



AQUILA THORNE

THE
SUMMONS

THE BLOOD MOON SERIES

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The Summons
Aquila Thorne

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The Summons

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Prologue

I, Cassidy Blake, had no idea what I was doing in merry old England but there I was. Well, that's technically not right. I did know why. I was summoned by invitation to attend the Black Flag pub and to be there at 6:30pm sharp. But that's all I knew. Easy right? Except it wasn't, not when I lived clear across the ocean. Here let me explain, it went like this...



Chapter 1

Jessica Parker, my baby sister, looked at me as I lay sprawled across, her spare bed. “Cassidy, when are you moving out? Your apartment has been ready for over a month now and we could really use the extra room with the baby coming.”

I inwardly groaned as I rolled onto my back to look at her. Knowing she was right; I said the first thing that popped into my head. “Soon. I’ll be moving out soon. The paint smell is still strong, and I get an instant headache.”

She gave me a look that said she knew otherwise but didn’t say a thing. Instead, she tossed a stack of mail onto the bed beside me, stopped and wrinkled her nose. “What’s that smell?”

“That smell is me. I need a shower.”

She arched an elegant brow then quietly left the room.

She would never understand the feelings I was going through. Having a loving and attentive husband like she did, shielded her from ever knowing.

Guilt settled into the pit of my stomach. My divorce was settled last month and at 35 years old it was time I spread my wings, and she did need the room. But I was afraid of being alone. Always living with someone since birth, it was scary to take the leap in the direction of the unknown. Thoughts swirled in my head, like, what if my cat hated me? It didn’t matter that I didn’t have a cat but at this rate I would have several.

My phone pinged, pulling me out of the wallow of my pity party. It was a reminder that I had to get on with my day. Not that it would be any different than the day before. Heaving a sigh, I put my hand down to push myself up off the mattress. Instead of the softness of the down comforter that I was expecting, I felt the mail that Jessica had left for me.

Looking at it sourly, I picked the stack up and sorted through it. It was the usual, junk mail, bills, a flier for duct cleaning service, coupons for a local eatery and a black envelope.

Talk about a foreboding feeling. The second my hands held it I knew it was something that I either would cower from on a normal day or embrace it with open arms. Turning it over in my hands, the seal, stamped in wax stared up at me. Like literally. It was an eyeball in the middle of a ghostly face. Fearing that it would be an anthrax laced letter from my ex, I cautiously opened it and peeked inside. I thought it was empty, and in a sense, it was because the letter was the envelope. I unfolded it and held it with shaky hands. I started to break out into a sweat as I started to read it.

'You, Cassidy Blake are hereby requested to join us, Watchers of the Night at the Black Flag pub in the town of Sussex at 6:30 pm sharp on August 1st. Your flight and accommodation will be provided. All that we ask is that you come with an open mind and to hear us out. We will explain the need for your attendance once you arrive. Please RSVP no later than July 18th so arrangements can be made by calling 011+44+ 370+395+6143.

I laughed as I tossed the letter down onto the bed. Yeah right, like I was going to fall for that! My luck, it was a kinky sex club. I got up to gather a change of clean clothes because Jessica had been right; I was a bit ripe smelling.

The whole time I showered I kept thinking about that letter though. What if it wasn't a kinky sex club? Maybe I won something, like a cottage in the English countryside. That would certainly beat the barren apartment over the meat market I was the proud renter of. I decided I would call that number, hoping to glean some information when I did. But first I would do a quick search online for the Watchers of the Night.

I shut the water off and wrapped my head and body in towels then headed straight for my room. I felt like an idiot racing down the hall towards my bedroom door and even worse when I slammed it closed behind me. But it was the

most exciting thing that ever happened in my life, and I needed to know what it was about, whether I went or not.

I took my laptop and plopped down on the bed then quickly typed Watchers of the Night into Google. They were a YouTube sensation, a ghost hunting team made up of five men. Despite that, kinky sex club did flash through my mind as I looked at their bio's, they were all in their mid to late twenties, except one. Who from the looks of it, was around my age. I was safe that way. There wasn't a snowballs chance in hell that I would fall for someone younger than me, and the other dude? No thanks, I had enough of men. My eyes fell to the letter on my bed. After tugging my underwear on I spent no time snatching it and my cell phone up then dialed the number.

"Hello?" A man with a British accent answered. I quickly hit the end button and tossed the phone onto my bed.

What the hell was I thinking? *Me*, travel on an all expenses paid trip across the ocean... *alone*? I had a hard time going to a public washroom by myself. Pushing the thoughts of escaping my reality to the back of my mind, I got up and started to dress, but one foot into my pant leg, my phone lit up; someone was calling.

A quick glance at the screen had me freezing on the spot. It was the number I just dialed. I dared not touch it despite the thrill that ran up my spine. I didn't want to appear eager. I would call back when I was finished dressing. I must give them credit for their persistence though. I gave in and answered it after I pulled my bra on.

"Hello, Cassidy Blake."

"Uh... Hi?" I sat down on the edge of the bed as I held my breath.

"I see your envelope arrived."

I cringed at the squeak in my voice when I asked, "How do you know?"

"How else did you know to call this number?"

"Oh right." A nervous titter escaped past my lips. Feeling like an idiot, I quickly asked, "Who are you and what do you

want with me?”

There was a pause on the other end. So long in fact that I thought he'd hung up on me. Finally, he said, “Who I am does not matter. If you love your family, you will pack a bag and get on the next flight to England.”

“Are you *crazy* ? Do you honestly think I'm going to do that?” I yelled into the phone.

I heard a scuffling come over the airwaves the second the last word escaped past my lips. A few grunts and another man's voice asking, “What the hell is going on?” Then, I heard that same man say, “Give me the damn phone!”

Evidently there was a fracas because the next thing I heard was the new man say to me, “Cassidy, don't mind Peter, he isn't very forthcoming with information. My name is Cashel McGuire, one of the members of the Watchers of the Night and... how do I say this without upsetting you?”

Okay this guy had my interest piqued. For starters I could almost guarantee that I hadn't won a cottage in the English countryside, and this guy sounded more American but with an Irish lilt. What would an American in England that I never heard of in my life have something to tell me that would upset me? And thirdly his voice was so utterly hypnotic that I was creaming in my nice clean underwear. If this man told me to go to hell, I would try my *damndest* to find it, his voice was *that* sexy.

“Go on,” I murmured lazily as images of this man, who I had no idea what he looked like, seduced me in a field of clover. “Whoa!” I abruptly stood up, shook to the core because of what just flitted through my mind.

“Are you okay?” Cashel asked.

I started pacing the room. How could I possibly explain what I just saw? Lying was never my forte but you better believe I came up with something quick.

“Ah yeah, I um just saw a mouse skitter across the floor. It's... gone now.”

He seemed satisfied with the excuse and continued. “Okay then. As you may know we do a lot of research before we do any investigation, and we have found.... Some things that we think you should know. That’s why we invited you to join us.”

I pulled the towel from my head and started finger combing my hair. “What kind of ‘things’?”

“That, I cannot disclose over the phone. It most assuredly is a conversation one needs to hear in person. You will be completely safe the whole time. As per the letter, we request you to meet with us in a very public pub. Whether you agree with what we have to offer, or you don’t, that is entirely up to you.”

“And you can’t tell me anything more?” I squinted in thought, knowing he was being evasive and said, “Or you won’t?”

“Both.”

Good enough for me! You can call me crazy, but I was considering it. I mean, I had never in my life been anywhere out of my own county, let alone country and the idea of a free trip to England of all places, sounded like heaven. Even if it was just for a night.

“How soon would I need to go?”

I could picture him looking at his watch when he said, “Ah, well here it’s now, 6:00 pm, July 15th, roughly 2 pm your time. Taking into consideration any stops the flight could be anywhere from 14 hours to 9 hours, then you need to get here, that would be by car. So, in answer to your question on how soon...Now, you need to leave right now.”

I thought about my sister and what she would say. “*You can’t possibly be entertaining the idea.?!*” Her voice echoed through my mind. Easy enough. I just wouldn’t tell her.

“Are you in Cassidy?” the man asked.

I was never one to make a split decision, especially when it entailed ominous vibes. But the way I saw it, I could pack a duffle bag for England or pack the bedroom that I’d been

currently holed up in for the past four months. I chose the duffle bag.

Nodding as if the man were somehow able to see me, I looked down at my legs as I sat there on the bed and realized I only had one leg in my pants. Tugging on the waistband, I stuffed my bare leg into the empty pant leg, stood up and yanked them on. Jumping to get the jiggle at my waist tucked into place, I heaved out a groan and zipped them up.

“Cassidy? Are you alright?” Cashel asked, with more than a hint of concern.

“Yes, of course.” I answered. “Just needed to get the ole belly... er never mind.”

“You’re an odd one, aren’t you?”

Embarrassed that I was about to tell a stranger about my pudge, I spat out, one word— “*What?!*”— never thinking in my wildest dreams he would say it again.

“I said, you’re an odd one, aren’t you? It means you are ‘the one’.”

A little off put I asked, “What is that supposed to mean, ‘*The one*’?”

“It means I’m sending a car over to your sister’s house. Be ready it will be there in five minutes.”

“Five minutes?! Are you *crazy*?” I dashed over to the closet and pulled out a Goodlife duffle bag and tossed it onto the bed. I blindly started yanking clothes off their hangers. As I did, I tossed them over my shoulder in the same direction of the bag, and yelled, “There is no way in hell I’ll be ready in five minutes!”

“Four minutes Cassi.”

“My name is Cassidy.” I told him as I rummaged in my dresser for socks and underwear. Tossing them onto the bed, I hurried over to the nightstand and yanked the drawer open.

“So, how long do you think I’ll be over there for?” I asked as my fingers poised over my sex toys.

I was fighting an internal battle with myself waiting for his response.

“Pack enough for a week,” he murmured.

“Hmmm okay.” I was faced with a dilemma. Did I really need my toys? Or would I even get the chance to use them? And what about the airport? Did I really want a rubber shlong showing up on the x ray machine? No. Leaving the dildo behind I took my trusty clit sucker and stuffed it into the duffel bag before tossing my clothes on top.

I huffed my way through zipping up the bag when the sound of the doorbell ringing had me freezing. “You said four minutes,” I whispered.

In my mind I pictured him lifting a shoulder in indifference. “Traffic must have been light,” he said.

I crossed the room and peered out the window to the street below. There, a black limo sat all shining and sleek in the sunshine. I looked down to see a man standing below looking directly at me. A very large, muscular man with dark hair, slicked back in a ponytail.

The curtain fell back into place as I backed away from the window. “You sent a limo?” I muttered. “Why Cash?”

“You will find out once you’re at the Black Flag.” Before he hung up, he said, “Now, grab whatever you can, your flight leaves in twenty minutes. We will be waiting for you at the pub. Have a safe flight, Cassi.”



Chapter 2

The flight across the Atlantic started out uneventful and my travel companion a very attractive man. So attractive in fact, that if I weren't already infatuated with the mysterious Cashel McGuire's voice, I would be flirting up a storm with him. Raul, aka limo driver, was not very forthcoming with any info as to why I was being summoned.

I shook a box of Reese's' Pieces minis at him. "I'll trade you these for a little tip as to where I'm heading."

He nodded eagerly and held out his hand.

"You don't talk much do you?" I said, handing him the box. I sat there patiently waiting for him to spill the beans while he inhaled the candy.

I smiled at him. "Good, huh?"

Smacking his lips together he nodded.

"Okay?" I looked at him wide eyed, willing him with my mind to give me the dirt.

"Oh right."

My eyes widened because for a second, his voice seemed familiar. But then, he coughed and smiled. And apparently, he must have had a frog in his throat because, his voice came out a few pitches higher when he said, "You wanted a tip. You have a long trip ahead of you. Get some sleep."

He promptly turned his head towards the isle and started snoring.

I sat there dumbfounded. *That was not a tip!!*

Part of me wanted to reach out and smack his cheeks or kiss him until he answered but the rational part of me turned and stared out the window at the clouds. Before I knew it Raul was shaking my arm telling me to wake up. My eyes sprung open as I felt the plane jerk violently.

"What the hell is going on?" I stared at him wide eyed.

“Emergency landing. Duck your head between your legs.” I felt Raul’s hand on the back of my skull as he shoved me downward. So far that I could have kissed the floor if I stretched my lips out.

I sprung up the second his hand moved. “No!” I shook my head in denial, to the point I felt like a fricken bobble head that someone had flicked with their finger. “This isn’t happening!”

“Oh yes, it is. Stop talking and get down now!” he roared, shoving me downward once again.

I did what I was told but I was definitely not finished talking. Peering at him between my legs, I tried rationalizing with him. “This is just turbulence, right?”

“Not when the wing has been hit...”

“By *what?*!”

“A... um... not sure,” he said. “But whatever it was, it happened right out your window. I saw it with my own eyes.”

I popped my head up and looked out the window, and I swear by all that is holy, that by the time I arrived in England my eyes would be permanently bugged out. If I were to make it there that was. Because the wing wasn’t just hit, it looked like a dinosaur had bit a chunk out of it. I’m sure my mouth matched the perfect roundness of my eyes as I whipped my head around to look at Raul, who just happened to be popping up beside me.

“Mickle is gonna kill me if something happens to you,” he muttered as he wrestled me downward, covering me with his body.

“Who the hell is Mickle?”

“Never you mind! Just stay down and for the love of God, shut up!”

I had no choice but to stay put with his hulking form pressed against my back and for some inane reason I was quite enjoying the feel of him against me. That was until the plane jostled us to and fro and I realized the predicament that we were in. I gritted my teeth, knowing that this was the end. I

was going to die over the Atlantic Ocean with a wannabe Hercules pinning me in the fetal position. I would never get a chance to tell my family one last time that I loved them, and I would never get the chance to meet the man that melted my insides with his voice alone.

“Tell me something would you Raul?” I choked out around the lump of unshed tears in my throat.

“What... what is it you want to know?”

“What does Cashel look like?”

“*What?!*” Came his muffled reply against my back.

“What does he look like? Does his voice match his...” —I groaned at the mere thought of what it had done to me over the phone. — “... you know.”

I could feel him shake his head, as difficult as it was. “No. I don’t know.”

I groaned in frustration. Did I really have to spell it out for the man. Fuck it, I was going to crash into the ocean with him draped around me like a cape and both of us would probably be eaten in one gulp by a passing shark.

“Does he exude sexual tension when he walks into a room?!” I bellowed out.

“I... I guess... you should know anyway, you’ve already met him.”

I turned my neck and managed to somehow look him in the eye. I squinted. “What the hell did you just say?”

Before he could muster an excuse, the pilot came over the intercom, telling everyone to brace themselves, the plane was going down. Instead of doing that I of course just had to look out the window one last time, to see the wing that had somehow managed to carry us as long as it had. With the sound of Cash’s voice echoing in my ears, I placed my hand on the window and gazed at it, willing it to just hang in there.

Now, you can call me crazy all you want, but I think the damn thing heard me, because the next thing I saw was green fields speeding below not more than a thousand feet.

“For the love of God, get your head down!” Raul grabbed me by the shoulders and shoved me down. This time I listened, and I thank the universe that I did.

Never being on a plane before, I couldn't tell if the pilot hit the brakes or if the squealing coming from the tires, was a normal occurrence. However, I was pretty sure that we should have stopped by now, considering the sound went on and on.

“Shouldn't we be stopping by now?” I muttered.

“We aren't at Heathrow,” Raul hissed.

“What's that got to do with anything?”

“It means the tarmac is running out... hang on!”

The squealing of the tires stopped only to be replaced by the sound of something being pelted into the underbelly of the plane as we jostled about. Amongst the crying and screaming from my fellow passengers I sat there with my head between my knees, happy to know that we weren't going to become shark bait. With one last shudder, we skidded to a standstill.

“Can I sit up now?” I asked.

Raul did just that. Taking his cue, I threw myself back against my seat and started laughing hysterically.

“What is wrong with you?” Raul asked.

I wrapped my arms around my belly and looked at him. “You... you said Cash exudes sexual tension!”

“I didn't...” — he shook his head. — “...I didn't say that.”

The stewardess came over the intercom just then, instructing everyone on how to get off the plane.

I grinned as I unbuckled my seat belt and stood to retrieve my Goodlife bag in the compartment above. “Yeah, you did, or at least you agreed that he does.”

He waited for an elderly woman to pass by him, and then he stepped into the aisle, letting me go in front of him and said, “That was under duress. I didn't mean it.”

I waited as the flight staff helped the elderly lady onto the inflatable slide and watched as she slid down to the ground before I sat down. I turned and looked up at Raul. "Call it whatever you want, you still said it."

Before he could answer, I slid down yelling, "Weeeee." Like a fool of course because evidently having a near death experience made me feel like a kid again. Allowing myself to be lifted by the hands from more flight people, I stood on shaky legs and looked around at my surroundings. I was still doing that when Raul decided to join me.

"So, would you like to elaborate on what you said earlier about me knowing Cash?"

"I didn't say that..." He had the decency to try to cover his lie with a cough at least.

"Riiiiight..." I pursed my lips and nodded slowly, knowing exactly that he would deny it. "Well, one thing you were right about, we certainly did run out of pavement." I pointed to the front wheel of the plane just under the nose. There it sat, with no more than a foot of ground to spare. The pilots in the cockpit had a front row view of a green valley below.

I watched as Raul visibly shuddered at the thought of what could have happened if the pilot had delayed anything by even a second. I tried to throw my arm around the big guy's shoulders in an attempt to offer comfort but gave up and settled for his waist. "Come on, there's a bar over there. Let's go slam a couple of shots back!"

"No, we can't just leave... Cashel will be... concerned."

"Let him be," I said, as I made my way under the plane and headed straight for a table at the back of the bar.

"Cassidy! You can't just leave!" He was practically begging me.

Stopping, I turned around and looked at him. Raising a brow, I said, "Watch me." And with that, I turned back and was on my merry way to get drunk.

He came scurrying after me, like a lost puppy through the tall grass. "There's a protocol when planes land in places they

aren't supposed to. You can't just leave."

"Ah... I think I am." I said, stepping onto the back patio of the bar. Tugging on the door handle, I pulled it open and the two of us slipped inside. Heading straight for a table, I sat down and pointed to the seat across from me. "Now, get on your phone there, call Cash and tell him to send a car, or I will head back to America after I get drunk."

"Where did you come up with the name Cash? I... he's not going to like that just so you know," Raul said as he dutifully pulled his cell phone out of his pocket.

I snorted as I held two fingers up to the waitress. "I don't like Cashel. Seriously, what kind of name is that?!" I dug my fingers into a bowl of peanuts in their shells.

"A very old Irish name," he said as he placed his call.

The waitress came over and sat two pints of beer on the table. I pointed at Raul and whispered, "He's paying. Oh, and can you please bring me a shot of anything that's liquor?" I popped one of the nuts into my mouth, smiled my thanks as she nodded and headed back to the bar.

"What did he say?" I asked as I sucked the salt off the shell then broke it between my teeth and spit it in my hand.

"That's gross," Raul commented.

I looked up at him from examining the innards of the peanut shell and said, "What does that mean?"

"It means..."— he waved his hand at me. — "...you... what you're doing is gross."

"Well excuse me. But it's not like I had a chance to grab anything to eat when you showed up at my door, four minutes early I might add!"

The waitress came back with a tray in her hand and a shot of amber courage. Not waiting for her to set it on the table, I relieved her of it by plucking it off the tray and sucking it back all in one smooth motion, just as his phone pinged.

"Come on, our ride is here," he said, pulling his wallet out and standing up.

I watched as he tossed a few bills onto the table. Realizing he meant now, I of course protested, to no avail. “I... what... no! I’m not even feeling good yet. We can’t’ leave!”

“We are and I don’t care.” He came around and pulled my chair back. Then he picked up my Goodlife bag, slung it over his shoulder and ushered me to the exit.

Once outside, an identical black limo to the one he’d picked me up in, stood waiting for us with the back door held open by the driver.

The driver nodded and said, “Nice to see you’re safe, sir.”

Sir? Why would a driver call another driver sir?

Raul must have a sixth sense or something because before I could say a thing, he held up his hand to me. “Don’t ask.”



Chapter 3

After driving three hours we finally arrived in Sussex. The driver pulled up in front of the only hotel the tiny town had to offer; conveniently attached to the Black Flag pub. I looked up at the mini looking castle as Raul helped me out of the car. He hurriedly ushered me inside right to the front desk.

