing my lying in the correct position that doesn’t cause me discomfort
Raladriel,” Reuel murmurs in despair.

n’t stop I catch my breath when I see the extent of his injuries. There isn’t
of skin that isn’t burnt.

ie place “I can get you home. We can heal you.”

follows “Not without my wings! My wings!” Raladriel shouts, but his lip
move; they are too burnt, the flesh blackened.

“If these are it, there’s no feathers left. It’s just bone,” Abaddon
dragging them across the ground. “Heavy still.”

need to “Doesn’t matter. Bring them. I’d rather die with them than without
e get to Raladriel explains, his breathing rapid and irregular. “Just let me die.”

“No.” Reuel grabs my hand, and I grab Lex’s. “Where are Greys
Anwyll?”

“We’re here. We have the fortune teller. She’s out cold, though.” C

unicycle has the woman in his arms, and her dark hair nearly touches the ground. carries her.

hands. “Everyone touch. We’re going home.”

No sooner than I can blink, we’re in front of the steps, and Severide is standing there, Lex’s father. He’s finally come out from the catacombs visiting Atreyu. Severide dashes to our side and engulfs us in a hug.

“Why didn’t you come to get me? I would have—”

ie right, “It’s fine,” Lex interrupts him, the bite of bitterness evident.

Lex won’t admit it but he believed his father to be dead, only to have him see me come back and barely come from downstairs. His brother won’t be waiting soon, and Severide chooses Atreyu over Lex every day.

“Move. Get the fuck out of my way.” Finnick grabs onto the wall for support as he walks down the steps.

“Oh, “Finnick’s back,” Greyson mumbles, and Lex nudges him in the side. Finnick falls next to Raladriel, and Luna is at his side too, but when she lifts her head, she shakes it. Not even her magic can heal him.

Finnick bends down. “Hey, come on. You can’t go. You’re free now. You didn’t go through all that to die.” He sounds emotional, and a lump forms in my throat.

“Freedom can mean death.”

Greyson states, “Raladriel, not like this.”

Abaddon places what’s left of the wings against Raladriel’s back. “I’ll hold them,” though there’s nothing left of them, they fuse together at the bone, becoming one with the angel again.

Greyson and Raladriel sighs in relief. “Thank you.”

I gasp in shock when a tear drips from Finnick’s cheek and lands on Greyson’s shoulder. Raladriel.

id as he The opal color fuses over the angel like a shield. The burnt skin is r
with a gorgeous golden color, and his wings grow new white feather
and lustrous.

eride is “Oh my God.” I can’t believe my eyes as I watch the miracle before
os from Raladriel is healed.

Every inch of ruined flesh is gone.

His wings are full.

Raladriel gets to his feet and stretches his wings, and I have to take
ive himback, so I don’t get hit.

king up “Beautiful,” I whisper.

“Thank you, Finnick. Knowing he was playing with your mir
rail forwouldn’t sacrifice a tear for Azazel, but you did for me. I’m so grat
there is anything, you need to know—”

e. Finnick leans in and whispers something that I can’t hear. Raladrie
hen shehis eyes softening as he presses his hand over Finnick’s heart.

“I’ll see what I can do,” Raladriel says.

ow. We “You’ll come back?” I ask him, not understanding why I want him t
o in my His eyes drop to my stomach, and he steps closer, tucking his win
against his back. “May I?”

“S-sure,” I say with uncertainty, but I know he won’t hurt me.

His hand cups my stomach, and his eyes glow the same color as his
c. Evenfeel relaxed, safe, and happy.

coming “I’ll be back when the time is right, Maven. Thank you all for eve
you’ve done for me.” Raladriel tilts his head back, spreads his
crouches, and rockets into the sky, flying above the clouds until he c
nds onseen.

“What do you think he means?” I ask Lex.

replaced “I don’t know.”

“It’s Alastair,” Amory yells from the door. “He needs help. I think he’s dying.”

“He needs hellfire,” Reuel says. “Azazel’s horn stabbed him through the shoulder.”

“I can help with that.” Abaddon climbs up the steps, and we all follow to the living room. Alastair is lying on the couch, shivering. He peels a strip of gauze from Alastair’s shoulder, making the scent of rotting flesh fill our noses, and we all turn away.

Luca coughs. “That’s awful.”

“Azazel is a bastard, but I can fix this. It’s going to hurt, Alastair,” Abaddon warns.

“Not worse... than... what I’m feeling,” Alastair struggles to breathe. A tired smile is a ghost on his lips.

Abaddon breathes in, and his eyes turn to flames before he blows hellfire entering through the wound.

Alastair screams, his back arching off the couch. Abaddon holds him tight to keep him still. Abaddon closes his mouth, and the flesh looks flawless and untouched, but Alastair still screams in agony.

“He’ll be in pain for about an hour. The wound has healed, but the hellfire in his system now, and it burns. After that, he’ll sleep for a week.”

“Thank you,” I say. “For all your help.”

“It’s what we are here for.”

“What’s going to happen with the rest of the creatures? They are wanted to stay here, but I need to change the house for a few.”

Abaddon stands and stretches, lifting his arms above his head. “V

take them to a rehab center where they will have the best care possible. If they want to come back or go home, they can. We will take them if they actually. It's been... amazing watching your magic, Maven. We'll be there for you though this soon."

"You're—" but Abaddon is gone before I can finish the sentence. I show him with the rest of the Hell's Harvesters.

is away "The banshee is gone!" Tala yells from the kitchen.

hit our "The siren, she just vanished," Amory shouts next.

"They are all going to a safe place. Abaddon said so," I explain.

Lex wraps his arms around me and places his chin on my shoulder. "I had enough of Halloween this year. What do you think?"

I shrug a shoulder. "I don't know... I could carve a pumpkin."

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ws, his "No funny business in the shower," I tease.

"Oh, things are about to get hilarious," he says, snagging me by the waist and pulling me down and blurring to our bedroom.

ess and Lex starts the shower, and I'm left staring out the window, view of the pumpkin patch. Monsters live in both the light and the dark, but it's the dark where there's screams who come out at night.

about a Nothing is ever what it seems.

Happy Halloween.

Welcome

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

FANGBANGERS,

I HOPE YOU'VE LIKED MY LAST-MINUTE HALLOWEEN NOVELLA. I ENJOYED IT, AND EVERY MONSTER I BRING INTO SHALLOW COVE WILL EVENTUALLY GET HIS OWN STORY.

I WANT TO THANK MY ENTIRE TEAM, DALLAS ANN DESIGNS, CAROLINA, MY TEAM, ARC TEAM, SHENANIGANS SQUAD, THE AMAZING FANGBANGING READERS, MY HUBBY FOR CONSTANTLY SUPPORTING ME, MY BESTIE, AND EVERYONE WHO BELIEVES I CAN BE A WRITER, AND DO THIS AS A JOB. NONE OF THESE BOOKS WOULD BE WITHOUT YOUR CONSTANT SUPPORT.

HAPPY FANGBANGING HALLOWEEN.

LOVE YOU ALL,

JANUARY

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