After signing me in, he palmed the door key and looked at me. “Come on, you can freshen up. I’ll get them to send up a tray of food.” He looked at the man standing there watching our exchange and with a flick of his hand, the man left.

I shook my head as I held out my hand, waiting for him to drop it in my palm. When he didn’t, I put it on my stomach. “I’m good, I think those peanuts were rotten back at that bar.”

“That wasn’t a suggestion, you will eat. You’re going to need the strength.”

I felt like stamping my foot, but instead said, “The only thing I need strength for is to fall in a bed.” I turned and headed to the stone staircase but was stopped by Raul putting a hand on my shoulder.

I look at him and raise a brow. “Can I help you?”

“I’m coming with you.” Placing his hand at the small of my back, he guided me up the steps.

“I figured as much; you do have the key.” A thought occurred to me and so I said, “Are you staying here as well?”

“Something like that,” he muttered, as he pointed to the right at the top of the stairs. “It’s this way.”

I followed him the short distance to room 113 and waited while he unlocked the door. Pushing it wide, he entered the bathroom, looking at every square inch of it. When he was satisfied, he ducked out and came into the main area.

Folding my arms across my chest, I leaned a hip against the tv stand and watched as he went to the nightstand and

picked up the lamp. Turning it upside down, he ripped the bottom of it open and peered inside.

I snorted. “What exactly are you looking for?”

“Bugs,” he muttered, frowning.

I had to bite my lip to control my laughter. “Do you mean like listening devices?”

“No, I mean bugs.” He pulled back the pillows, followed by the blankets. “The creepy crawly kind.”

“I see.” I crossed the room to the window and pulled back the drapes. “Like what?”

“Black Widow,” he muttered, looking under the bed.

I spun around to face him. “Ahh, correct me if I’m wrong, but there aren’t any black widows’ in England.”

“No, you’re right. They can unintentionally be brought into the country, but...”

He gave me the heebie jeebies just talking about it. Hunkering down beside him, I looked under it too. “There’s nothing here.”

“Good, it’s all clear.” He abruptly stood and held his hand out to me. A knock at the door had us both looking that way.

“Food’s here,” he announced, leaving me on the floor, he went to open the door.

He pulled a cart into the room and carried the tray over to the table as I scrambled to stand. I plopped down onto the bed and watched as he uncovered the tray. He looked at the platter and selected a cherry tomato off it. Holding it up to the light, he slowly rotated it between his thumb and forefinger before popping it into his mouth. Next, he snatched up a grape and was in the process of doing the same thing.

By this time my face was screwed up, wondering just how far this man was off his rocker. I had enough of his oddness.

“What the hell are you doing?” I asked.

He had the audacity to look confused. “What do you mean? I’m eating.”

“You didn’t inspect every piece of candy on the plane like that, in fact, you ate them all in one swallow. What is going on?”

“You will find out tonight at the—”

“Yeah, yeah, yeah, at the Black Flag Pub.” I wave my hands in the air. “That’s tomorrow night, not tonight.”

“Correction. Was tomorrow night, it’s now tonight at 9 pm....”

“Fine! I’m going to have a shower!”

I grab my duffle bag, open the zipper, and dump the contents onto the bed. Pawing through my clothes, I realized that I packed the shittiest items I owned. Nothing matched. Settling on a long floral printed skirt, I snatched up a white ribbed t shirt to go with it. They would have to do.

It wasn’t until I stuffed a pair of fresh undies into my pocket that I glanced over at Raul. Sweat beaded on his brow as he stared at my heap of belongings. Following his gaze, I was appalled to see that he was staring at my little sucker friend.

He pulled his shirt collar away from his throat and I could see his Adam’s apple bob up and down as he swallowed hard. “What is that?” he growled as I snatched it up.

“It’s ah...fan.” I cleared my throat. More confident now with my excuse, I reiterated. “Yes! That’s what it is, my personal fan.”

Raul raised his shoulder. “Huh, could have fooled me. It looked like a clitoris sucker.”

He abruptly turned and started to head toward the exit. Stopping, he looked back at me and said, “I’m heading downstairs to the bar. Once you’re done, you can join us down there.” He started towards the door once again and over his shoulder, he tossed out, “Oh... and bring your ‘fan’... you’re going to need it.”

He left me standing there gaping at the closed door, turning fifty shades of red. I picked up a pillow and whipped it at the door imagining it was him then marched myself into the bathroom.



Chapter 4

C^{ashel}



I ENTERED THE ROOM where we, the Watchers of the Night, hold our meetings. A hidden room in the underbelly of the bar, far away from the prying eyes of the bar patrons above.

I look around and take note that a fire is already blazing away in the fireplace that's big enough to park a Buick in and see Mickle sitting in one of the plush leather chairs set before it. A glass of amber liquid, that I know is the finest and oldest cognac around, dangles from his fingertips.

To my left is a boardroom sized table with a dozen chairs tucked neatly around it, and I toss the manila envelope I'm carrying onto its shiny surface as I pass by.

The second Mickle sees me, he pounces.

"I trust she made it safe?" he asked, sipping the amber liquid from his glass as his knee bounces up and down in nervousness.

I sit across from him and help myself to a glass of cognac from the tray on the low table that separates us. I nod. "As safe as can be expected, all things considering."

Mickle rubs his jaw. "Does she suspect anything, you think?"

I toss my drink back in one swallow, then shrug. "Who knows? Would it matter if she did?"

"No. Not in this case it wouldn't." Mickle shook his head as if to reaffirm his statement. He then looks at me, squinting. "You know, you're supposed to sip cognac, not chug it down."

"Perhaps if you would stop bouncing your damn leg, I would. I just traveled—"

The sound of the door leading to a secret passageway had me shutting up and both of us turned in our seats, holding our breath.

Peter Jones, at the age of 25 was the youngest member of our team, strolled in with a huge grin on his face. He thought everything was a joke. Most times it was, but not this time, the stakes were too high.

He flopped down into the chair beside me. Leaning forward, he snagged a glass off the tray and looked at the scowling Mickle. “What’s up with you mate?” he asked.

“Must you come through that entrance every time?” Mickle questioned, bouncing his leg even faster. “You know it’s haunted.”

“Pfft, it ain’t haunted!” Peter said, waving his hand in the air. “I go through it every meetin’ and not once have I seen a ghost.”

“You will,” I muttered. “When you’re least expecting it.”

Peter grinned. “Nah... you have to be a believer, and I’m not, remember?” He looked around the room and said, “So, where is everyone?”

I look at my watch. “Jake is running late, and Ivan is upstairs talking to some blonde at the bar. Or was, when I went by.”

Peter laughed. “Knowing Ivan, he’s upstairs shagging the broad by now.”

Mickle tsk’d. “Do you have to be so crude?”

“Oh, come now Mickle,” Peter said. “Maybe you need a good shagging yourself, stop that knee from bouncin.”

I had to laugh at that myself because that’s exactly what I was going to say but the kid beat me to it.

“What the hell is going on in here, is that laughter I hear?” Jake strolled in looking like an old-time gangster. He looked like that because he was.

“Hells yeah. Was just saying to Mickle that he might do good having some sex.” Peter laughed.

I glanced at Mickle and saw the pent-up emotions brewing just below the surface.

“Enough,” I growled at Peter.

“What?” He had the decency to look ashamed. “Was just having a lil fun is all.”

I raised a brow. “Yeah? Keep pushing him and see how much fun you have then.”

Jake sat in the chair next to Mickle and placed his hand on Mickle’s knee. “You need to learn to relax mate.” He raised his eyes to me. “She’s here, right?”

“Indeed, she is.” Looking at my watch again, I continued. “She should be here any second. I instructed the owner to bring her down.”

Jake nodded. “Good. The faster we get on with it the better for everyone. Do you think she’s the one?”

I shrug. “Won’t know until she tastes it, but I’m fairly confident that she is.”

The pull I have always had for Cassidy is telling enough for me.

Jake nods and asks, “Where’s Ivan?”

“I don’t know. I’ll call him.” I pulled my cellphone out of my pocket and stabbed his number into the keypad. On the fifth ring he picked up. “Where the hell are you?” I asked in way of greeting.

“I’m right here dear cousin,” he pushed the door open and stood there with his eyes aglow. Still speaking into the phone, he said, “And I have such a delectable morsel with me, she even brought this with her.” He holds up her clit sucker for all to see.

“Give me that!” I say, yanking it from his fingers as I watch the door open fully and see a trembling Cassidy standing beside him with unseeing eyes.

I stalk over to the duo and grab Ivan by the shirt. Fisting my hand, I pull my arm back ready to let it fly and snarl. “You fucking better not have touched her.”

“She’s fine!” Ivan licks his lips. “Just in a little trance is all and a little lick or two.”

He sees the fire in my eyes at his admission and puts his hands up. “I jest! I kept my tongue in my mouth! Can’t have her knowing where the meeting room is, now can we?”

“Have you forgotten?” I roar as I feel a set of arms pulling me back. Knowing that it’s Jake, I shake him off. “She *is* the reason there is a meeting room! Snap her the hell out of it, now!”

Ivan runs his finger from her forehead down her nose and taps her chin. Cassidy’s eyes focus on the first thing she sees, and it just happens to be me.

“Raul? Is that you? You look different. What the hell is going on and how did I get here?” She turns her head and looks at Ivan. He grins and wiggles his fingers at her.

Seeing him for the ghoul that he is, she screams at the top of her lungs.

All hell breaks loose.

Mickle yells, “Close the bloody door!”

Jake raises his hand and with a shudder, the stone door slams shut.

Ivan and Peter clap their hands over their ears. Their faces contorting into a mass of pain, as their screams of agony echo off the walls.

And Cassidy. Cassidy lunges towards me, seeking the only semblance of normalcy in the room.

As I take her in my arms all my senses reel, from the feel to the smell of her trembling body.

Swaying from the effects this woman has on me, I set her at arm’s length and look deeply into her eyes. Casting a calming spell directly into her soul, I ask, “Do you trust me?”



Chapter 5

Cassidy



ONE MINUTE I WAS EXITING my room and the next I'm standing in a house of horrors and Raul is asking me if I trust him. How could I not? If he wanted to kill me, he had plenty of opportunities.

"Do I have a choice?" I ask as he takes me by the hand and leads me over to a chair.

"Of course you do. Sit," he says. He settles himself on the coffee table in front of me and hands me a glass of liquid courage. "What is this?"

Raul looks at me. "It's cognac... old cognac," he replies, studying my face.

I sniff it and ask, "How old?"

"Not that it matters," Mickle said. "But if you must know it's five hundred years old and from my own collection."

"Is it any good?" I look at Raul.

At his nod, I take a sip, only to spit it out accidentally, in his face. I wipe my mouth with the back of my hand. "You're trying to poison me, aren't you?"

I notice the man with a bouncy knee lean forward, his knee no longer bouncing. I frown at him, knowing he's likely the mastermind behind my demise. "What does it taste like?" he asks.

I feel my brows lift skyward. "What?!"

"For Christ's sake Mickle. An introduction would help." A tall blonde man that looked like he just stepped off the set of *Peaky Blinders* sits in the chair to my right and holds out his hand. "Cassidy, I'm Jake. It's nice to meet you."

He looks harmless enough, so I take his offered hand. Noticing how cold it is, I mumble. “Nice to meet you too...I think.”

Jake laughs as the man across from him leans forward. “Hi. I’m Peter. Sorry for reacting the way that I did when you screamed. I’ll learn to better control myself around you.”

I look at Raul and see him slowly shake his head. My eyes widen when I can hear his voice *inside* my head saying, “*I’ll tell you later.*” He then cleared his throat. “The one hovering in the corner over there and who brought you here, is Ivan.” He jabbed a thumb over his shoulder at bouncy man. “And you already know that’s Mickle... and I’m—”

I whisper, “Cashel... I can tell from your voice. How—”

“How did I change my looks?” he asks, as he morphs from Raul to himself right before my eyes.

“Whoa!” I climb up the back of the chair and over it to stand on the floor, needing to put some distance between us.

“What the fuck is going on?” I whisper. My voice rises an octave higher with each word I say. “Did you put something in my drink? PCP’s, magic mushrooms, peyote? Is that why it tasted like dirt?”

That got a chuckle out of all five men in the room.

“No Cassidy.” Mickle stood. “But magic is correct. Cashel is a witch. A very powerful one. But not as powerful as you...”

Now it was my turn to chuckle, only I didn’t just do a few ha ha’s, I was full blown out cackling like the witch they accused me of being.

When none of them joined in I realized they were just as delusional as me, thinking I was getting a cottage in the countryside.

“Cassidy.” Cash said my name like freshly shaved legs on satin sheets; cool, smooth, and sensual. I clammed up and stared at him. “Yes?”

“Are you done?”

I fold my arms across my chest. It irked me that he had such a command over me, making me cream in my pants by just saying my name. Suddenly, horrifying thoughts entered my brain. He knew about my clitoris toy and what it was, and he knew I thought his voice was fucking hot as hell. He probably even knew what color of underwear I was wearing. Instead of looking for bugs in my room he was probably hiding tiny cameras all over the place.

“Green with a lacy fringe and if I must say, sexy as fuck. And no... no cameras, that would be an invasion of your privacy,” he murmured.

My vision went from fuzzy to black in a split second and the next thing I know I’m flat out on the floor as they converse amongst themselves.

“I told you not to read her mind,” Mickle tsk’d.

“Do you think she hit her head?” Peter asked.

“I don’t know, but cover her mouth, I don’t think I can handle another screaming bout,” Ivan muttered.

Realizing the vulnerable position I’m in, I open my eyes to see five men peering down at me.

“Oh, no, there she is, keep opening those peepers, beautiful,” Jake encouraged.

“Keep your endearments to yourself,” Cash grumbled, as he helped me sit up. “Are you alright? Did you hit your head?” he asked, running his fingers over my scalp.

I have to admit, his fingers massaging my head had me feeling like ice cream melting on a hot summer’s day. If we had been alone, I wouldn’t have hesitated tackling him to the floor and having my way with him. But seeing how that wasn’t the case, I smacked his hand away and grabbed Jake’s instead. “Help me up, would you?”

Jake grinned as I placed my hand in his and looked at Cash. “You were saying?”

“Fuck off,” Cash muttered as he stood and stalked over to the drinks.

Jake ushers me to the chair I had been sitting in then he walks over to a fridge behind a bar and takes out a can of Coke. Popping the tab, he holds it out for me to take. “Drink this, the sugar will help.”



Chapter 6

Cassidy



I GUZZLE THE FIZZY goodness just as fast as Cash is banging back drink after drink, only I let out a huge burp.

Mickle rolls his eyes. “Are we certain we have the right one?”

“I’ll say. She has the sirens wail. The blood coming from my ears can attest to that,” Ivan muttered.

“Aye.” Peter agreed.

“I told you both to rub that salted earth in your ears...” — Mickle sniffed as he plucked a speck of fuzz off his coat sleeve— “...you only have yourselves to blame.”

Not sure I heard right; I blink in disbelief. “Salted earth? In your ears?!”

Peter nodded. “Yes, from a grave—”

I stood up and yelled. “Enough!”

Five sets of eyes were fixed on me and as I looked at each set, I saw something. Call me crazy but what I saw was fear. It was then that I knew I was in total and utter control over these five men.

“I don’t want to hear about bloody ears, salted earth, or anything other than why I’m here. Because honestly if you all are going to sit there, bickering, and bouncing your damn leg, I’m outta here.”

“Cassidy.” I looked at Cash when he called my name.

I sat back on the chair and said, “Please. Tell me why I’m here.”

He took my hand in his and rubbed his thumb across the back of my hand. “As you know, we are called the Watchers of the Night, right?”

I swallow hard. The rhythm of his thumb on my skin is creating a shock wave throughout my entire body. So strong, that I forget that the others are in the room.

“Ah... yes on YouTube.”

He winced. “Yeah. Well sort of. That is just basically a front.”

“A front?” I send him a dubious look. “You have millions of followers; I highly doubt that.”

“It’s true.” Peter chimed in. “I set up the account.”

“Why?” I ask.

Peter shrugged. “To not raise suspicion.”

I feel like I’m living in a fricken riddle. Which is something I don’t do. I rub my temples and start to hum. Something I’ve always done since I was a child whenever I feel out of control.

“Is she casting?” Ivan asks in a hushed whisper.

“No. She is not casting,” I say. “She is sick and tired of this bullshit!” Dropping my hands into my lap I look around at them, then point at Mickle. “You! Cut to the chase and tell me what the hell it is you want with me.”

Mickle gets up off his chair and shoos Cash aside. Sitting directly in front of me he begins.

“It’s simple really. You are here because we need you... the world needs you.”

“That’s it. I’m done!” I put my hands on the arms of the chair and go to push myself up. Only to be shoved back down.

A low growl comes from Cash. “Touch her again like that and I’ll end your life myself, Mickle.”

Mickle waves his hand like he’s swatting a gnat. “As I was saying. Humanity needs you... and so do we.”

Still reeling from what Cash said to him, my mouth starts working like a fish out of water and when I realize it, I snap my jaw shut. Taking a deep breath, I look at Mickle. “No, you

don't, and it doesn't either." I go to get up again, but his next words have me freezing on the spot.

"All your life you have wondered why some people have all the luck and why some people struggle to put food on their table for their children and yet others have an endless supply of money," Mickle said. "Your marriage failed since your husband couldn't handle the fact that he would never be a father because you're barren."

I'm numb. Absolute mind-blowing numbness spreads through my veins, chilling me to the core. There is no way they could have known any of that.

"You're a fucking asshole Mickle," Cash says, shoving him off the table.

Mickle stood and brushed himself off before planting his ass in his chair. "She asked for the truth, not your pussy footing around."

Ignoring him, Cash looks me in the eyes and softly says, "You have been cursed your whole life, Cassidy. Your twenty-sixth great grandmother who was born in 1424 was a witch, a very powerful dark witch, who cast a curse on her entire offspring and future generations."

My eyes are brimming with tears, threatening to spill over and I know they will, but I have to know. "Why? Why would she do that?"

I can tell Cash doesn't want to tell me as he sighs and looks at his hands.

"Please." I beg as the first tear rolls down my cheek.

"Because... she was an old woman of 99 years, which is absolutely remarkable back then, but she wanted to live forever. And so, she came up with a powerful spell that no one has been able to break in over 500 years."

He takes my hands. No tantalizing stroking like he did earlier, he just holds them in his strong hands, letting me know that he's there, as he continues. "Having outlived her first husband, she cast the spell on her second one to see if it would

work. Not only did it make him 50 years younger, but it also made him immortal.”

I snicker. “Like a vampire?”

Cash nods.

The tip of my tongue darts out and licks my pasty lips. It’s futile because all moisture has left my mouth. It feels as if I had been running a marathon on a hot summer’s day. I need a drink. Tasting like dirt or not, I lean over, reach around him and help myself to a glass of cognac.

“Not so fast.” Cash takes the glass from my hand and looks at Jake. “Can you get her a glass of rum?”

“It’s fine, I can drink that.” I nod towards the glass.

“No, you can’t. That is a special cognac. The ashes from where they buried her remains were rubbed into the oak barrels that it was stored in.”

“Dear God.” Instead of spewing vomit everywhere, I swallow the stomach acid as it floods my mouth. When I feel that it’s safe to talk, a plethora of colorful words fly out of my mouth. Looking accusingly at Cash, I say, “And you called *me* gross?! Why would anyone do that?”

Mickle spoke. “It was in her spell book, and I quote, ‘*Only the chosen one will taste the earth from where she lays.*’ In order to find the one to break the curse her ashes needed to be rubbed in barrels and left for 500 years. You’re not the first to drink it, but the only one who spit it out.”

I take the glass of rum from Jake and sip it slowly. A thought occurs to me. “If her spell book told you about the cognac, did it also tell you how the curse could be broken?”

“No. Well at least not like you would think,” Ivan said.

“What do you mean?” I ask.

“She left a clue as to where to look,” Jake answered. “We have been searching through the ages, and finally have found the missing clue.”

Not feeling good as to where this was leading, I ask, “Which is me?”

All five men nod.

A nervous giggle escapes past my lips as I shake my head. “I don’t want it; I don’t want to be the clue. I’m 35 years old, living in my younger sister’s spare bedroom. What could I possibly have to offer to save the world?”

Mickle darts his eyes to Peter, who looks at Jake. Jake in turn looks at Ivan, who says. “Before we get to that. Is there anything you want to know?”

I sit there for a second, playing everything over in my mind. As a million thoughts race through my mind, a few stand out.

I nod. “Yes, there is.”

“Go ahead.” Cash urged me on.

“What was her name, my grandmother?”

“Lilith Alexandria Blake,” Mickle replied.

“That’s my middle names,” I say, barely above a whisper.

“Aye.” Mickle stands, walks over to the fireplace and gazes into the flames. “From the day she was burned, every baby girl born that was a direct descendant of hers, carried at least one of her names. I made sure of it...”

“Why? Why a girl? Why not a boy?” I frown, something is bugging me, but I just can’t pinpoint it yet.

He shrugged. “She hated men. A man is who told the prosecutors that she was a witch. It was only natural that she would bestow her powers, the very same powers that will destroy her, with a little help, onto the first-born girl child that would be the age she wanted to become, 600 years to the day of her death.”

I gulped, loudly. I knew because everyone looked at me. “How old did she want to be?”

He glanced at me; his eyes glowing like a cat’s in the dark. “She wanted to be thirty-six again...”

I stand up and start to pace the room. “I knew something was wrong with me. Always did. From the weird chanting that came from nowhere to seeing things that weren’t there. Are you sure it’s me? Wait.” I stop for a second and look at him. “When’s the anniversary of her death?”

“The next blood moon. A fortnight from now,” Peter said.

I gape at him. “Which is?!”

“Two weeks, Cassidy,” Cash replies.

“Aha! My birthday is two weeks and a day!” I declare, relieved, that I can’t possibly be the chosen one.

“You’re in England, it’s already tomorrow your time.” Ivan smirked.

I glared at him. “Great. Thanks for bursting my bubble.” I start my pacing again and blurt out, “Fine okay, so I’m the chosen one. A witch, a reluctant one I might add.” I throw my hand in Cash’s direction. “And apparently Cash is too. So, what are the rest of you?”

“You haven’t figured it out yet?” Peter asked.

I drop my hand and smack it on my thigh. “Nope. Call it jet lag or call me dumb. I have no clue.”

“Well.” Jake leaned back in his chair and put his feet on the coffee table, crossing his legs at the ankles. “Peter, Ivan and I are all vampires.”

I raise a brow. “Really?” I don’t know whether to laugh or cry at this point.

“Yeah.” Jake nods. “Mickle was a witch but isn’t anymore.”

That got me excited. Smiling I turn my eyes on Cash. “You mean that I don’t have to stay a witch?”

“You don’t have to practice witchcraft if you choose not to. You have powers, always have. You just didn’t know you had them. I’ll teach you.”

“Great, I can do that I suppose.” Somewhat relieved, I remember what Cash told me earlier. “But you said that it’s

entirely up to me if I help right? So, what if I don't want to?"

Mickle turned and advanced, stopping within inches of me. "If you don't, everything that you hold dear will be gone. Your family, your friends, your nonexistent job, your favorite TV show, your favorite food, your phone. Will. All. Be. Gone. But you, you will remain, that is *your* curse for not accepting her gift and become immortal just like us."

"Us?" I ask in a hushed whisper. "Does that mean you're a vampire too?"

"Yes. I'm the one who reported her to the Spanish Inquisitors, Lilith's second husband. The one she cast the spell on."

This time when I hit the floor, I was out cold and quite frankly I wished I could have stayed that way. But they had an agenda...



Chapter 7

Cassidy



I AWAKE TO SUNLIGHT streaming across my face. I know it's the sun because I can see it through my eyelids, and I can feel it's warmth. Wait. The sun doesn't breathe or feel heavy on one's body. My eyes spring open to see a sleeping Cash next to me. Not that I mind, in fact, I like the weight of his arm thrown across my waist. Gently, I lift the blanket to check if he's naked. He is not. I lay my head back onto the pillow and stare at him with a soft satisfied smile on my lips. Why the smile? I have no idea. Cash doesn't come across as the type of man to take advantage of someone passed out, and he has his clothes on, so I can rule out that we had sex. Maybe it's the fact that another human has willingly laid beside me, something my ex refused to do in the last two years of our marriage.

"Stop wasting your thoughts on the douchebag that you called a husband," Cash murmurs.

"How do you do that?" I scooch closer to him. "Will you show me how?"

He opens his eyes, props his head in his hand and scans my face. "No. It's not something I can teach you, it's just something that happens."

"Oh..." I look up, trying desperately to not bat my eyelashes at him. "...what will you teach me?"

He takes hold of my chin and runs his thumb along my jawline. Inches away from my lips he murmurs. "We will teach you the magic and art of lovemaking..."

Now, if you have ever seen Kristie read between the wines on TikTok,, she makes this face when she talks about a spicy hot book. That's how I'm feeling right now. And if you haven't seen her, I suggest you go look it up. Because when his lips capture mine, a rapturous delight

sends shivers from my toes to the roots of my hair. There's no tongue, just his lips. And my blood is pounding, POUNDING, in my veins and it all seems to pool directly into my vagina like molten hot lava. But it's not blood, it's just me creaming away.

I swear to all that's holy if I don't get to have sex with this man soon there's going to be murder and mayhem in England. I say that as my brain finally kicks in. I flatten myself into the mattress, enough to break off the kiss. Panting as if I just got done building a house or something, I look into his eyes and say, "*WE?*"

Cash groans in pent up sexual tension and rolls off the bed. Standing, he gazes out the window. "Get up. We, as in, you and me, are going for a walk. We need to talk."

I scurry out of the bed, grab some clothes, and head off to the bathroom. As I use the toilet, I quickly change into my fresh clothing. When that's done, I squirt toothpaste in my mouth and vigorously start to brush my teeth. I freeze when I hear a tap on the door. "Yeah?" I ask around a mouthful of minty suds.

"When you're ready, meet me in the front lobby."

"Hold up." I spit into the sink and rinse my mouth. Opening the door, I smile. "I'm ready."

"Here." Cash shoves a jacket into my hands. "Put this on."

"It's ninety degrees out?"

He nods. "Yeah, I know. But until you learn how to conceal your identity you need to hide."

I hurriedly put it on and flip the hood over my head. "Can't I just wear a wig? Or you cast a spell or something on me?"

He shakes his head then opens the door and ducks his head out. Grabbing my hand, he pulls me into the hallway and shuts the door then waves his hand over the lock. A sliver of a lightning bolt exits his palm into the keyhole.

Eyes wide, I ask, "What did you just do with your hand?"

"Sealed the lock."

He tugs on my sleeve, and we walk the short distance to the staircase. I start descending first but then he grabs my elbow. Next to my ear, he whispers. “Keep your eyes down and don’t look at anyone.”

I’m getting a little concerned at this point. Cash is starting to freak me out and not in a good way. He takes my arm and hooks it through his and we go down the stairs together and out the front doors of the lobby. Once outside he glances down at me and says, “Don’t say anything till I tell you it’s safe.”

In silence we cross the gravel driveway onto the front lawn and make a beeline for a wood lot. The closer we get, a feeling of peace settles over me. Has he cast a spell on me or is it the outdoors that is making me feel this way? I soon find out as we enter onto a path and the trees seem to welcome us under their umbrella.

Cash lets go of my arm. “Okay. You’re safe now, feel free to talk and take off that jacket.”

I whip my head around to look at him. “Safe now?! You mean I wasn’t before?”

“Cassidy, you will always be safe around me. I’ll protect you with my life. But there are forces that are out there that want you. Strong forces that will stop at nothing to prevent you from learning your powers.”

“Do they come disguised as bugs?” I laugh, remembering his thorough search of my room.

He nods. “Yes, amongst other things.”

I look around at the ground and see a ton of bugs going about their bug life. “There’s bugs everywhere in forests. How can this be safe?”

“They aren’t really insects, but conjured and they can’t come into your home unless invited.”

“Vampire bugs?” I start laughing when he nods. My home? What the hell is he on? “Can you just tell me from the beginning? Because I don’t like this ride that I’m on anymore and I’d seriously like to get off it.”

“Follow me,” he says with a crook of his finger.

He starts walking along the path, leaving me standing there. I’m fighting an internal battle. Part of me wants to turn around and hightail it to the nearest airport but the other part, the part that has always known something about my life was off, follows him.

We walk in silence, deep into the forest. Sweat pours from my scalp, down my back and in between my boobs. I’m soaked and not in a good way. I lift the weight of my hair off my shoulders, hoping to catch a breeze when I spy a small waterfall pooling into a pond. Without a thought, I deviate off the path, straight for it, stripping my clothes as I go.

“Cassidy where the hell are you going?” Cash calls out.

“Swimming.” I answer as I near the edge of the crystal-clear pond. There I stand, in bra and underwear dipping my toes into the cool water and it feels like heaven.

Cash comes behind me. I know without looking because I can feel his heat whenever he is around. He drops my clothes onto the ground, then wraps his arms around me.

He pulls me back against his chest, and I meld my ass against his erection as his hand smooths up my stomach to my breast. His fingers dip inside my bra and seek out my nipple, teasing it into a stiff peak as he nuzzles my neck. “We can’t do this. Not yet,” he growls.

I turn in his embrace and wrap my arms around his neck pulling him to me. “Yes, we can.”

I lick his lips, teasing him to take my tongue into his glorious mouth. When he does, he cups my head, holding me there as our tongues taste and dance with one another. His other hand slides down my stomach and around my hip. He lifts my leg and wraps it around his waist, then shoving my underwear aside, slides his fingers inside me.

I’m almost embarrassed as to how wet I am, when he leans back and looks at me. “Fuck me, you’re drenched.”

Guilty, I nod and ask stupidly, “Is that a bad thing?”

A slow grin spreads on his lips and I notice that same sliver of lightning I saw earlier come from his hand is now in the iris of his eyes. "Not at all," he says, as he begins to slowly stroke his fingers in and out.

Deep down I have a feeling that I will fall in love with this man, and he will only break my heart, but I don't care because there has been nothing and I mean nothing in my life that I have wanted more than him.

But evidently, others think differently.



Chapter 8

C^{ash}



HAVE YOU EVER HAD ONE of those internal battles of knowing you should do the right thing, but the bad thing is just oh so good? Yeah. That's exactly how I feel as I stroke my fingers in and out of her wishing it could be my dick.

She doesn't know it yet, but I've been with her ever since my powers were strong enough for her not to detect. Something that took me years to master, she is going to need to learn in a few days. But every time she used her sex toys, I was there right with her. Watching her as she pleased herself time and time again, I could do nothing. Not even pleasure myself. And now that I have her in my arms, I still can't do anything. You see, the prophecy clearly says that our union must be witnessed by the Watchers of the Night... and more, that I'm not too happy about. But anyway, nowhere does it say that I can't offer her a little... enjoyment before our wedding. Just that we can't have sex.

"Oh my God!!!" Cassidy grips my arm and I watch as her eyes roll back in her head. She's getting close and all I want to do is ram my cock to the hilt inside her warmth. Fuck the prophecy.

I kiss her, backing her up against a tree, holding her there as I free my other hand from between her legs. She cries out at its absence, her hips still rocking as if I'm still finger fucking her. "Give me a second sweetness," I say as I fumble with my jeans. Pulling them down around my hips I pull my cock out, twitching, it seeks out her warmth like a heat seeking missile. I can feel her body steaming as she wraps her legs around me, pulling me closer and closer until...

A rumbling thunder erupts from the clear blue sky above followed by four bolts of lightning.

I lean my head on the tree against hers and mutter, “Sonofabitch.”

“What’s going on?” Cassidy whispers as four figures covered in black, from their pointed witch hats to their boots, move through the underbrush towards us.

I disentangle myself from her body and strip my shirt off. Pulling the shirt over her head, I softly say, “Go get dressed.”

She ducks around me just as Mickle orders, “Get your dick back in your pants, now!” He brushes a speck off his sleeve and looks in my direction. “You know the prophecy and what it states.”

Instead of arguing my reasoning of why I thought it would be a good idea to screw Cassidy against a tree, I just nod instead. “It won’t happen again,” I say, gruffly.

“Ah... Excuse me.” Cassidy walks to my side tugging up her jeans then hands me my t-shirt. “We are grown adults and if we want to ... fornicate against a tree, who are you to stop us?”

“You two can fornicate against a tree all you want,” Mickle responded, waving his hand about. “In fact, be my guest. But only after the marriage is consummated. If it happens before, the ritual won’t matter. It won’t stop her.”

I wince and shake my head. “Ah... about that.”

“Beg your pardon?” I feel Cassidy’s eyes snap to my face. “What marriage?”

“Oh, for Christ’s sake,” Mickle mutters, throwing his hands in the air.

Peter laughs. “You haven’t told her yet?”

“No. I haven’t.” I shot Peter a dark look. “We got... sidetracked before we reached the castle ruins.”

“Give me a second.” Cassidy puts her fingers to her temples then closes her eyes. The air around her ripples, like a mirage on a hot day. “Will you all please remove your face covering so I know who I’m talking to?”

I look around to see if anyone else notices the displacement of the air around her, that is now rippling around me too. I feel something that I haven't in years. A healing, calming effect slides over me like a lover's touch. "Cassi, they can't, they're vampires, remember?"

She drops her hands and blinks her eyes at me, like she'd just been in a trance. "Right, I forgot."

Ivan comes forward and stands directly in front of her. Apparently, he'd gotten over his fear of her. "What did you do just now? With your hands?"

"Rubbed my temples. I seem to get a splitting headache whenever the four of you are around. Most likely because you talk in nothing but riddles." She sighed.

"Do you still have the headache?" I ask.

"No." Delicately she lifts a shoulder. "It's gone. Always does go away when I rub my temples."

"Wait a minute," Mickle says, coming forward. Peter and Jake do the same, surrounding us in a circle. If these men weren't like brothers to me, I would be worried.

But Cassidy doesn't know that, all she knows is that they are blood suckers. She raises her hand and the air around us ripples again. She doesn't know it, but she just erected a force field that they can't penetrate.

"Ah you're in my personal space there bud," she says to Mickle.

He pushed forward, or at least he tried but he was going nowhere fast. He rooted his feet to the ground but that only made it worse. He started sliding back, right towards the pond.

"Cassi, put your hand down," I said to her.

She dropped her hand and Mickle stumbled forward, right into her. He grabbed her by the arms and through the mask on his face, he kissed her on the forehead then bowed at her feet.

She looked at me dumbfounded and whispered out of the side of her mouth. "What the fuck is he doing?" Jake, Peter,

and Ivan followed Mickle's lead, and all bowed down to her. "What the fuck are *they* doing?"

"They are bowing to you Cassi." I smiled at her.

A giggle slipped past her lips. "Why?"

"Because you, will be their salvation."

"Cool. Y'all can get up now." She then raised a brow at me. "Now, who the hell is getting married?"

Mickle stood. "That would be Cash and you."

I held my breath wondering if she would start screaming in hysterics and was relieved when she didn't.

I looked at her, to see her staring at me.

"And you're okay with that?" she asked.

Okay with that? Hell, that's all I've been thinking about for the past ten years. I nod without saying a word.

"It's in the prophesy. That the chosen one shall marry the first-born male witch. Not one that claims to be a witch but one of pure blood, who was born with magic flowing through his veins," Mickle said.

"And who predicted this?" Cassidy asked.

"No one." Mickle turned and started heading towards the path. "Well, that's not true. It was in Lilith's book of spells. You see, there is no 'spell' that can alter it, only events. However, I was the one who made sure they happened."

We all started following him through the underbrush, when I said, "Before Lilith cast the spell on Mickle, he too was a witch that set the wheels in motion for what is happening right now."

She gasped and looked at Mickle's back. "You altered the future? You can't do that!"

"I didn't alter it. I guided it. Why do you think she wanted to live forever? Because she was a wicked woman that wanted to control the world!"

“And she still will if you choose not to help us,” Jake said, pulling up the rear.

“I find that highly unlikely,” Cassidy snorted. “She’s been dead for what, 500 years?”

“Don’t you get it Cassidy?” Peter asked as we came to a clearing. “Lilith will become you. She’ll use your body as a vessel to carry out what she wanted to all those years ago.”

Cassidy stopped dead in her tracks so fast that I bumped into her. Catching her in my arms, I looked down at her and saw terror in her eyes. “Is what he said true?”

I nodded. “I’m afraid so. Look, we are here.”

I knew she was too afraid to look, especially when she dug her nails in my forearms.

In a hushed whisper, she asked, “Where is here?”

“Your ancestral home. Lilith’s castle.”



Chapter 9

Cassidy



I DARED NOT LOOSEN my grip on Cash. Didn't even want to look to where they all stood in silence gazing. Like they were seeing some mythical creature. Well at least Cash was, the others just stood there with their black pointy hats tilted back so I assumed they were staring at it too. "Is it hideous?" I muffled against his chest.

"See for yourself Cassi." He pried my nails from his arms then turned me around, still holding me. Thank God, it wasn't hideous nor in ruins like he'd mentioned to Peter earlier. It was stunning. Built of limestone with turrets on the left and right. The sun gleamed on the windowpanes as birds sang their song and the trees swayed softly in the wind. Nothing that I expected a 500-year-old castle that was left to rot away would look like.

Mickle held up a finger and shook his head. "This isn't right. It wasn't like this a year ago."

I took a step forward. No. That's wrong, I was pulled forward. By an unseen force that wrenched me from Cash's arms.

"Cassidy!" he yelled, as I flew in the air; like I could stop it.

Ignoring him, I watched in horror as the castle turned into a decrepit pile of mortar before my eyes.

Below me, the five men are all shouting commands at me to do something.

Peter laughed, and said, "Rub your temples."

Jake screamed something in another language. What, I have no idea.

Mickle told me to go right. Again, like I had a choice.

And Ivan yelled at me to use my clit sucker. Cash either told him or he snooped through my bags. Either way, I planned on finding out once I got out of the predicament, I found myself in.

And Cash, ran alongside of me in the air. I thought Vampire's were the only ones that could run faster than the speed of light, but I was wrong.

“What the *hell* are you doing?” I shouted at him.

“Making sure no harm comes to you,” he grinned.

“I fail to see the humor in this,” I said. “Get me down. Now!”

“You're safe, there's nothing here to harm you, yet. So, this will be a good practice run for you. Use your mind, Cassi.” He tilted his head forward. “Before you hit that wall. Now, close your eyes and concentrate.”

He's insane. But I did as he said. I focus and can see words forming in my mind. Not English. I realize it's the chant that's always running through the recesses of my brain and I start to say them out loud. It's then that I realized it's one of Lilith's spells. I'm slowing down, no longer soaring through the air. I can feel it because my hair isn't flapping in the wind, more like a feather floating on a gentle breeze. When I'm almost stopped, I feel Cash take me in his arms, and together we settle on the ground, within an inch of the wall.

I punched him in the arm. “What would you have done if I couldn't stop myself in time?”

“I'd never let that happen. You've always been able to change the wind with that chant,” he murmured pulling me close. “I'm so very proud of you, sweet one.”

His kiss was soft and gentle and had me close to tears. Not because of his lips fluttering on mine like a butterfly's wing but because he was proud of me. No one ever told me that in my life, not even my parents.

“Enough of that!” Mickle snapped, as the four of them approached. “We need to get you two back to the hotel. The ceremony will be tonight.”

“Tonight?” Cash shot him a dark look. “She’s not ready.”

“Ready or not, it must be performed tonight,” Mickle said, as he started off towards the forest, and we all followed. “That little show only proves that Lilith will do anything to stop Cassidy learning her powers. If she’s incapacitated in any way, Lilith will take over her body on the night of the blood moon.”

“Well, she won’t kill me if she needs me so what does it matter?”

“No, she won’t kill you Cassidy, but she could harm you enough to put you in a coma,” Jake said. “You won’t be able to fight her off.”

“Oh.” I sighed. That wasn’t something I’d considered. “Now this marriage, is it real or fake?” As much as I had the hots for Cash, I wasn’t entirely sure I wanted to get into a loveless marriage again.

“It will be real in every sense of the word and yes it does have to be... consummated.” Mickle answered. “Whether you want to remain in it after all is said and done, that’s entirely up to you.”

Well, that was a bonus. Cash and I had already been close to having sex, which would not be a tragedy as far as I was concerned. I darted a quick look in his direction to see his reaction. There wasn’t one.

I frowned. “Tell me again why we have to get married?”

“Your powers combined is the only way to defeat her,” Peter said.

Not entirely convinced Cash was on board with the whole marriage idea, I asked, “What does getting married have to do with it? Can’t we just work together?”

“It’s more than just working together. Lilith made sure that in order to defeat her, yours and his powers had to become one. You two *must* become one.”

I burst out laughing as an image of me sitting on Cash’s dick while we waved wands in the air flitted through my mind.

“You’re a dirty girl you know that?” Cash laughed.

Completely forgetting he could read my mind; I turned five shades of red, I shit you not.

“Do tell.” Ivan chirped out.

“It doesn’t concern you,” Cash replied, gruffly.

Ivan shrugged. “Doesn’t matter, I’ll find out soon enough during the consummation.” He wiggled his fingers in the air, and said, “Ta ta!” Then disappeared the same way he came, in a lightning bolt and rumble of thunder.

“What is that supposed to mean?” I turned my gaze onto Mickle. “He won’t be there will he?”

He had the decency to rub his forehead in what I took for as a guilty look.

“Lilith was a bit of a... sex fiend if you will.” He sighed. “The prophecy states that the wedding has to be consummated between you two and...”

He paused so long that I thought my hearing was gone. Getting frustrated by the minute, I walked right up to him and stood toe to toe. Which in hindsight was stupid, he is after all, a vampire. “And?!” I yelled.

“And two vampires...”

“Oh, *HELL* no!”

“You deal with her now Cashel. Show her what the future looks like if she doesn’t do this,” Mickle said. “We’re out of here.”

“Chicken shit! I’m standing right here you know!” I yell as Mickle snaps his fingers. The same rumble of thunder and lightning strikes down, and the three remaining vampires are gone.

I pinched my lower lip between my thumb and index finger, standing there staring at the ground. My head started shaking in denial and I looked at Cash. “I can’t do this.” I started to pace back and forth along the path in the forest. “You. I could do you, hell I’m already low key in love with you. Don’t ask me why because I *don’t* understand it,” I spat out. “But I can’t do them.”

Cash grabbed my arm and spun me around to face him. His face was a picture of agony. Why?

“Do you honestly think I want that to happen, Cassi?”

I bit my lip, watching him as every emotion I was feeling crossed his face.

“I’ve watched you for 10 years, slept in the same bed as you even while you were fucking your husband, or rather while he fucked you, and there was nothing I could do.”

My eyes bugged out of my head at this little nugget of info. “*What?! You were stalking me?*”

He shook his head. “No. Protecting you. You just couldn’t know.”

Cash took my hand in his. “Close your eyes.”

I didn’t want to... but I did.

He started by rubbing the backs of my hands with his thumbs, then says, “Once I was old enough, and my powers were strong enough for you not to detect, I was sent to your side. To watch over and protect you.”

As he spoke, images flashed behind my eyelids of him by my side, cheering me on when I got my driver’s license, and rigging a bingo board just so I could win the jackpot. Standing beside the minister at my wedding, scowling as I smiled at my soon-to-be husband. Then he was there at my doctor’s office when I learned that I couldn’t have a baby, holding me, with tears in his eyes as I bawled my eyes out, then again when I had to sell the house after the divorce.

Touched, I open my eyes and said, “I never—”

“Shhh, there’s more. Close your eyes.”

My eyes fluttered shut and at once I saw him there, beside me during my exams in college, directing me to the right answer. There he was, leaving flowers on my pillow when I thought it was my husband and again on my golden retriever’s grave.

I pull my hands free of his and fling myself into his arms, and sob. “You were there when I needed someone the most. You were the only one.” I leaned back and looked him in the eyes. “Were you ordered to be chained to my side by Mickle?”

“No.” He shook his head. “He never did. No one did.”

“Why did you?”

He smoothed my hair that had fallen over my eyes and said, “I fell in love with you and found that I couldn’t bear not to be near you.”

“You made me dream about you, didn’t you?” I ask, squinting my eyes. “That’s why on the plane you said we already met.”

“No, that was your powers. My powers are strong, but I can’t manipulate your thoughts.” He sighed. “Now I have to show you what the future holds, with and without your help... Close your eyes sweetheart.”

Cash cradled my head in his hand, and gently laid his thumbs on my eyes and said, “Just listen to my voice. I’m going to show you what life will be like if you agree to this first.”

“Okay.”

The word no sooner passed my lips, and I was catapulted into the future. When he said he was going to show me, I assumed it would be a photo slide or snapshots. Not like this. This was like a silent movie.

I’m standing in front of an old farmhouse with Cash at my side. At our feet sits a Golden Retriever, all of us are staring at the house.

“Come on. Take my hand,” Cash said.

“I can’t, you’re covering my eyes,” I mumble.

“You need to act out what I tell you as I show you. Understood?”

“Yeah, no. I can’t do that.” I shake my head.

“Yes, you can. Picture in your mind that you’re taking my hand. That’s it, see, you’re doing it.” He said encouragingly.

I grin, because he’s right, I am doing it. “How do you do this? How do you ‘see’ me taking your hand?”

“Because it’s already happened in that realm. Anyway, you’re asking too many questions. Remember, just listen to my voice and do as I tell you.”

“But—” I feel his finger smooch against my lips.

“Shhh. Just watch and listen.”

As I take his hand, he leads me across the front yard and the dog trots happily in front of us. There’s a swing, big enough for two, gently swaying in the breeze hung from a huge weeping willow. A greenhouse sits in a field off to the left with wildflowers galore surrounding it.

“What is this place?” I ask.

“Our home. Now, follow me up the steps.”

I do follow him because I’m dying to know what the inside looks like. We stop on the top step, and I glance around the covered porch. I drop his hand and head straight for the porch swing that looks so inviting that I sit my butt down. Pushing on the floor with my toes, I lift my feet and sway forwards.

He laughs. “Did I tell you to sit on that?”

“Sorry.” I smile. “I couldn’t resist. Care to join me?”

I stop the swing as he comes towards me with a grin on his handsome face. He sits beside me, and together we push off. He puts his arm around me and pulls me close as he rests his other hand on my belly.

“Good *Lord!* Why am I so fat?!”

He chuckled. “You’re not fat... you’re pregnant.”



Chapter 10

C^{ash}



CASSIDY RIPS MY HANDS from her face and looks at me. “What kind of trick is this?!”

“It’s not a trick Cassi.” I shake my head. “It’s the future, our future. If you want it.”

“It’s a lie!” Tears begin to stream down her face, and I want so badly to reach out and pull her into my arms. But I don’t. Instead, I stand there as she shoves me.

She jabs her finger into her chest, and wails. “I can’t have kids! I’m barren. We tried everything to get pregnant even invitro.”

“You’re not barren...” I clench my jaw shut. Not knowing if I should tell her the truth of how I prevented her from getting pregnant, or if I should lie and tell her that her ex was shooting blanks.

She started backing away. A look of horrid realization settled on her face as she pointed a shaky finger at me. “You... you stopped it didn’t you?”

“Cassidy. Put your hand down.” I order. She doesn’t and I see a small puff of frost exit from under her fingernail. I put my hand up, knowing that if she doesn’t lower hers, the next strike will send me to my knees. “Look, I did it because I knew that if you couldn’t do what the prophecy says, that your child wouldn’t suffer for what’s to come.”

“You had no right!” She stumbles over a root and falls to the ground. Her elbow hits hard, which I’m concerned about but I’m more concerned about the fact that a bolt of ice hits a tree limb over her head, slicing it in half.

I rush to her side, taking the brunt of the fallen limb. “Are you alright? Did you break a bone?”

She smacks my hands away. “I’m fine. What the *fuck* just came out of my finger?”

“Ice...” I take a step back, giving her the distance she needs and wanting to stay clear of her finger. “When you’re upset, you have the power to shoot icicles.”

“What else can I do?” she asked, pulling herself up off the ground.

“Aside from controlling the wind and sometimes weather,”— I shrug. — “You shoot ice from your fingertips.”

As she brushes dirt off her glorious jean clad ass, she asks, “What happens when we become one? What happens to me?”

“You will shoot electrified bolts of ice. Lilith wasn’t alive when lightning was first harnessed as an electric current. Therefore, she never had a use.”

“Hmm, okay. So, between the two of us, that will destroy her for good?”

“According to Mickle, it will.” I start walking on the path towards the hotel, hoping she follows. Thankfully she does without a gripe.

As we walk in silence, I peek into her thoughts and find she’s weighing the pros and cons while she silently curses me for blocking her chances at having a baby. As we break clear of the forest she pulls on my sleeve.

“Yes?” I ask.

“How do we combine our powers?”

I ram my fingers in my hair, then rub a hand down my face. Steeling myself I take a deep breath and say, “The night of the blood moon is a lunar eclipse. The earth’s darkest shadow, is called the Umbra and when the moon falls within it, it will turn red within the umbra, hence why it’s called the blood moon.”

“Cool. Thanks for the astronomy lesson.” She rolls her eyes, and says, “Now, do you mind answering my question?”

I've dreamt of this moment, to the point I could taste it and here I was acting like a teenager about to kiss my first girl. "When the moon is blood red, we will need to perform an act of love on the altar... in the castle ruins."

She crosses her arms in front of her chest and leans on one leg. A defiant stance if I ever did see one. "Whom am I to have sex with that time? Just you or more vampires?"

I shake my head. "Just me."

"Okay. I need to think about it."

I stood there and watched her walk away towards the hotel. I never had to be afraid of losing her all these years. Until now...



C ASSIDY

I shove the hotel door open and head directly to my room. Only to find my key isn't working. Of course it isn't, Cash welded it shut. I glanced down the hall both ways and when I saw no one about I pointed my index finger. A blast of frost hits the lock but does nothing. His words echo in my head to try again. "Shut up," I mumble. "I'm mad at you remember?"

I flatten myself against the wall as a couple approaches giving me weird looks. "Hi." I smile as they scurry past without saying a word and I wait until they start down the stairs. "Get the hell out of my head Cash!" I say as I point my finger at the lock again. This time, a wand sized bolt of ice slices into the metal like a hot knife in butter. "Ooops," I mutter as the remains of what was the lock clang to the floor.

Pushing the door open, I make a beeline for the bed and flop on it, burying my face in a pillow. I can't believe Cash would put a stop to me having children. Looking back, there were many times my ex couldn't get it up. Now I knew that it was Cash cockblocking him.

But that didn't bother me. I'm glad I didn't have kids with him. I never wanted to see his face again. What bothered me

was the agony of going through everything only to be told it was my fault.

I roll onto my back and realize that Cash never showed me my future if I didn't help them. I stare up at the ceiling asking myself how bad could it really be, when I spy a fly crawling around doing fly things; then suddenly stops directly above my head. I watch as it grows before my eyes to the size of a fat bumble bee. Now, at this point I'm rising inch by inch, slowly sitting up in disbelief because like I said, this thing just *grew* at least five times it's size. And then it exploded. But not what you would think. It exploded into a whirling vortex of thousands more, and they were coming at me.

I jump off the bed as the door slams shut and feel myself thrown back onto the mattress, pinned by an unseen force. I dare not open my mouth to scream for fear they will fly right in. I can do the only thing I know how... scream in silence and hope like hell Cash hears me.



Chapter 11

C^{ash}



I FOLLOW CASSIDY AT a snail's pace and watch as she storms into the hotel. As she tried to open her hotel room, I watched through her eyes as she turned the handle and thought she could just walk in but instead rams herself into the closed door. She forgot that I sealed the lock. As she cursed me, I had to bite my lip from laughing and tell her to try again. Once she succeeds, I back out of her mind, giving her the privacy she needs to sort things out.

I enter the hotel through the hidden entrance and make my way down the tunnel to our meeting room. Pushing the door open, I see everyone gathered at the boardroom table.

"Bout time ye show up," Peter said, as he gazes at some photos lying on the table.

I pull out a chair and sit. "What are these?" I drag the nearest photo to me and glance at it. It's of a woman I've never seen before.

"These are possible substitutes in case Cassidy refuses to help," Ivan said. He holds up a photo of a woman with red hair. "I fancy this one."

"You just want to get in her pants!" Peter grins. "Does she even have any powers?"

"Dunno about magic." Ivan licks his lips. "But she has powers alright, she stole my heart."

"What heart? The shriveled thing in your chest isn't a heart." Jake laughs.

"Enough!" Mickle snarls, glaring at the others.

He looks at me and says, "Did you show her?"

I nod. "I told her everything."

“Everything?” Jake shoots me a worried look.

“Yes...”

“So she knows you prevented her getting pregnant?” Ivan asked.

“She does.”

“Oh man, what were you thinking?!” Peter yells.

Mickle waves his hand. “Never mind that. Did you show her what will happen if she doesn’t help?”

I lean against the back of my chair and say, “I showed her what her future will be if she does.”

“Sonofabitch!” Mickle storms over to me. His face contorts to the aged, old man that he is as he comes within inches of my face, hissing. “You had one job! One job and you fucked it up!”

“Stand down, Mickle,” I snarl, raising my hand. “Before I do it for you...”

Knowing what I’m capable of, Jake jumps up and yanks Mickle away. Smacking him on the chest, he says, “Cash has put stronger monsters than you down. I suggest you sit your ass somewhere.” He shoves Mickle into the chair and stands beside him.

I hear a piercing wail calling my name and somehow the others do too. I can tell by the way we all stood as one, looking at each other.

“Cassi.” I groan her name as I morph into a wraith and fade into the wall. In seconds I’m in her room and see her pinned to the bed by a swarm of flies in the shape of an imp. The ‘creature’s’ claws pierce into her shoulders, holding her down as its sharp teeth nip at her face. With no time to waste, I transform back to myself and pull a Flail out of thin air. Swinging the club like a lasso over my head, I cast a lightning spell on it for good measure and let it soar. It hits the imp squarely and I watch as thousands of flies light up like lightning bugs, only they are frying instead. Having done its job, the Flail rests imbedded into the wall, the handle swinging

from it's chain. I recall it back as Cassidy darts off the bed and into my arms.

With a worried look at me, Mickle says, "That was Lilith's familiar."

I frown at him as Cassidy trembles in my arms. "How is that possible? Should it not have died when she did?"

He shook his head. "Not necessarily. Either way, having it appear tells me that something sent it and I'm betting it was her from the grave."

Cassi pulled back and looked up at me with tears in her eyes. "I'll do it. I'll marry you and... and if I must I'll even have sex with" —she looked around me to the four standing there and lowered her voice— "...them. But only two, is that right?"

"Yeah, only two." I nod. "You can decide which ones."

She scrubs a hand over her face and whispers, "Fine. Then I pick Jake and Peter."

I turn to look at the men standing behind me. "Cassidy has decided she'll do it. and picks Peter and Jake, to help consummate it."

"Fuck me!" Ivan shouts then spins on his heel and leaves.

"My oh my!" Jake laughs. "He's a bit butt hurt, isn't he?"

"He'll get over it," Mickle says as he steps forward taking Cassidy's hand in his. He presses his lips to the back of it then said, "Thank you my dear. I feel as if I've waited an eternity for this moment. You have nothing to fear. Jake, Peter and especially Cashel will take care of you. We will arrange for the wedding to be three days from now, at midnight to give you time to process everything." And with that he left by bowing out of the room.

Peter then stepped forward. "I want to thank you for allowing me the opportunity to help you. Just please don't scream." He grins. "I can't bring myself to rub dirty ashes in my ear and I think blood pooling out of them will spoil the

mood.” With that he also left the room and Jake was the only one left.

“We will take care of you Cassidy,” he said. Lightly he took her by the shoulders and Cassidy winced.

Squinting, I asked, “What’s wrong?”

Jake pulled his hands away and looked at them. When he saw her blood on his hands, his nostrils flared and his eyes rolled back.

“Get me out of here.” He roared in agony, as his fangs started to grow in length.

Jumping on the spot, Cassi yells. “Holy shit!”

I yank her behind me and say, “Sorry buddy, you know I have to do this.” Raising my hand, I swept it through the air and shoved Jake out of the room. “You’re no longer welcomed in here.”

The door slams shut, and I seal it with a spell. I looked to see if she was still standing or passed out on the floor and I’m relieved to see her sitting on the bed.

I went into the bathroom and grabbed a towel then went back to her side. “Here.” I handed it to her. “Take your shirt off and wrap this around you.” I told her before going back into the bathroom to scrub my hands clean. I returned to see her sitting there. Her hair laying softly on her bare shoulders and she’s holding the towel just above the swell of her breasts. Swallowing hard, I went to the nightstand and took out a first aid kit that I knew was there because I manifested it. I wanted to appear as normal as possible, she had enough scares for one day.

I knelt before her as I set the kit on the bed beside her and took out what I needed to clean her wounds and stitch her up if needed.

I rip open a pack of gauze and soak it in alcohol. Taking hold of her right upper arm, with the gauze poised, I look at her and my gaze softens. “This is going to sting. Can you move your hair aside for me?”

“I don’t feel so good.”

I frown. “What’s wrong?”

“I feel like I’m going to throw up.” She jumps off the bed and races to the bathroom.

I go to her and she’s dry heaving over the toilet. My hand brushes against her neck as I gather her hair up to hold it out of the way and I find her skin scalding to the touch. Worriedly I wait for her to finish and when she does, she leans back against the tub in a heap of exhaustion.

The towel that’s wrapped around her has slipped and one rosy, pink nipple peeks out at me. I pay no mind to it as my gaze settles on her shoulders. The wounds are an angry black color and so are her blood vessels. She’s been stricken down by Lilith’s imp. I know what I must do and it’s not going to be pleasant for either of us.



C ASSIDY

I don’t know why I suddenly felt so sick. Probably because I was just attacked by a swarm of flies that took the shape of a winged creature with a forked tongue, or maybe it was the fact that a man that I had to have a foursome with, in 3 days just wanted to suck my blood dry. Either way, I had to run to the toilet before I upchucked in Cash’s face.

He was sweet about it though, holding my hair back as I got cozy with the throne. And now I’m resting against the coolness of the tub and all he wants is for me to stand. I don’t want to stand. I want to sit here and sleep off whatever it is that’s caused me to make an intimate acquaintance with the toilet.

“Cassi, you need to get up.”

I smack his hand away and slide down to lay on the floor. As my eyes flutter shut, I say, “Just leave me here.”

“NO!”

I crack open a peeper to see him glowering down at me. He stuffs his hands under my armpits and pulls me to my feet.

“You need to get in the shower, you’re burning up.”

Well, I can’t argue with that. It feels like red hot coals are being pressed against my skin. He shuts the toilet seat and I plop down on it while he turns on the water taps.

He pulls me back to my feet once again and tugs my jeans down; the towel drops forgotten to the floor. At this point I’m like a zombie, standing there without a care in the world. But then I hear him suck in his breath and I look at his face. His eyes alight with what looks like static electricity, and I know without a doubt our union will be a sizzling one.

He lifts me in his arms and murmurs, “I’ve seen you naked so many times over the years but none of it compares to how you look right now.”

Did he mean that in a good way or a bad way? Cuz right now I feel like the gum on the bottom of someone’s shoe. I want to say something, anything but I’m just too weak to. He holds me underneath the cool spray, just standing there, looking into my eyes as I shiver uncontrollably.

“Do you think you will be able to stand?” he asks. “There’s something I have to do.”

I nod. “Only one way to find out.” He sets me on my feet, and I stand there shaking like a leaf. My teeth start to chatter, and I stutter out. “Wh... what do you need to do?”

He gently takes hold of my upper arms and bends down to look me in the eyes. “You’ve been envenomated.”

“What the hell does that mean?”

“It means you have venom in you, that I need to suck out.”

That perked me the hell up. “WHAT?! How?”

He brushes the wet hair off my shoulder and drops his gaze. “There. The imp did it when it had you pinned to the bed.”

Panic sets in as I look down and see what looks like black spider veins running from the wounds, down my arms and spreading to my chest. I snap my eyes to his and in a hushed whisper, ask, “Am I going to die?”

“Not on my watch you aren’t. But it’s gonna hurt. Just whatever you do, don’t move.”

I vigorously nod my head and watch in awe as he bends towards me. He’s mere inches from my breast and all I can think of is him clamping his lips onto my nipple. I mean if I’m going to die, what better way to go than having him suck on it?

He raises a brow and grins. “We will get to that, but first the venom comes out. Remember, don’t move...”

“I won’t,” I say and make a mental note to remember he can read my mind.

Scared shitless of the unknown, I draw in a sharp breath as his lips touch my skin. He opens his mouth and flicks his tongue over the first wound, then jabs it into it. I scream in agony as I feel the poison being drawn out of my blood vessels. As the pain subsides, it’s replaced with a delicious feeling of pleasure. Odd reaction, right? It’s like he put a spell on me or something. And I know he said not to move but I couldn’t help myself. I ram my fingers in his hair and hold his head fast to me until I feel him back off.

He spits the poison out at our feet then bends his head once more. Only this time he captures that nipple between his teeth while his tongue dances across it. Little jolts hum through my veins causing a heaviness between my thighs.

Wanting to feel him, my hands go to his belt, and I’m relieved he doesn’t stop me. He gathers me in his arms, and I lean back, allowing him to take his fill as I unzip his jeans and eagerly plunge my hand inside, seeking out his cock. I froze when my hand encountered steel. “You have a Prince Albert piercing?” I whisper.

He glances up at me and nods. “For you.”

Well damn it all, I orgasmed on the spot. Not at once mind you, but when my overactive imagination pictured us doing the deed, his cock slick with my wetness sliding in and out of me with that ring hitting my g spot every stroke, yeah, you're damn right I went off. I could not wait to have him between my legs doing just that.

“Can we get married tonight instead?” I ask.

He laughs. “No. Not tonight. After I suck the other wound clean, we both need to rest and recuperate.”

“I feel a lot better now—”

“You think you are, but that's not a risk I'm willing to take...”



Chapter 12

C^{ash}



I 'D RATHER BE LYING next to Cassi, but I must fill the others in on what happened to her after they left. So, I sit beside the bed in a recliner watching her chest rise and fall with every breath she takes while my lips and mouth feel like they are on fire. She didn't realize how close she came to succumbing to the venom. Another five minutes or so and instead of watching her peacefully sleep I would be casting a spell to bring hell to earth. She means that much to me.

When I'm convinced she will be fine, I pull out a black velvet bag from the pocket of my jeans. Inside are crystals, Amethyst and Obsidian for protection, Moonstone for calming and Jade for healing. I lay them around her then conjure my familiar, a black panther, as well as her's that she has yet to meet, a black wolf. Both will watch over her in my absence.

Knowing they are there to protect, they lay on either side of her. Their keen yellow eyes, unblinking in the low light makes me a little apprehensive. If she awakens before I return, she will undoubtedly freak out. But I can't leave without knowing she will be protected; I know they will defend her at all costs. Before I leave, I cast a sleeping spell on her to ensure she stays asleep and then I duck out of the room, sealing it shut from intruders.

I make my way down the stairs to the basement below and when I enter, I hear Peter laughing. "Stop sulking mate! She probably remembers you putting her in that trance."

I glance over to Ivan who is sitting like a petulant child, arms crossed and pouting.

Jake nods a greeting to me then shakes his head. "Doubt that, she likely can smell all the other women on you."

Clearly, they are discussing Cassi's choice in who gets to bed her.

Ivan rubs the stubble on his jaw. “Well, she wouldn’t be wrong.”

Mickle is standing by the fireplace staring into the flames and turns as I head to the bar. He can tell something is wrong with one glance at me.

“Is she alright? Jake told us what happened,” he said.

I look over to Jake and ask, “How are your hands?”

He rubs his palms on his thighs. “Burning a bit, why do you ask?”

I grab a bottle of whiskey, twist the cap off and methodically pour myself a shot glass full. I toss it back and pour another. Taking it, I sit on one of the leather chairs and take a deep breath. “After you left Jake, Cassi started throwing up.”

He leaned forward in his chair. “Did I cause it?”

I took a sip of my drink this time and shook my head. “No. Lilith’s imp caused it. She has two puncture wounds; both were turning black along with her blood vessels.”

“Holy shit!” Peter jumped up. “What did you do? Is she alright?”

I nod. “She’s resting with our familiars. I put a spell on her to make sure she sleeps.”

“How did you get the venom out?” Ivan asked.

“Sucked it out. My mouth is burning, but at least she’s safe.”

“That’s odd... venom doesn’t usually cause a burning sensation,” Mickle said. “Not from coming in contact with it. It has to be injected.”

“Kinda like us when we’re turning someone?” Peter asked.

“Exactly.” Ivan nodded.

“What does it mean?” Jake stood up.

Mickle rushed over to a book lying on the bar. Lilith’s book of spells. He started flipping page after page until he

found the one. He ran his finger down the page as he read, then stopped. With a horrified look, which says a lot coming from a Vampire, he said, “It means the wedding is moving up.”

I raise a brow, puzzled at his reaction and ask, “Why?”

He looks back down at the pages and reads aloud, “*If sour blood lays upon the altar, hell will rein shortly there after...*”

Peter rams his hand through his hair. “What the hell does that even mean?!”

“It means that if one speck of Cassidy’s blood is tainted that you might as well kiss your lily-white ass goodbye.” I say as I stand.

Peter throws his hand in the air. “But you sucked it out!”

“Yeah, this time he did,” Jake said. “What happens if a flea bites her that’s been sent by... whatever the hell sent that imp? And quite frankly bleeding ears from her screaming is a walk in the park to this burning.”

“But how would moving up the wedding help?” Ivan asked.

“With each act that Cassidy completes, the marriage and the consummation, makes her magic more powerful. She doesn’t know what she’s capable of.” Mickle wipes his brow. “Once those two acts are complete, Cash will start training her for the final act. The one on the night of the blood moon that will destroy Lilith or...”

That was the first time we’d ever heard Mickle say ‘or’ after explaining the fine details.

I had a gut feeling that it wasn’t a good thing. “‘OR’ what?” I ask.

Mickle swallows hard before answering. “Or herself and the world as we know it...”

I’m across the room before I know it and grab Mickle by the front of the shirt. “That was never part of the bargain you fucker. You said she would never come to any harm if she did this.”

Mickle has the strength to throw an ox across a field if he wanted to, but he's no match for me when I'm angry. I lift him high; his feet start to dangle in the air when he looks to the others for help.

"You're on your own man." Jake shakes his head and walks out of the room.

"I agree," Peter says as he heads for the secret door. "Nice knowing you, Mickle."

Ivan walks over and stands beside me. "You know, I may be pissed that Cassi didn't choose me to get down and dirty with, but I'm not dumb enough to piss Cash off. You know he's loved her for years. And if I'm not mistaken, he would be happy just being her protector for as long as she lived without her ever knowing, am I right Cash?"

I nod without taking my eyes off Mickle's face.

Ivan sniffed. "Right. So don't be shocked when you find a stake through your heart, Mickle. Ta ta." He wiggled his fingers and left the room.

I stare at the monster before me. The one that I considered a friend. He was, after all, the reason I came to realize my powers. If it weren't for him, I'd never met Cassi in the first place. With disgust, I toss him aside like a used-up tissue and walk back to the leather chair. I sit down, pick up the shot glass from the table and calmly take a sip of the amber liquid.

"Now." I set the glass back on the table. "Tell me exactly what I have to do to stop her from destroying herself."



Chapter 13

Cassidy



I 'M LAYING ON A MASSEUSE'S table getting the most relaxing massage of my life from a blonde woman named Kate. Apparently, it's in preparation for the waxing that I will be getting shortly. Personally, I think the massage after would be more ideal, considering every hair on my body except my head will be ripped out by the roots but who am I to say.

“Okay Miss, we are done here. If you want to get off the table and move to that one”— she points a finger to a table alongside the wall— “and I'll get the sugar wax ready.”

I pull the sheet around me and slide off the table. “I've never had a sugar waxing before, does it hurt as much as regular waxing?”

“You trimmed; I trust?” She asks.

I stand there blinking at her. Trimmed? It finally dawns on me that she means my coochie. I nod. “Oh! You mean *trimmed*. Yes! Of course.”

“Then no. It doesn't attach to the skin like regular wax, just the hair.”

I hop onto the other table. “What area are you doing first?”

“The runway.”

“Right...” I nod slowly. “The runway.” I cross my ankles and clamp my legs tight as she comes ever closer with her wax bowl and grin. “Sorry, I... I think I'll just shave that... area myself.”

The next thing I know, Cash is murmuring in my head.

Open your legs sweet one. Unless of course you don't want me sucking on your clit while I plunge my fingers deep inside you...

I never sprang my legs open so fast in my *life* . So fast that Kate jumped back in alarm.

'That's my girl...' he murmurs as I lay there spreadeagled, grinning at her like a fool. "I'm ready!!" I say in a singsong voice.

She begins to slather the sticky goo on my crotch and is heading to my asshole. I was going to tell her to not bother going that far cuz no one and I mean no one would be entering the back door. Then I hear a low growl and once again, Cash murmurs, *Oh, yes I will be...*

'Do you mind?' I say back to him *'You really need to stop or Kate's going to have a real mess on her hands.'*

He laughs his ass off, and finally said fine before backing out. Which was really a weird thing, because I never felt him leave before. "Thank you," I mutter. More to myself than to him, but Kate is certainly giving me the side eye at this point as she finishes smearing the goo on.

Setting the bowl aside she looked at me and said, "Are you ready?"

"For what?"

"For it to come off." She moved between my legs and gripped the hardened wax.

"Um, can't we just wash it off?"

Kate laughed. "If only it were that easy. Ready, on 3?"

I nod, what else was I going to do.

"One... two... three... four...." *Riiip*

Sweat pours from every pore on my skin and I howl in pain as my pubic hairs are ripped from their roots.

"Are you okay?" She asks, shoving a cold cloth between my legs.

"I thought you were going on three. Here I was hoping you decided to give up." I puff a strand of hair out of my eyes. "If you call being skinned alive okay, I'm just *fucking dandy*."

Four hours later I'm back in my hotel room and ready to pass out when I hear a knock at the door.

Getting off the bed I pad across the room and look out the peephole. I don't see a thing. I put my hand on the lock ready to open it when from behind me I hear breathing.

"Don't you dare," Cash growls in my ear.

I spin around and stare up at him. "Were you just out there?"

"Yeah. I wanted to see if you would open it." He backs away and waves his hand towards the table. "I brought us dinner."

I tighten the tie on my robe and hurry over to the table and sit. "Thanks, I was just going to hit the hay, but I'm starving."

He takes the cover off the platter and hands me a plate of chicken alfredo. I start to dig in when he sits across from me.

Lifting the cover off a smaller platter, he hands me a bowl of Caesar salad. "How did your appointment go?"

I look up with a forkful of pasta halfway to my mouth. "Painful. Was it really necessary for all body hair to be removed?"

"Yeah." He nods, before biting into a piece of garlic bread.

"Why?"

"Because, if you haven't noticed by now, lightning is my element, yours, ice. And what does lightning do, it causes things to catch fire. When we have sex, I don't want to be smelling burnt hair. It's a huge turnoff."

I gulp. "You mean the hair on my head is going to catch fire?!"

His brows shoot upwards. "What? No." He laughs. "It doesn't work that way, thankfully."

I nod. Something is bothering me, but I don't know how much I can trust him. Wanting to block my thoughts, I push the food around my plate with my fork and concentrate.

“Something wrong?” he asks.

I shake my head but never break eye contact, it’s like I’m in a self-induced trance... just staring at my plate.

“Cassi. You’re blocking me, aren’t you?”

“Am I?” I look at him then and see the confusion on his face. “I am!” I hoot.

“Good, now I don’t have to teach you that. So, what is it that you didn’t want me to know?”

I drop my fork and lean back in my chair and sigh. “What’s the reasoning for the others the night of our wedding? Like I get that we need to do the nasty, but why them?”

Cash takes a deep breath and pushes his plate away. “Honestly, I don’t know.”

“Like, are they there as witnesses or are they trying to get me pregnant? Because if that’s the case I’ll be bringing a wooden stake.”

“I don’t think so. What would the purpose be?”

I get up and cross to the window to look out and see the forest off in the distance. I turn to look at him. “Have you ever read Lilith’s spell book?”

“Pfft, yeah right. Mickle doesn’t let anyone touch it.”

“Can you make me invisible?”

“Why, what do you have in mind?”

“I want to see that book.”

I walk over to my suitcase and begin to paw through it, finding a black track suit, I strip my robe off. Standing there naked, I pull the hoodie over my head, fully aware that my breasts are jiggling enticingly.

Cash hisses. “Woman you’re going to drive me insane, you know that right?”

I smile at him as I pull it down and stuff my cellphone in the pocket then reach for the pants. “Well, can you conceal me or not?”

“I can do one better... I’ll make us both invisible.”

True to his word, we both exit into the hallway, like ghosts on a nightly stroll. He’s assured me that no one can see us, but he didn’t mention if animals could. Which I find out soon enough that the hotel cat can certainly spy us as it sits on the front desk with its back arched and hissing. Cash raises his hand, and the cat promptly passes out.

‘You didn’t hurt it did you?’ I silently ask.

‘Nah, he’ll wake up soon enough.’

With a sigh of relief, I follow him out the front doors into the darkened night.

“Where are we going?” I’m having a hard time keeping up with his long strides.

“To their lair... They will be out feeding now.”

His words sicken me, and I gag at the thought of it. “Where is that?”

“In a cave. Hug me.”

“Huh?” I say then stumble into his ass because he’s bent over like a football player only, he’s looking at the grass. I look around, seeing no one, I ask why.

“Easier to fly there. Just climb on and hang on. I got you.”

Expecting him to pull out a broom from the ground, I wait excitedly. I always wanted to know what it felt like to fly, soaring above the treetops like a bird.

“What are you waiting for? Get on my back.”

“Oh! I was waiting for a broom. You mean like a piggyback?”

He laughs. “Yeah, something like that.”

I scramble up his back and he hangs onto my legs. And just like superman we’re off the ground and flying. Only it was more like a fricken cyclone.

This time when I started to gag, I just let it hurl through the air.

“I forgot to tell you to close your eyes.” He laughs as the sound of my upchucking echoes off everything we pass like a bat’s sonar.

Finally, my head and stomach stop spinning and with repeated swallows, I manage to keep the bile where it belongs just as we start to slow down.

“This is not flying!” I say into his ear.

“Of course it is. We all do it using mother nature’s gifts. Can you imagine if people saw witches and vampires flying in the air? Everyone would want to do it, save a ton on airline tickets,” he said, as he set us down on the ground in front of a cave.

I roll my eyes at him.

“Tuck your hair inside your shirt,” he says, as he glances around.

“Are we still invisible?”

He nods as he sprinkles something onto my head then does it to himself.

I start having a sneezing, snorting fit, because that’s what happens when I sneeze uncontrollably, I ask, “What is that?”

“Pulverized mushrooms, it’s to mask our smell. Come on.”

He takes my hand and leads me inside...



Chapter 14

C^{ash}



I WAVE A HAND AS WE enter the cave, and it alights with flames from the torches placed in the wall scones. I look over to Cassi and see her staring at the coffins with their crooked lids. They are empty just like I knew they would be. I know how she's feeling when her eyes come to rest on a pile of bones in a corner. I know because I had the same feeling the first time, I'd seen it. Pulling her close I lead her over to what looks like a shrine. One for Lilith, that wasn't there before. The book is lying closed in the center of a podium beside a wall, and torches flicker on either side of it. Dried flowers and the salted earth that Mickle harps on about, surrounds it, like it's warding off evil spirits.

Cassi is drawn to it I can tell. Like it's calling to her and when she puts out her hand to take it from the podium, I stop her.

"Wait. Don't touch it."

"Why not?"

"Lean down and hold out your hand, palm up, even with the book."

I watch as she does, then say, "Now blow on your palm."

The frost that comes off her hand, illuminates what I suspected. There are souls trapped within the circle. Scared, she jumps back.

"What the fuck was that?!" She asks, rubbing her palm on her pant leg.

"It's a binding spell, to hold her there and likely her familiars, we can't remove it. But I *can* do this."

I place my hand over the book and flip it open with a twirl of my finger. We both lean in trying to see what's written there

in the dim light.

She sighs. “It’s not English. It’s symbols, that look like a bunch of train tracks on a map.”

I frown. “I would assume it would be written in Gaelic, but that doesn’t look like anything I’m familiar with. Whatever it is, it’s old.”

“Wait a second.” She pulls her cellphone out of her pocket and starts to take pictures of it.

“That’s probably not a good idea.”

“Just a couple, I can reverse image them and see if anything pops up on the internet.” She smiled, and when she did, I knew then that I would give her the world if she asked me to.

As she gets busy taking pictures, I keep an eye on our surroundings.

“Okay, you can flip to the next one,” she says.

With one more twirl of my finger I open the next page and glance at it. There on it is a hand drawing of an altar with the blood moon in the background. On the altar lay two people in the throes of passion. She takes a quick photo of it too and then I close the book just as we hear a rumble of thunder in the not too far distance.

Putting a finger to my lips, I motion for her to follow. I duck behind the pile of bones and drag her down with me, against her protests of ick. A lightning flash on the wall near the mouth of the cave announces that someone has arrived to bed down for the night. It’s Peter. Strolling in, he walks straight to his coffin, climbs in, and closes the lid.

Cassi enters my mind and says, “*I thought they can’t see us.*”

“*They can’t, but their smell is like a hound dog’s. Come on, we’re getting out of here.*”

Normally in tight spots like this, I would just turn myself into a wraith, but I can’t do that to her, we have no choice but

to walk out. I help her to her feet and we both freeze when a skull goes skittering across the cave's floor.

With bated breath, we wait precious minutes to see if Peter will arise. When he doesn't, I make a beeline for the mouth of the cave tugging Cassi along as I do. The second we step outside, three rumbles of thunder sound out. I grab her by the waist and start to spin up into the air as three bolts of lightning touch down.



C ASSIDY

“Oh my god that was so close!” I mumble against Cash's chest. I nuzzle my face between the folds of his shirt and inhale deeply. He smells of sandalwood and bergamot with a hint of cedar. An intoxicating mixture to my brain to say the least.

I feel the rumble against my cheek as he says, “Open your eyes and look.”

“But I thought you said—”

“Just look.”

I raise my head and turn, looking over his arm that holds me tight. We are still in the air but instead of a whirlwind, we are flying just like a bird would. He turns me within his embrace and criss-crosses his arms over my body. I stick my arms straight out at the sides, and I feel like I'm soaring just like a bird. And it feels just like I thought. I'm speechless as I see the hotel come into view, and we come in for a soft landing. As soon as my feet touch the ground I leap into his arms and rapid-fire kisses, all over his face.

I lean back and look him in the eyes and see the love he has for me in their depths. I trail my thumb over his bottom lip. “Is there ever a time that you're not in my head?”

“No. Never.”

I kiss him then and a tear rolls down my cheek.

He leans back, searching my face. “You have nothing to be afraid of, I’m not going anywhere. I’ll never leave you like your ex. Do you understand that?”

He knew exactly what was bothering me. I slide down his body, taking pleasure in the hardness of every muscle that I meet, until my feet touch the ground.

“Come on. You need to get some rest.”

“What about you? Will you sleep beside me?” I ask as we start walking towards the hotel.

“Do you want me to?”

Despite knowing he’s slept beside me for years, I nod shyly.

He smiles. “Consider it done.”

I took off running. The sooner I get there the sooner I can lay wrapped in his arms, right?

Wrong.

Once we get to the room, Cash proceeds to build a wall between us of pillows. Like that’s gonna stop me from sprawling all over him come morning. But I make him happy by saying goodnight and now I lay there staring up at the ceiling while he snores away. I roll over, facing away from him and see my cellphone laying on the nightstand. Grabbing it, I look at the photos I took in the cave. The altar one in particular. For some reason it draws me in, and I think for a second that it’s trying to tell me something. Swiping to the next photo I enlarge it to see if I can spot any clues. There aren’t any. Exiting out of the photo gallery I open Google and upload the one with the train track looking chicken scratch, as I wasn’t entirely sure they weren’t Egyptian. They were not. Nothing came back.

It was in that moment that my sister decided to call. Not having told her where I was going or even that I left, she was likely having a conniption right about now. I slide out of the bed and head into the bathroom.

“Hello?”

“Oh, thank God! Where the hell have you been? I’ve been worried sick. If this baby comes out with grey hair, it’s all your fault just so you know!”

“I know Jessica! I’m so sorry. I’m in England,” I whisper.

“Why? Why would you be in England?”

“It doesn’t matter. I’ll explain when I get home. Is Roger still busy working on those scriptures that were found under the church?”

Roger is her husband and a Paleographer to boot. If you don’t know what that means, he studies historical documents and deciphers them. Exactly the kind of person we need to figure out what the hell Lilith’s book of spells is all about.



Chapter 15

C^{ash}



IT'S EXACTLY ONE DAY since Cassi and I went to the cave and one day before our wedding. We both are sitting in her room on pins and needles waiting to hear back from her sister's husband. I no longer trust any member of the Watcher's of the Night. Quite frankly, I never did. Despite Ivan and I being related by blood, I found him the most repulsive of all, from the way he treated women; and some, would stupidly fall for his charms. I don't trust him, especially around Cassi and vampire or not, if he lays one finger on her head again, it will be the last time.

"Look at this." I watch as she comes towards me with her phone then she hands it to me. "Does that not look like the writing from the first photo I took?"

I pull out my phone and open the photos she sent to me. Placing them on the table, I examine each one to the finest detail.

I slowly nod. "They do. What is it?"

She scrunches up her nose. "Supposedly it's Gaelic or a more primitive form of it. I'm calling my sister." She picks up her phone, dials the number, and hits the speaker.

"Roger? What are you doing answering Jess's phone? Aren't you supposed to be deciphering shit?!"

"Sorry, Cass, Jessica is currently being wheeled into the delivery room. Can I call you back? We're a little busy."

"Oh my *GOD* ! She can't be! I'm not there!"

An agonizing growl comes over the wire that would scare Satan shitless, then Jessica snarls, "Send her the fucking email noooooow!!"

I feel my brow spring upwards in surprise. “Oh my...that’s your sister?”

“Give me that phone Roger!!” A scuffling sound can be heard in the background followed by Jess panting into the receiver. “Cass. Roger is sending you an email noooooow!!”

A doctor or nurse yells out. “*Don’t you push!!!*”

“Good Lord, I can see the head,” Roger mutters.

“Send it before you pass out! Cassi, are you there?”

I look at her and see her shake herself loose of the chaos on the other end. “Yeah, I’m here.”

“Mom gave me a book years ago—”

“What?”

“Don’t ask, just listen. The book is in English, a twin to the one you found. I made Roger scan it all night; he’s emailing a PDF to you.”

Cassi shakes her head. “What? I... I don’t understand.”

“As soon as you told me you were in England, I knew you would need it. Mom said it’s from some great grandmother from a thousand years ago. She made it... for you.”

Cassi squints. “You mean five hundred years ago?”

“No, a thousand. It will be explained in the emaailllll! Sonofabitch, get this kid out noooooow!!!”

“Cass, it’s Roger, I sent it. Got to go.”

The phone went to a busy signal, and I disconnected the call.

I look at Cassi and at the same time we say, “The Watchers of the Night are lying.”



AFTER HAVING A CAR rental agency drop off a Jeep, I drove Cassi to the nearest coastal town. We both needed a break from the hotel, away from prying ears and eyes. We

drive to a restaurant overlooking the ocean and are seated at a table for two in front of a wall of windows.

“I can’t believe she’s gone into labor,” she murmurs for the tenth time since leaving the hotel.

I reach across the table and take her hand, smoothing my thumb across the back of it. “It’s not uncommon for a baby to be early.”

“I know.” She slumps her shoulders. “I just can’t help thinking that it’s my fault. I should have told her where I was going.”

“It’s not your fault and mother and babe will be fine.”

She looks at me with hope filled eyes. “Really?”

“Positive. In fact, I made sure of it.”

She nods and releases a shaky breath. “Okay.” Turning around in her chair, she takes her purse off the back of it and pulls out her cellphone. Getting up, she sits in the chair next to me and opens up her email.

Roger’s email is there. Tapping on it, we start reading it together in silence.

Cass, the language is ancient Irish Gaelic, to be precise, its Ogham, modern spelling is Ogham meaning Old Irish. I glanced through the book Jessica had me scan and I need to mention that if you’re doing what I think you’re doing take note on the 13th page. There is a concoction on it that will protect you. ~ Roger

I swipe my finger to the page mentioned in the email and see a potion for protection against unwanted pregnancy. Tapping the screen, I look at Cassi. “We need to find the ingredients now.”

We stand up when the waiter comes with our drinks.

“Ah is there something wrong?” he asks.

“We have an emergency,” Cassie replies as she puts her purse strap over her head and settles it crossways on her hip.

I pull at a hundred-pound note and hand it to the man. “Here, that’s more than enough to pay for our drinks.”

Placing my hand on her lower back, I guide her towards the exit and out to the car. Making sure she’s safely inside, I go around to the driver’s seat and climb in.

She looks at me in disgust. “What in the hell is eye of newt?”

I laugh. “Relax, it’s mustard seed.”

“Then just say that!!”

I start the engine and put it into gear. “She was an old witch in an even older time, they used words like that for a lack of a proper name.”

“Fair enough,” Cassi nods. “Okay. So, what does eels scales mean?”

“Exactly what it sounds like.”

“How do you propose we find an eel?”

“Easy, we go to an alchemist.”

She looks dumbfounded for a minute before lifting her head. “Of course, why didn’t I think of that.”



Chapter 16

Cassidy



I 'M IN DEEP, AND IN more ways than one. First off, traipsing across the English countryside in search of a hidden magical village is one thing. But to have to drink a concoction made of the grossest things I've ever heard in my life, is another. Especially when it's to stop the conception of a Vampire's sperm taking root. Not my words, Lilith's. It seems my dear, old, great, (times a bajillion), granny, was the local gynecologist back in the day. Not only did she concoct vile birth control, but she also delivered babies. Even Vampire babies. And according to her book there indeed was a duplicate. Just not an accurate one. The other one was a decoy that she made after being ousted as a witch. Surprisingly, she had a fair trial, which was a real shocker to learn, considering her husband, Mickle, was the one that turned her in.

"I've read this book through twice and I still can't find where it says that I don't need to have an orgy on my wedding night." I sigh and close the book with a snap, then toss it onto the back seat.

Cash laughs. "From the sounds of it she must have enjoyed a good romp in the hay."

I pinch the bridge of my nose then look at him. "How do we even know that's true?"

Cash came to a rolling stop in the middle the dirt road we'd been traveling on. He looked at me and swallowed hard. "I made sure it was. I did my own digging all those years I watched over you because I too, didn't believe it nor did I want them touching you."

I look at him and see he's telling the truth. "Well, I suppose what else did you have to do. But why? You're a guy. Guys like that sort of thing."

He turns to face me and rubs the back of his hand down my cheek. “Because. From the minute I saw you I wanted you. In my mind you were mine. Mickle wanted to send in the other three to visit you in your dreams. He wanted to groom you.”

“*Groom* me? Like brush my hair and shit like that... or?”

“The or. He wanted you as a sex slave until the prophecy could be fulfilled. I refused, even went and hunted them down in their cave while they slept then set it ablaze as a warning. But then you got married, I was fucking furious when that happened but there wasn't a damn thing I could do about it. The only saving grace was that you were no longer pure and no longer wanted as their concubine. And then your powers grew strong enough.”

“Well, as far as I'm concerned, I really don't have powers.”

“Not magical powers. The power I'm talking about is the ability to bewitch. I fell in love with you four years ago. In order for the consummation to work and the prophecy fulfilled, one of the participants if you will, needs to love another one. Hence why there are four participants.”

“You love me?”

“I do.”

Tears sprang to my eyes as I thought of all the times he's been by my side, watching and waiting in the wings. Loving me from afar and I didn't even know he existed. “Why didn't you come to me sooner?”

He shrugged. “You were married.”

“To an asshole! What would have happened if I still was? Who would be in my place?”

“No one. You are the one. Now that you know all of that, take a look out your window.”

I turn my head and look. There's a little witchy looking house sitting a stones throw away from my window. I glance around and we are smack dab in the middle of a village with a total of eight witchy looking houses.

I whip my head around at him. “These were not here when we stopped... in fact, nothing was here but the road and fields.”

“I told you it was a magical village.” He puts the Jeep into park and shuts the engine off. Grinning at me, he opens his door. “Come on, you’re in for a treat.”

I grab up my purse as he comes around to my side and opens the door. He holds out his hand and I grip it for dear life, and I don’t let it go. I follow him up the walk, and he pushes his way into the shop. I don’t know what I was expecting but it certainly wasn’t this. The shop keeper, a little old man with a toothy grin greets Cash by name.

“Hector!” Cash calls out. “It’s so good to see you. How are you doing?”

For the first time since meeting him, I see that Cash is relaxed. I can tell he’s in his element. He’s home. I let go of his hand as the two of them exchange small talk and wander off to a wall of crystals and stones. I’m in awe of all of them but one in particular pulls at me. It reminds me of the Caribbean Sea. Light blue in colour, with a darker blue and white intertwining throughout. It’s stunning and I feel that I must have it for some reason. I select one from it’s glass dish, the prettiest one in my opinion and take it over to the counter. I set it down, look at Hector, and say, “How much and what is it?”

Cash laughs. “Please excuse Cassidy, she’s had a rough week.”

Hector waves his hand. “Nonsense. A good woman always knows what she wants and goes after it.” He grins at me then leans his elbows on the counter. “My dear, that is a Larimer Stone. It comes from only one place in the world and that is the Dominican Republic. Does it call to you?” He glances at Cash then back at me.

I nod. “It does.”

“Then you shall have it. But first, let me put it in something for you.” He picked up the stone and went through

a curtained doorway that stood behind him.

“So, instead of needing to get all the ingredients and making the potion, Hector already had some on hand.”

I laugh. “Eels scales and all?”

He chuckles. “Yeah, all of it.”

Cash hands me a paper bag with stars and moons on it.

“Oh, how cute! I’m keeping this one.” I say as I look over the details of the design on the bag.

“I know about your dirty secret,” he murmurs.

All I can think about is the sex toys in my bedside table back home. I turn wide eyes to him. “You do, do you?”

He nods and grins. “Yeah, you’re a paper bag hoarder. When we move into our house, we could use all your paper bags that you’ve collected for flooring.”

“Why do you think I collect them? I saw it on some home show where they scrunch them up, lay them flat then put a clear coat on them...” I stop and tilt my head to the side. “Did you just say when we move into our house?”

Just then Hector came back with a cloth in his hands rubbing something. “This is an earth healing stone. It’s powers have the ability to release unwanted entities, remove attachments, aura cleansing and clearing and soothing. It also has effects on four of the main seven chakras, the heart, the throat, the third eye and the crown. A very powerful stone indeed!” He pulls the cloth back, blows on it, then holds it out to me.

“Oh... it’s gorgeous.” When he said he was going to put it in something I thought he meant a box. But no, he put it in a beautiful, filigreed ring setting.

“That was your grandmother’s ring. The stone fell out years ago and I put it in that bowl that you picked it out of.”

I raise my brows and look at him. “You mean... this is her actual ring?”

He nods. “It is.”

“That’s impossible,” Cash says. “Larimar wasn’t discovered until the 70’s!”

Hector just stared at him. Finally, he said, “By a human. We are talking about Lilith here the most powerful witch to ever exist my dear boy! I saw that ring on her finger myself. It’s hers alright.”

I was rooting for Hector; he was talking a good talk until the last part of it. I mean, how could a man from five hundred to a thousand years ago, whichever the case may be, standing in front of us right now and not look a day over ninety? It was impossible.

I smile and say, “Doesn’t matter. I love it and think it’s gorgeous. Thank you for taking such good care of it, Hector.” I reach into my purse and pull out my wallet. “How much do I owe you?”

“Your money is no good here.” He bowed his head at me.

“Of course it is!” I start pulling out twenty-dollar bills one after the other and lay them on the counter. “You’ll need to exchange them for British pounds, but there’s enough here, I’m sure.” I frown, counting over three hundred dollars then pull out another forty bucks. “Here’s more because our dollar is worth shit compared to pounds.”

Cash picks up the money and hands it back to me. “What Hector meant is they don’t use money, it’s all on the barter system.”

“...Oh. Well, I don’t have anything to barter?”

Hector puts his hand on mine. “Yes, you do my dear, just go save the world. Now—” he pulls a book out from under the counter— “It’s time that you two got married...”



Chapter 17

Cassidy



N EITHER I NOR CASH imagined we would be getting married once we set out in search of the magical village but that's precisely what we did. Turns out, that Hector, acting as a priest was instructed by Lilith when the time came to do exactly that. A quick ceremony where he tied our wrists together, blessed us with the four elements, water; for our love to flow, earth; security and stability, wind; intellect and communication, and fire; for undying passion and ambition. We then each drank from a goblet blessed by him then jumped over a broomstick to seal the deal. It was all so simple yet perfect. And when Cash looked me in the eyes as he slipped Lilith's ring on my finger I knew in my heart of hearts that this man belonged to me for as long as I wanted.

We are back in the Jeep now and headed to the hotel and I can't stop looking at the ring. It soothes me, in a way I've never known before. The second he slipped it on, I felt the anxiety that's been just under the surface for the past week being sucked out and as strange as it sounds, into the ring.

I reach behind Cash's seat, and grab the little moon, and star bag. Setting it on my lap, I peek inside and see a bottle laying on a bed of tissue paper with pink glowing liquid inside it. "You know, I think Hector is a bit off his rocker, but he seemed like a nice man."

He takes his eyes off the road for a second and looks at me. "What makes you say that?"

I laugh. He doesn't bat an eye. "Come on, Cash, he said he saw the ring on Lilith's finger!"

He slowly nods. "Yeah. He probably did."

This time I howl with laughter. "That's absurd... isn't it?"

“Cassi.” He gives me a side eye glance. “We were in a village that appeared out of nowhere. Is it really that absurd?”

“Holy shit... were we transported back in time? Oh my God, no wonder he was wearing a dress.”

Now he laughs. “It’s called a robe. Want to hear something interesting?”

At this point I don’t know if I’m coming or going or what is real and what isn’t. I lift a shoulder of indifference. “Sure.”

“He told me that in order for the potion to work you need to drink it and then have sex twenty-four hours before the ‘wedding’ is consummated.”

I sit for a minute waiting for what he just told me to register in my brain. It didn’t. Scrunching my face up, I look at him and squint. “What?! How is that supposed to work? I thought we just got married?”

“In the eyes of the magic world, yes, we are for a year.”

Feeling disappointed at learning it’s only for twelve short months, I mumble. “Oh... What happens after that?”

“We can redo the ceremony... if you want to.”

Of course I want to, why wouldn’t I? But instead of saying that, I just nod thoughtfully. “You were saying about the potion?”

“Lilith created the potion for women of nobility so they could pick and choose who the father of their child was.”

I still ain’t getting it. “Huh?”

Cash laughs. “In layman’s terms?”

“Please.”

“They would drink it, have sex with their husband, then twenty-four hours later, go screw their brains out with whomever they wanted. Think of it as a vaccination against unwanted sperm.”

“Oooh. So, it kills off anything but the chosen semen. That’s genius!”

“It really is! There’s only one thing.”

Of course there is, there always is. “What’s that?”

“Magic relies heavily on believing. You need to believe in it, in order for it to work.”

I’m a believer alright. The thought of drinking this stuff and being able to have sex with Cash... tonight, had me squirming in my seat in anticipation. I pull open the bag, take the bottle from within and pull the cork out with my teeth. Spitting it on the floor, I hold the bottle up. “I do believe we will have a sleepless night.”

He nods. “And you best believe I’ll be ravishing your body. In every which way I can.”

As his words cause an uncontrollable shiver down my spine, I take a sniff and a sip. Let me tell you that the godawful smell was nothing like the taste. I hold it in my mouth for a second, looking desperately for someplace to spit it out. Hitting the button to put the window down, I’m gearing up to let that sucker sail out of my mouth. But then I feel an icy hot, electrifying jolt sliding in and out of my vagina in long languid thrusts. I look over at him and see him staring at me with such an intensity that I swallow what’s in my mouth. I realize that Cash is showing me a new meaning for getting mind fucked.

Hitting the power seat button, I recline it and plant my feet against the floor, bearing down. My eyes roll in the back of my head as I stuff my hand down the front of my pants and dip my fingers inside my pussy. Sliding the slickness upwards to my clit, I begin to rock back and forth as my hips start gyrating to the feeling of his cock sliding in and out of me.

Nothing like fucking air, I thought to myself.

Cash had to have picked up on my thoughts because he pulls the Jeep over and slams it into park. Leaning towards me he slides his hand alongside mine and slips his fingers inside of me as he devours my mouth with his. Pulling my hand away, I rip open my shirt and buttons go flying as I yank my bra down, exposing my breast. He knows exactly what I want

and dips his head, capturing my nipple between his lips, he tongues it as fast as his fingers are flicking my bean and I lose all control. Still holding the bottle of potion in one hand, I smack the other on the oh-shit bar above my window and hang on as I experience the most mind blowing, sexually satisfying orgasm, Of. My. Life.

I'm still gripping the bar as he leans back and points to the bottle in my hand. "Impressive. You didn't spill a drop." He winks at me then grins. "Bottoms up."

He casually puts the Jeep back into gear, pulls back onto the road and heads to the hotel.



WE ARE BACK IN THE room and I'm currently standing in the shower with my mouth open trying to suck in as much water as I can. I don't know what the hell was in that bottle other than eye of newt and eels' scales but after drinking the potion I've discovered I have an insatiable thirst. Not just for water but for everything.

The plan was for us to shower together but that was vetoed when my stomach started growling. I had searched my suitcase for any snacks that I might have snuck in it and only came up with an unopened bag of Starbursts. I polished that off while he hopped in the shower. Once he got out, I begged him to go get me food. I think I have worms or something now because I'm quite certain that the potion was as old as Lilith would be if she were here.

I hear a tap on the door. "Hey, are you done in there?" Cash asks.

"Yup, just getting out now." I turn the taps off and shove the shower curtain aside as I step out. Taking a towel off the rack, I wrap it around my head, and pull on my robe. I don't know what I'm more excited about, the smell of the food wafting from under the door or having sex with Cash. Seeing how I've waited this long for him; the food is my first choice. Grabbing my hairbrush, I yank open the door and round the corner then freeze.

He's sitting there with the food spread out on the table looking sexy as hell, but he isn't what has me frozen in place. It's the two black animals sitting on the bed with glowing yellow eyes.

"Uhhh... Cash!" My eyes dart to him, only to see him grinning like a fool.

Many things are running through my mind. One, he really is wanting to kill me, and the two beasts are here to do the job. Two that food smells so damn good and three, I want to fucking jump his bones and bounce on him like a pogo stick.

"Relax Cass, these are our familiars." He waves a hand at the two creatures who are now standing, looking at me like I'm lunch.

"Familiars?" I close my eyes and shake my head. Hoping they disappeared, I crack open an eye. Nope. They did not.

"Our protectors. They will do what we tell them too. Kinda like the imp that attacked you."

"I see. Are they ours or is one mine?" I slowly extend my hand to see if one had a preference in me. The wolf came forward and licked my hand, then rubbed his big head into my palm. "He's mine, isn't he?"

"My wedding gift to you, yes." Cash nods. "And Nala is mine." At the mention of her name, the big cat jumped off the bed and flopped against Cash's leg.

"I thought it was high time you met yours. He doesn't have a name, so feel free to give him one."

Feeling a bit more confident, I called the wolf to me. He jumped down and stood beside me than sat. He was so huge that his head was even with my waist. "Can I pet him?"

"Absolutely, he is yours."

I reach out and lay my hand upon his head and find his coat to be so soft. I give him a good scratching with my nails and his back leg starts pumping. "Is that a good itch?" I sit on the floor and coo to him, and he falls into my lap like a puppy, and I wrap my arms around his neck. "What shall I name

you?” I whisper. He looks up at me with soulful eyes and I’m instantly smitten. “You need a regal name, I think. How does George sound?” I’m rewarded with a sloppy kiss across my cheek.

Cash bursts out laughing. “George?”

“Ah, yeah. You know, King George?”

“Of course. Come and eat.”

With one last pet to George, I get up off the floor and join Cash at the table. I pull out a chair and plop down. “This looks amazing,” I say, as I start drooling at the spread.

“Dig in, you’re going to need the fuel.” He winks at me as he bites into a chicken wing.

I pick up my fork and stab a baked potato, dropping it onto my plate as my other hand is working a pair of tongs, tossing fried chicken onto the plate as well. I start stuffing my face and I wasn’t dainty about it either.

We eat in silence until Cash asks, “You were hungry, weren’t you?”

I nod and take a sip of water. “Yes! It’s like my stomach was a hollow pit.”

He picks up his drink and looks over the glass at me with lazy eyes. “Feeling better?”

I sit back in my chair and pat my belly. “Much.”

“Do you want to know what I think is sexy as hell?”

I look at him and lick my lips. “What?”

“You. Sitting there with a towel wrapped around your head, eating with gusto, sitting in a robe...”—he lowers his voice to a growl— “... that I know you’re completely naked under.”

I swipe the dishes aside and launch myself across the table at him. He shoves his chair back and catches me in his arms, pulling me to him. Our lips collide and our tongues dance as he pulls the robe from my shoulders and his hands find my breasts, kneading and teasing my nipples to stiff peaks.

Tearing his mouth from mine, he trails his lips down my throat to my shoulder, where he nips it with his teeth as I grind my pussy against his throbbing cock.

He pulls back and looks me in the eyes. I notice a blue flickering flame, in his that reminds me of my ring.

He murmurs, “Are you ready for dessert?”

Dessert? He IS the dessert as far as I’m concerned. Mutely I nod.

His hands settle on my ass as he stands in one fluid motion, and I cling to him. With a snap of his fingers two things happen. The animals disappear and a small chocolate fountain with a bowl of strawberries appear on the bedside table.

He pulls the towel off my head and carries me to the bed and gently lays me upon it. Stripping off his clothes he looks at me and says, “I trust you like chocolate and strawberries?”

“Wait.” Remembering what happened in the woods, and how we were rudely interrupted I put a hand on his chest. “Will the others know we are doing this?”

He grins. “Nope, I blocked them all from this room. Ever since the imp incident.”

“Well, in that case, I do love me some chocolate and strawberries.”

That’s all he needed to hear. I watch in delight as he dips his head and licks my nipple, then clamps his lips onto it. Drawing it into his mouth, he begins to suck on it, long pulling tugs, while he runs his hand down my body to my pussy.

“My vixen, you’re quite the mess, aren’t you?”

In answer I thrust my hips upwards and gasp with delight as his fingers stroke inside me and his thumb finds my clit. I start to see stars, but I don’t want to yet, I want this feeling to last a lifetime and most of all I want his throbbing cock in me, not his fingers.

I shove him off me, and he rolls over taking me with him. Straddling his hips, I push him back onto the mattress. “Not so

fast there, stud,” I say, even though I can feel myself dripping. Dripping onto his dick. I gasp as it twitches against me, as if it’s begging for a drink like a parched man in the middle of a desert.

He raises his brows at me and grins. “You don’t say? How bout I show you how fast I can be?” He grabs hold of my hips and jerks me upward and plants me onto his face. His tongue darts out and in one long swipe he licks me from asshole to clit. I grip the headboard as he jams his magical tongue into me, and I swear to all that is holy, that this man must have the strongest one in the world. This time when I start seeing stars, I don’t fight it. Instead, I ride the wave of ecstasy, gripping his head tightly between my thighs as I hold on for dear life.



Chapter 18

C^{ash}



S HE'S LAYING ON TOP of me, her head against my chest. Her breathing slowly calming down and I just hold her, relishing the feel of her finally in my arms. Not as an onlooker but as a lover.

I feel her move and I look down and see she's staring at me in wonderment.

"Yes?"

She grins. "That was amazing... you're amazing."

I laugh. Not at her but because she has no idea what is still in store for her. I tuck a stray hair behind her ear. "You're pretty amazing yourself. I knew you'd taste like nectar."

She smiles. "You know. I think I'll get waxed down there more often." She reaches over to the bedside table and plucks a strawberry from the bowl. I watch as she bites into the succulent fruit, and I lick the dribble of juice from her chin. I sit up and take her with me, her legs straddling my hips. My cock is begging to get inside her, but I refrain. Instead, I lean over and select my own strawberry and hold it under the chocolate sauce.

"Rest back on my arm love." She does and I rub the berry on her nipples, watching as the twins form into stiff peaks. She cries out from the heat of the sauce, but I soothe the scorch with my tongue. She's like jelly at this point and I lay her on her back, slipping my arm out from under her, I dribble chocolate down her body, only to lick her clean.

I hold the berry under the chocolate sauce again then bring it back. I stop, holding it above her clit as my eyes roam over her body. She's laying there, a fine sheen of moisture on her skin, her legs spread wide open, waiting for me. As the chocolate drips onto her sensitive nub, I slide my fingers

inside her, only to pull them out to rub her clit with her juices, blending them with the sticky sauce. I lean forward, tongue poised above her, as she quivers under my touch. I lick her clean as my fingers plunge into her warmth, and I know she's on the verge of coming again. With one last nibble of that delectable button, I seal my lips to her pussy as she begins to squirt, and I swallow every drop.

I take hold of her hips and jerk her towards me. My cock bouncing with a mind of its own, seeks out her warmth. I take hold of it and trace the tip against her. "I know you're not a screamer, but you will be tonight."



CASSIDY

My eyes widen as he eases inside me. With every inch, I feel little electrifying currents along my vaginal walls. It's something I've never experienced in my life before and I'm not sure if it's because of the size of him, stretching me, or if it's the steel ring pierced through the tip of his dick, gliding over my g-spot. But whatever it is, it's causing my vaginal muscles to clamp around his cock like a fine leather glove.

He's balls deep and is so still that I'm not even sure what to do. My hips are saying go but my mind, like usual, is overthinking. I mean, I've never had sex with another man other than my ex in my life and he certainly wasn't a witch that could fry my body hair off. Which by the way, I'm loving the feel of that alone. Skin against skin... down there, is highly recommended!

He leans over me, chest to chest, and swoops down, capturing my lips with his. After a thorough tongue lashing, literally, he drags his lips across my cheek to my ear. Nuzzling it, he growls. "Stop thinking."

He raises his hips and I start to whimper because I swear my vagina clamped onto his thickness, like it was sucking him back in, not wanting its fullness to leave.

He embraces me as he thrusts his hips forward and I wrap my legs around him, welcoming his stiffness back home to

where it belongs. He quickens the pace and I match him stroke for stroke, and the only sound that can be heard is the slapping of skin and the bedframe squeaking. Until I feel a molten lava spread through my blood and electricity lick along my veins followed by an icy feeling. Truth be told it scares me, so much I need to stop. Panting, I put my hand on his chest. “Cash, wait.”

No questions asked he stops immediately. Expecting him to be pissed, I’m touched when I see concern in his eyes. “Are you okay? Do you need anything?”

Untangling my legs from him, I shake my head and roll away. “No. Why am I feeling fire, a shocking feeling and ice?”

He frowns. “Where?”

“Everywhere. From the roots of my hair to my toes.”

“Does it hurt?” he asks, brushing the back of his hand across my thigh.

“Hmm uh uh. No... it’s. Different. Exhilarating is the word I’d use.”

He looks up at me through his lashes. “Do you want to continue?”

“Hell yes!” I turn my back towards him and kneel on all fours. Shaking my ass, I look over my shoulder at him. “Just don’t set me on fire.”

He gathers my hair in his hands, and I feel him twist it around his fist, and then smacks my ass. I feel a bubble of excitement in my chest as he tugs my hair and bends down towards my ear as he guides his cock into my slickness. “I won’t set you on fire. Do you want me to fuck you deep?”

I thought he was in as far as he could go earlier but I was so wrong. As his pubic bone rubs against my ass, I spread my legs further and scream, “*God yesssss!*”

One hand in my hair the other on my hip, he buries himself inside me as I scream his name. Together we begin to feel that ultimate goal, reaching an orgasm. All my years of having sex, if I was lucky to have an orgasm, it was always a solo venture,

seeing stars, hurling towards them until they burst in a shimmery downpour around me. But not this time, with Cash, we soared together side by side in each others' arms until it seemed like the whole damn milky way burst around us.



WE COLLAPSE ON THE bed in a heap, and he pulls me into his arms, smoothing my hair down my back. “Are you okay?” he asks.

Okay? I feel like a cat who’s just had it’s first bowl of cream and now I want to be fat and lazy and purr myself to sleep but I can’t. I smile and hug him tight. “More than okay. Thank you.”

“Where are you going?”

Giving him a peck on the lips I say, “I’ll be back, just need to go to the bathroom.” I snag my robe off the floor and pull it on as I head to the toilet.

I close the door behind and sit down, ready to take a quick pee, but stop. Should I? Will his sperm come out if I do? Pawing the pockets on my robe, I’m relived when I feel my cell phone. A quick google search ensures me that his sperm will stay, allowing the potion to work. I pee quickly and clean myself up. As I’m washing my hands, I look up in the mirror and see a bruise on my breast. Slipping it off my shoulders, I turn to the full-length mirror on the back of the door and gasp. “Oh dear...” Signs of our lovemaking are all over my body. Bruises, bite marks and my clit is swollen. Which I don’t mind one bit because I’m still getting delightful shockwaves from that area. I pull up my robe and yank the door open. Rushing into the bedroom I look at Cash, and say, “We got a problem...”



Chapter 19

Cassidy



IT'S THE MORNING OF our wedding, and I'm standing in the middle of my hotel room looking at my body in the mirror. And I've never been more nervous in my life than I am in this moment. After freezing my ass off for over an hour, bathing in cool water, my crotch no longer feels enlarged and flaming hot. Cash has assured me that he can cast a spell, to conceal the bruising and teeth marks left behind from our lovemaking, but I almost don't want him to. I want to wear them like they are a badge of honor. But I can't, the vampires would know that we had sex and heaven knows what would happen if that little tidbit came to light.

I look in the mirror at Cash's reflection. He's standing in front of the window staring down at my cellphone. I know what he's doing. He's reading the passages from the book Roger sent, studying each one in detail, hoping to glean any information that he can to stop our wedding. I want to wipe that broody look from his face but have no desire to sit in another hour-long ice bath.

"Find anything yet?" I ask, as I begin to braid my hair.

Turning, he tosses the phone onto the bed and sighs. "No. It seems that part of the prophecy must be completed."

I walk over to the bed and sit on the edge as I fasten a tie to the end of the braid. "What I don't get is why would Lilith bother to write two spell books?"

"Well, there has to be a reason why. From the pictures you took of Mickle's there is no difference to the ones Roger sent."

I sit for a moment lost in thought as the images of those pictures flit through my mind. "Wait a minute..." I snatch my phone off the blanket in front of me and open the photo gallery. Turning the phone towards Cash, I say, "I completely forgot I took this."

He bends down to look at it and laughs. “You took a selfie in the cave?”

“No!” I chuckle, as I turn the phone back to me and swipe that photo away. “Well yes. But not intentionally, I accidentally hit the button and it reversed the screen on me. Anyway, I also forgot that I took these pics before it.” I hand him back the phone and watch his expression. “You did say you never saw Mickles copy of Lilith’s book yourself, right?”



CASH

“No, never have.” I shake my head as I take the phone from Cassi and stare at the image on the screen. It’s a rough sketch of four people having sex. Which presumably would be us, and two of the vampires.

I raise my eyes to her. “So, you saw two drawings in Mickle’s book of people having sex?”

“That’s right. Here let me see.” She holds out her hand and I give her the phone back. I watch her as she taps the screen a few times. I inwardly groan when she stands up and moves to stand beside me. The mere scent of her shampoo goes straight to my dick. After last night, this woman scares the hell out of me. I knew I always loved her but to think I had to share her with two other men was enough to drive me insane.

“Now, look at this. It’s from what Roger sent.” She holds the phone in a way so that we both can look at it and I’m shocked to see the same sketch. With only two people having sex. But what interests me the most is the four gathered around, watching, they are the ones that I take note of. Especially when each of the figures has a set of fangs hanging out of their mouths.

“Presumably this is our wedding night,” she says. “Which we had last night.”

A triumphant smile spreads upon her lips.

I need to take a step back before I throw her down on the bed to relive last night. “Well, we know that Mickle is lying

about his age. So, it only makes sense that he would lie about the prophecy saying our marriage has to be consummated with two of them. But why?"

"You want to know what I think?"

"Of course." I nod.

"He was a witch before Lilith turned him?" She looks at me for confirmation.

"Yes. Once he turned, he lost his magic. I mean he can still do a few things, but nothing compared to what he supposedly was capable of."

"And I'm a pure witch or whatever you want to call it?"

I laugh. "Yes. The magic is in your blood from Lilith. Mickle was taught, that's the difference."

She rubs her chin in thought. "I think that he wants me to get pregnant so that vampire babies are born with magical blood." Her brow crinkles and she says, "Never mind, that's a stupid idea."

I take her by the shoulders and look her in the eyes. "No, it isn't! That's exactly what he has planned!"

"So does that mean because we are already married and had sex that we don't have to go through with Mickle's plan." Her hopeful eyes stared into mine.

I hate to break it to her, but I have to. "I want that more than anything. I go blind with rage whenever I think about them touching you, but Mickle is up to something. And until we find out exactly what that is, we must go through with it. If we deviate from his plan at all. He will know we are on to him."

She shrugs her shoulders. "Let him."

I look deeply into her eyes. "We can't. If we do, the others will side with him and attack us. I can't fend them all off at once and once they kill me, heaven knows what they will do to you."

She pulls away from me but not before I see the defeated look in her eyes. “Why don’t you take a nap?”

“I’m not tired. What I need is to get out of here, go for a walk or something.”

I head towards the door and say, “Take a nap, we’ll go for a walk together when I get back.” I call King George to the room and the wolf appears on the bed. “He’s a cuddler. Take a nap with him, I’ll be right back.”

“Where are you going?”

I turn around and look at her. She’s already snuggled up to the beast, with her arm laying over him softly snoring.

I turn myself invisible then quietly I leave the room and head down to the basement...hoping like hell they won’t smell me.



C ASSIDY

The second the door closes I pop my eyes open and scoot off the bed. I tug my shoes on as George jumps down as well and stands between me and freedom.

I look at his wise eyes and say, “Don’t worry, you’re coming too.”

It seemed to appease him because he backed up as I make my way towards the door. Taking hold of the handle I pray it opens and that Cash didn’t put a spell on it. Relief floods through me as the door cracks open and I peek out.

“Come on George, the coast is clear.”

I hold my breath half expecting someone to order me back into the room and don’t release it until we slink out the front door like thieves in the night.

George trots at my side towards the forest like he knew exactly where I was heading, then takes off in a gallop.

“So much for guarding me.” I mumble to myself.

I enter the forest, and that familiar feeling of being home hits me like a brick. I inhale deeply, as the scent of the earth fills my lungs, I let my nose guide me. I'm not surprised when I see the waterfall to my right and a shiver goes up my spine as my eyes fall on the tree that Cash and I had been making out against. But that's not why I'm here.

George comes running from the underbrush and takes the lead, straight to the castle ruins.



Chapter 20

C^{ash}



I STOP OUTSIDE THE door and cast a spell to hide my scent. I select the cognac as it's always in the room whenever we have a meeting and wouldn't seem out of the ordinary. As it is, I need to wait to enter, because opening it would only raise suspicion, something I don't want. Slipping into a wraith would be ideal, as I could go straight through the door, but there is always a risk of being seen and isn't an option as I can't be two things at once. Having passed Ivan on the way here tells me he should be coming any minute, and so I wait until he appears. I don't have to wait long.

He comes down the stone stairs and stands for a moment picking his teeth. From the bloodstains on his fangs, I can tell he's just been feeding. He looks around and sniffs. And I know from the look in his eyes, he can smell me despite the spell. He shrugs and opens the door.

I follow him as he saunters in and says, "Bloody hell, did someone spill the booze or something? I can smell it out in the hall."

Jake shakes his head. "No, just a fresh batch is all. Want one?"

"Absofuckinglylutley!" Ivan kicks his feet out and plops into a chair then takes a glass of the amber liquid from Jake. "Thank ya mate." He takes a sip then asks, "So, what's the plan?"

"We were discussing what to do about Cassidy if she starts to scream," Peter said. "Mickle says the dirt will no longer work. He's looking into it now."

"Oh? Why is that?"

"Because her powers are stronger than I anticipated." Mickle answered, frowning at the book in his hands. "That

imp should have taken her down at once.”

“What’s the spell book say?” Peter asked, clearly agitated. “I don’t think I can be having sex with a screaming banshee.”

“You have to,” Mickle replied, rubbing his jaw. “She picked you and Jake. What she says goes.”

Peter stood up. And if I didn’t know better it looked like he was on the verge of a temper tantrum. “Why? It’s not like it’s going to make a bit of difference in the end.”

“Because dummy,” Ivan said. “If Cassidy isn’t relaxed and feel like she’s being taken care of, the ritual won’t work.”

Ritual? I knew they were lying but a ritual was not a prophecy. Clearly there wasn’t one, or at least not in the true sense of the word. It was more of a planned ceremony that they had total control over.

“Either way I don’t like it,” Peter said. “And I won’t do it.”

As quick as lightning, Mickle dropped the book and was at Peter’s throat, fangs bared. “You will do it because if you don’t, I’ll cut your cock off and feed it to you before I remove your head. Got it?”

Peter turned whiter than he already was and silently nodded his head.

Mickle smoothed his hair back. “Where were we... ah yes, the book.” He strode back to where he’d been standing and retrieved it from the floor. “So, there is a potion that I can make that will help ease the sound of her screams. Shall I mix it?”

The burning question that I’ve been having is why would Cassidy be screaming in the first place? She already agreed to consummate the wedding by having a foursome. Consensual women didn’t usually scream their heads off. Thankfully Jake asked the question for me.

“Is this going to be painful for her? The pregnancy that is?”

“Well of course it will be,” Mickle spat. “She will be pregnant for a week and a half, from conception to full term.”

Sonofabitch, Cassidy was right. Sickened to the core I needed to get the hell out of there and fast. Not wasting any time, I went over to the secret passageway and flung open the door.

Peters screams of terror echoed through the hallway as Jake laughed. “We told you it was haunted...”



C ASSIDY

I really don't know why I'm here. It's creepy as fuck and I don't like it. But something is telling me to come, beckoning is more like it. I follow George as he makes his way through the weeds towards a gate in the wall. It's large enough for a car to pass through and I gingerly make my way through it. I glance around and realize there is a moat that we are about to cross. My eyes settle on the fortress in front of me and for some inane reason I feel as if something is watching us.

“What exactly do you think you're doing here?”

I just about jump out of my skin when I hear Cash whisper that in my ear. I moved so fast it felt like I was springing on pogo stick and I reacted by punching him in the face. In horror I see him fly back five feet.

“Oh my God! I'm so sorry! Did I just...”

He plants his feet on the ground, rubbing his jaw. “Did you send me flying? Yeah, you did. Mickle was right, your powers are strong. Now, do you mind answering why you're here when you're supposed to be napping?”

I shrug because I really don't know. “It's calling to me.”

Cash raises his brows and looks to the castle. “It's calling to you?”

“I guess, what else would it be?”

He throws his hands in the air. “Honestly who knows anymore. Come on, let's go find out.”

Hand in hand we enter the castle courtyard. I look up to what must have been a beauty in it's day to see broken

windows and crumbling walls.

Cash is looking at a darkened patch on the cobblestones at our feet. “This is where they burned her.”

I look at him in horror. “Here?! They burned her here at her home?!”

He nods. “Afraid so. Until her hearing, she was tossed in her dungeon to await her trial.”

When he said that it all became crystal clear. “Take me there... to the dungeon.”

“I don’t think that’s a good idea.” He glances around. “The place looks like it could collapse any minute.”

I was never one for begging to get my way, until now. “Please Cash, take me there.”

He stood there what seemed like an eternity, staring at me. “Fine. Come here.”

He opened his arms and I stepped into his embrace. Within seconds we went from being out in the sunshine to standing in the underbelly of the rotting ruins in a circular room. The stench was enough to knock a horse over, but I didn’t care, I needed to see where Lilith spent her last days on this earth.

There were three doorways, each facing what looked like an old well in the center of the room. I walked to the closest one and stood outside looking in. A rusty iron door hung from it’s hinges, stood open to the tiny room. A barred window that a small child would have trouble climbing through was the only source of light. I closed my eyes and listened, only to be met was silence.

“It’s not this one,” I said, moving on to the next door. Again, I closed my eyes and listened. This time I heard the low mutterings of a woman in distress. My eyes sprang open and when they did, I could see an old lady sitting on a raggedy blanket on the floor with her back to me.

“I see her,” I whisper softly, more so to convince myself than to tell Cash.

Flies hovering over a plate of rotten food, were ignored as she raised her hand to the wall. On the damp surface I watched as she extended her index finger, the tip of it turning blue, almost like a laser beam.

Afraid to say anything more, I watch her without saying a word. When she's done, she lowers her hand then turns to look at me. A feeling of pure evil washes over me as I hear her begin to cackle. At this point, I'm thinking this wasn't such a good idea, but I can't look away. It's like she's locked me into her sights and she's not letting go. She's like a trainwreck, you know you should look away, but you can't.

"Cash..." I quietly say. When he doesn't respond, I say his name again. "*CASH?* Ahh, I could use a little help here!"

Help arrived but it wasn't from Cash. George appeared out of nowhere to stand between me and her. With jaws snapping the big beast advanced on the old crone which gave me enough leeway for me to break the connection and send a blast of ice at the old bitch. It ricocheted off the wall and hit her in the back of her head, knocking her to the floor. A look of pure shock crossed her face then fury. Quite frankly I thought I was a goner when she raised up into the air but then a blast of lightning flew past my shoulder and sent Lilith on her way to whatever hell she'd come from.

I turn and gawk at Cash. "Where the *hell* were you?!"

"I'm sorry! Believe it or not she had me imprisoned. I couldn't move! The one time you needed me I failed you."

I walk to his side and put my arms around him. "It's not your fault, neither of us expected that. Especially when we assumed she was on our side."

Cash pulled me into his arms and hugged me, burying his face in my hair. "If it wasn't for George, I'd have lost you."

Hearing the anguish in his voice, I hushed him. "Enough of that. I'm here, safe in your arms."

He leaned back and looked me in the eyes. "How are you so calm?"

I shrugged. "I don't know. I suppose if my aim was better, I'd have gotten her good. Did you see the look on her face?" I laugh.

He tightens his arms briefly before dropping them and smiles. "Yeah, you shocked the shit out of her."

I pulled my cellphone out of my pocket and took him by the hand. "Come on. She was writing something on the wall, and I aim to find out what it is."



Chapter 21

Cash



BACK IN THE HOTEL ROOM , I can't shake the image of Lilith rising off the floor gearing up to strike Cassi down. What Cassi didn't know, was that Lilith was getting ready to deliver the death blow. Which is boggling my mind. What purpose was it to send her book of spells through the generations of her own family just to off her great granddaughter times forty?

"Here it is," Cassi says from behind my shoulder. I move so she can show me her phone. After downloading an Old Irish translator, she had to painstakingly input all the characters.

I see her frowning and then she reads it aloud.

"According to this, it says '*We shall be one again ...*'?"

"Huh..."

She looks at me and says, "What does 'huh' mean?"

I look at my watch. It's nearing the midnight hour which means we either leave this godforsaken place and be on the run, or we go through with the wedding.

"It means I have no clue. So, do you want to get the hell out of here or...?"

She turns and looks at the dress that is laying on the bed. A black wedding dress complete with a veil that Mickle had sent. "Or go through with the wedding?"

I move and stand behind her. Resting my hands on her shoulders, I pull her back against me. "Yes."

She turns in my arms and buries her face against my chest. "Will they hunt us down if we leave?"

"More than likely yes."

I'm lost in her eyes as she looks up at me. "They will kill you, won't they?"

"I'll die fighting them if it means you're safe. Just say the word and we are out of here." Silently I pray that she does.

She shakes her head. "I won't let that happen." Tears well in her eyes as she pulls me by the neck towards her. "I need you to know something. No matter what they do to me, know that it's you that has my heart."

I taste her salty tears as her lips move against mine, kissing me with an urgency. I groan and pull her tightly against me, grinding my cock against her belly. I know she's wanting this as badly as I do when she turns her back to me and bumps her glorious ass, against my groin. Looking over her shoulder, with a sly grin, she says, "Promise me one thing?"

"Anything," I murmur, as I pull my cock out of my pants, and begin to stroke it against her.

"When we do the nasty with them. Make sure you're the first to go inside me." She pulls her pants down and I watch in awe as she dips her fingers inside that hot pussy of hers. She moans when she feels how wet she really is, then grabs my cock. It's pure torture when she glides it over her soaking lips, not being able to penetrate it for fear of the vampires knowing we had sex. But then she slides it to her perfect little pucker.

I take hold of her shoulder, poised to go where I know no man has been before and ask, "Are you sure about this?"

She bites her lip and nods. "Just maybe do a little hocus pocus on it will you? So it doesn't hurt so much?"

I laugh. "You got it." I do just that, and as she bends over the bed, I reach around to fondle her clit, gently of course, as I slowly ease into her ass.

She moans in delight as I slide into her. Not only did I put a calming spell on her I also added lubrication. Between that and me fondling her, her moans of pleasure soon turned into soft mewling sounds as she climaxed. Gripping her hips, I buried myself into her tight hole. Hissing from the feeling of being encased inside her, I had the biggest cum shot of my life.

A knock at the had us springing apart, looking at each other wide eyed like we'd just broke a cookie jar and got caught.

“Housekeeping.”

“Gaah!” Cassi throws her head back and looks to the ceiling, “Oh thank God!”

“Go get in the shower. I’ll deal with it,” I said pulling up my pants.

Quickly she races off to the bathroom as I round the bed and head for the door.

I open it and look at the woman standing there. “We’re good for cleaning but could use some extra towels.”

I patiently wait as she retrieves a few from her cart and mutter my thanks, as she hands them over.

“Here.” She shoves a bottle into my hand as she quickly looks down the hall. “Tell her to take a handful of these too.”

I look at it and turn it over to see the label. “What? Wait, who sent you?” I ask as she sets off down the hall.

“Hector,” she calls over her shoulder.

“Right. Tell him thanks.” I close the door and head to the bathroom. Setting the towels on the vanity, I strip my clothes off and move the curtain aside.

She grins when she sees me. “Hey handsome. Was it really housekeeping?”

I take the washcloth she was scrubbing with and lather her back. “Yeah. And a little wedding gift from Hector.”

“Hector? What is it?”

“A bottle of garlic tablets.”

She laughs. “Really?”

“Yeah. I don’t know why I didn’t think of that myself.”

She turns to look at me and draws a line on my chest. “We had other things on our mind. But can we trust him after what Lilith did?”

“Don’t worry, they are sealed and from a drug store.”

She nods. “Oh, okay.”

A pensive look crosses her face.

“What’s on your mind?” I ask, washing my dick.

“I don’t understand. She instructed Hector to hold onto the ring and he married us at her request. Why?”

“Well maybe she’s blind or she doesn’t know who we are. She’s old.”

A doubtful laugh erupts past her lips. “Maybe.”



Chapter 22

Cassidy



I 'M STANDING AT THE foot of the bed looking down at the hideous gown that I'm supposed to don and cross my arms over my chest. "I refuse to wear it. It's old, gross and it stinks."

Mickle looks at me like he wants to take a chunk out of my neck, but I show him no fear. After what Cash told me while we were showering, I now know that I'm in control of the situation and I'll be damned if I'm going to let an undead rule me. "I'll wear what I have on."

Cash chuckles as he knew this was going to happen. I told him the second that he told me that he would need to lift the spell that blocked them from entering the room.

The others look at me as if I have grown a horn out of the center of my forehead, and I might as well, considering my current fashion attire. Remember when I said I brought the worst of the worst clothes I own? ... Yeah. Well, my current getup ranks #1. I smooth a hand over my belly, (praying that if anyone's sperm takes hold it's Cash's), as I look down at the soft pink fuzzy onesie I'm wearing, complete with a hoodie that is currently sitting on top of my head. It's basically a unicorn costume but for sleepy time.

Mickle huffs. "You CANNOT wear *that!*"

Peter scratches his head. "You did say that Cassidy must feel comfortable." He darts his eyes to me and grins. "I say let her wear whatever she wants."

Jake nodded. "You did say that."

"I don't care what I said... she cannot wear that. The ritu... prophecy won't allow it. I will not have my wif... You, wearing that!"

"What was that you were about to say?" I squint at him.

“Nothing.” He said, clearly flustered. “It’s fine, wear whatever you want. We need to get to the castle now.”

I look at Cash, and he nods at me. He too caught the slip up.

Ivan smacks his hands and rubs them together. “Let’s go have a wedding!”

I roll my eyes as I head towards the door, wishing that the floor would just open and swallow me up.



WE ARE ALL STANDING in the castle chapel, which to me in a sense, is an oxymoron, considering what happened earlier down below. Why would there be a chapel that is supposed to be pure, in an evil witch’s castle? Frankly it doesn’t matter and as we wait for Mickle to get his shit together, flipping through his book of spells, I’m starting to rethink my choice of wedding attire. I’m sweating my ass off and with the vampires around us, I fear before the ceremony has even begun that the smell of my swampy ass will be a turnoff, even for Cash.

‘No worries there sweet one, you could never turn me off.’

I give him a side eye glance and see his quick smile as he squeezes my hand reassuringly.

“Yes, here we are,” Mickle announces as he lays the book down on the podium, and like a proper member of a clergy begins speaking in what can only be old Irish.

I tune him out and glance around my surroundings and considering the shape of the rest of the place, it’s darn close to being pristine. Which leads me to believe this isn’t the only ceremony that has taken place in the past centuries.

Whatever the case, hand in hand with the altar at our backs we begin to recite the vows that come from Mickle’s spell book. Which again is bullshit. Just a bunch of drivel that still doesn’t have me truly married to Cash. I swear to all that is holy that once this is all said and done, I will be dragging him to a justice of the peace if I have to.

“You may now kiss your bride Cash.”

I shake myself out of my thoughts because for once, Mickle is giving us permission to touch. Not like it really matters.

Cash turns to me and takes me in his arms, and my body hums as he slowly looks me in the eyes. Taking hold of my chin, he raises my mouth to his. Our lips meet, and that electrifying thrill runs down my spine with promises of what's to come. He breaks the kiss off and gathers me close. With his warm mouth next to my ear, he whispers. “How are you feeling?”

“Gassy.”

He softly chuckles and leans back.

“Very good.” Mickle grins and claps like the fool that he is. Spreading his hands wide, he motions towards the altar and says, “Now. Let the consummation begin.”

I glance to my right and see steps leading to the waist high slab of stone that the act of our union will take place upon. Cash leans close and whispers, “You don't have to do this Cassi.”

I look back at Mickle to see him staring at me. For the first time since meeting him, I see his fangs protruding and I know that if I refuse, he won't hesitate to sink them into my flesh. I slip my hand into Cash's and look him in the eyes. “It's fine.”

Taking the lead, I pull him behind me and move to the foot of the altar, as far away from Mickle as I can get. I calm my breathing as I climb the steps and with one last withering look at Mickle, I turn my back on him and sit down on the edge of it. My skin starts to prickle from him boring his eyes into the back of my head, which is exactly what I want.

With Cash in the lead, Peter, and Jake, flanking him, he climbs up the steps and stands before me.

My eyes dart over his shoulder and I look at Peter, an almost apologetic look flashes on his face.

“Eyes on me vixen. I’ll make sure it’s fast and quick,” Cash murmurs, so that only I can hear.

He reaches up and pulls my hood off, which is such a relief because now my scalp can breathe. Just as I gather my hair up to pull it out from the confines of the hoodie, Cash take the zipper tab of my onesie and slowly unzips it to my waist.

It could have been the scent wafting off my body or the fact that my exposed skin, from cleavage to belly is bared for all to see, but Jake hisses and steps forward.

“Fuck off,” Cash snarls. “She’s mine first.”

To me he says, “Remember, eyes on me the whole time.”

I give him the signal by nodding, and with that, he puts his hands onto my shoulders and slips the material off me.

I shiver as the cool air touches my heated skin and my nipples grow hard in response. Cash dips his head and begins to suck one into a hard peak. I shove my hands in his hair, holding him there while he slips his fingers inside me, knowing I’d already be wet and slick for him.

I cry out as his lips leave my nipple and travel down to my ribcage. I close my eyes and lay back upon the cold stone while his mouth blazes a trail to my pubic bone. His tongue finds the hard nub, and he begins to flick and suckle it as his fingers slide in and out of me. I writhe in ecstasy as he pulls my clothes off my body, then stands and takes hold of my hips, pulling me to the edge. With one inward thrust I’m already seeing stars and mindlessly I wrap my legs around his hips as he pumps into me.

It’s that moment that Peter and Jake decided to join, one on either side of me. I spring my eyes open as Peter captures my nipple between his lips, working it into a stiff peak. While Jake rolls the other one between his fingers, he works his mouth from my breast to my neck. For a moment I’m frozen in fear, thinking he’s going to bite me but than he licks my lips before plundering his tongue in my mouth. I turn my head away than glare at him. Undaunted, he flashes me a grin then swoops his mouth onto the nipple he’d been playing with.

Peter's hand finds my clit, his quick jerky movements has my hips moving out of sync with Cash. I look at Cash and see the fury in his eyes.

'It's fine, I feel nothing but you.' I tell him and it seems to relax him a bit until Peter thinks it's a great idea for his next move.

His mouth leaves my nipple and travels over the same path Cash had earlier, straight to my clit. His tongue is hovering over it, ready to taste it but when he stops to take a sniff, is when Cash punches him in the back of the head, and growls, "Don't you dare fucking touch her there."

Mickle yells, "The prophecy says that they can do anything they want to her."

With that Peter swoops down and swirls his tongue around my clit and instantly recoils just as Cash spills his load inside me.

Peter stands straight and starts to gag. "What the fuck is that taste?"

I push Jake away from me and sit up. Grabbing my onesie to cover myself I innocently ask, "What taste?"

Peter is rubbing his tongue on his shirt sleeve. "It's stinging and bitter," he said.

While Cash pulls out of me and rights his jeans, he smirks as Jake kneels before me and swipes his tongue for a taste. I shove him away. "Do you mind?!"

I quickly shimmy into my onesie as he spits on the floor and wipes a hand across his mouth. "Sonofabitch! It's garlic."

"Oh yeah. Cash and I had garlic toast and a Caesar salad for dinner tonight. It comes out in the pores...why, is it a problem?" I bat my eyelashes. Little do they know I'd consumed half the bottle of garlic tablets, Hector sent via the cleaning lady.

Mickle roars. "FINISH THE CONSUMMATION!!!"

"I ain't touching her." Peter shakes his head.

Jake spits again. “I’m good.”

Mickle marches off his little stage he was standing on and heads straight for Peter. He raises his hand and I see the sharp jagged claws his fingernails have grown into. “You *WILL* have sex with that woman and consummate the marriage, or I’ll strike you out!”

“Not so fast.” Everyone turns to see Ivan standing there, looking down at the spell book on the podium. He points his finger at the page to where it lies open. “It says here that the first act of sexual intercourse must be completed on the altar by man and wife and only by man and wife.” He looks up at Mickle and says, “What the fuck are you trying to do here?”

In my mind I hear Cash say, *‘Get off the altar and follow my lead... whatever you do, don’t let go...’* He grabs my hand in his as I slide down off the stone slab, and I feel an icy, electrifying jolt hum between our joined skin. “Yeah Mickle, what the hell are you trying to do here?” he asks, as he raises our joined hands and his other palm up.

I quickly raise my free hand, palm up just like he is doing and feel it go from warm to freezing in less than a heartbeat. Startled, I look at it and see it’s frosty blue as icicles start to form upwards out of my palm. I’m feeling a little panicked at this point, so I lean forward and look at Cash’s free hand to see mini bolts of lightning licking along it’s surface.

I sigh in relief. “Okay, it’s supposed to do that,” I whisper to myself as everyone waits for Mickle’s answer.

He raises a shaky finger at Cash and me. “Put your hands down!”

A dark look settles on Cash’s face. “Answer the fucking question Mickle,” he orders.

Mickle shakes his head, his once smooth hair, now astray. “Nothing I swear! Just fulfilling the prophecy!”

“*Liar!*” Cash shouts as the energy builds around us. “You were wanting Cassidy to get pregnant before the night of the blood moon and resurrect Lilith! You even sent the imp that attacked Cassidy. Just to bend her to your will, but it backfired

on you when it pumped her full of venom, didn't it? That's okay though because now I have a little surprise for you..."

Cash looks straight up at the ceiling of the chapel and begins to chant. The same chant I've heard in my mind all these years. I join him and the ceiling opens to reveal the night sky soaring past in a blur.

I don't know how we did it, but we fast-forwarded through time. I know because the full moon, glorious and white begins to turn a pinkish hue and before we know it it's blood red. And it begins to emit a black mist that travels down into the chapel and hovers over the altar.

"What are you doing?!" Mickle cries out. "Stop!"

As the mist begins to take the shape of a woman, Cash says, "*The one who calls upon me in the light of the blood moon shall reign over me....* That's what the prophecy truly says, for CASSIDY, not you, isn't it, Mickle? You wanted her powers so you can take over that child's body because your days on earth are numbered. It wasn't good enough that you were the one who turned yourself into a vampire in the first place, then blamed her. But now, you want the powers to wreak havoc on earth. Am I right?"

I gawked at Cash, as this was news to me then looked at Mickle who was cowering away. "How... how did you know?"

Before Cash could respond, Lilith in full form, steps down off the altar and moved to stand before us. She raises her arm and places her hand upon mine. I stagger under her touch. Her powers so heavy, that I lock my knees, and stand there tall and proud. This woman was my kin, and she was giving all her magic abilities to me.

Turning, she looks at Mickle and says in a ghostly voice, "*We shall be one again... today, the day you die...*"

With one last look to me, she spins into a misty whirlwind high into the air, then dives into my palm. My head flies back from the force of her entering my body and exiting out of our joined hands. I force my head upright in time to see a lightning

bolt encased in ice, smack right into the middle of Mickle's chest. Agonizing screams tear from his mouth, seconds before he explodes into a shimmering cloud of dust that settles on the cobblestone floor.

Hoots and hollers echo out from the podium as Cash raises my hand to his lips.

I look at him in wonderment. "How *did* you know about the true prophecy?"

He looks at me with a sly grin. "You want the truth?"

I wrap my arms around his neck. "Uh, yeah!"

He shrugs his shoulders. "I just guessed."



6 MONTHS LATER

A knock at the door has me waddling my fat ass to answer it. Placing a hand on the swell of my belly I open it and am welcomed into a flurry of hugs.

"Look at you!" Peter says, gawking at my rounded belly with a grin. "Can I touch it?"

"No, you can't touch it!" Jake laughs, knocking Peter upside the head, as he steps over the threshold. I smile at him as I take Peter's hand and place it on my belly. It was that moment that little Miss Lilith Alexandria Blake McGuire the Third, decided to kick. Yeah, I know what you're thinking, only men have generational name titles, but this little one is so special in so many ways that I don't care what anyone thinks.

Peter jumps back. "It kicked me! Is that normal?"

Ivan rolls his eyes. "Of course it is you fool." He then looked at me. "You're glowing, you must be happy."

"I am," I murmur and smile as he leans down to kiss me on the cheek.

Jake glances around the entryway. "Where's your hubby at?"

“He’s out on the back veranda,” — I point past our framed marriage certificate that sits on the hall table, proudly displayed— “down the hallway, just go through to the kitchen,” I say, as I shut the front door and lock it before I follow the trio.

I stop at the pantry and pull out a bottle of cognac, then set it onto the counter.

I watch from the window as Cash stands and hugs each one of his friends in a bear hug.



AFTER FINDING OUT FROM Hector that the three men truly had no idea what Mickle was planning to do, he forgave them. Interestingly enough, we also found out from him that Lilith had terrible eyesight and was working on a potion to fix her sight, when Mickle decided to drink it himself, thus turning him into the monster that he’d become.

She indeed created the prophecy. Not for him to take over the world by impregnating me with a vampire baby; thus, allowing him to gain his witchy powers back, but for revenge on him from her grave for all the hurt he’d caused her.

As for me, I no longer need my toys, not when I have a man like Cash. And my powers, I don’t practice any magic, well, maybe a tiny bit... but only to bewitch him.



The End



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