

SOMETIMES THE DARKNESS
FLIRTS BACK...

COME
FOR A
SPELL

WICKED ECSTASY
BOOK ONE

KAT BLACKTHORNE

BLURB

I BETRAYED MY COVEN FOR MONSTER LUST.

I'm a passion witch, he's an ox-skull demon, can I make it any more obvious? Ok, that's the shorter version of this quick and dirty tale. The Moon Halo Coven always told me to stay in the light. But being good is so boring and this darkness in the woods pleases me like a champ. But can I really submit to his every demand, let him be my master, and all this other weird stuff just for some good lust? Or am I just delirious on good lovin'? Either way, this monster has awoken something dark inside me and I can't wait to get to know her...

Read my story for a good time not a long time.

Love,

Merimange the Passion Witch

Merimange is restless within the confines of The Moon Halo Coven. When the crones want to keep her away from the fun on Halloween in Ash Grove, she decides to embark on her own night of mischief. But something worse intervenes, a voice in the dark, a shadow with a rough touch and sinister motives. Find out if Merimange chooses good or evil when her true powers are unlocked by an unlikely source. Spoiler alert, there are no good guys, heroes, or healthy relationships here.

This is an 18+ wickedly hot novella set in The Halloween Boys universe and includes a few familiar faces from Ash Grove. You don't have to read The Halloween Boys to know what's going on, but it would be cooler if you did. This novella encompasses Halloween and the couple days there after and ends with an HEA.

They each have something the other craves and they're each willing to stop at nothing to get what they want... but who's darkness will win?

COME FOR A SPELL

WICKED ECSTASY

KAT BLACKTHORNE



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This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, monsters, magical practices, and incidents either are products of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously.

You hate me but you're still reading.

Damn, you're a fan.

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Also by Kat Blackthorne

YOU'VE BEEN WARNED

I am not responsible for any of you spooky babes wandering into the woods and trying to flirt with cryptids, monsters, demons, or other folkloric beings. They may or may not be as hot and amorous as I'm describing.

This novella follows villains in the The Halloween Boys universe. Everyone's toxic and no one does the right thing. If you're down for a quick story with monster f-ing and an unhinged sex-witch, you've come to the right place. There's magic, witchcraft, graphic sex, dub-con, marking, breeding, toys, and dub-con. For a full list please see author's site.

NOW GO ON, FLIRT WITH THE DARKNESS.

I

“What’s the matter? I have to be a witch, I have to be a mortal, I have to be a teenager and I have to be a girl all at the same time. That’s what’s the matter.”

-Sabrina The Teenage Witch

MAGIC AND ORGASMS WERE TEDIOUS BUSINESS.

They each evaded me. None of my sisters in the Moon Halo Coven worked with sex magic. But I'd heard that some witches could cast spells with their pleasure. I wanted to be a sex witch. The few orgasms I'd had were ... well, I'm not even sure if they were officially that. When I asked my fellow witches, they only laughed and said if I didn't think it was, then it probably wasn't. I'd taken part in sex rituals, I'd had sex with women, men, witches, and even a pirate once. The experience was enjoyable, but not like what others experienced. Maybe I was broken.

But my category of witchery didn't matter, because it was my favorite night of the year. The night where the dead walked among us, the veil was thin, the air crisp and tinted with pumpkin and smoke. Halloween. And being that Ash Grove was boring as fuck every month of the year aside from October, I was dying to party at Hallows Fest.

I pulled the strings of my black leather corset over the top of my dark purple dress. Hell, I even wore a witch hat and knee-high boots. I gingerly clutched my fingers around my broom handle and made to step outside of Magia Eclectics when a voice made me cringe.

“Merimange, where are you going?”

At least it wasn't Marcelene, our coven's crone, who caught me sneaking out.

“I was just going to patrol the perimeter of the town by sky, Elora.” She'd been a high priestess for all of a month and thought she could boss me around already. I knew I was supposed to stay for an all-coven meeting, but with how the crones went on and on, I'd be there all night and miss out on Hallows Fest on Hallo-fucking-ween.

Elora turned a crystal ball slightly on its stand before using her long sleeve to buff out her fingerprints. Her hair was spiked in a pointed black mohawk, and I noticed what looked

like a fresh tattoo peeking out from the neck of her robes. *Ugh, now I'm lusting after my high priestess who is decidedly trying to sour my fun.* She was attractive, though. I liked her well enough, and I was perpetually horny. Though Elora seemed like the kind of friend who'd encourage you to get bangs instead of prying the scissors from your hands. You know, sort of nice, but also devious in a sabotaging type of way.

"Sorry, M, but you have to stay. We all do."

"Why?"

"There are new threats on the town this evening, and with the veil being thin, we already had a legion of filth here a few weeks ago. Unfortunately, that means we have to perform spell work for at least the next twelve hours."

"Twelve hours! That's all of Halloween! Why can't Marcelene do it? She's like, so old and so powerful." Anger and disappointment raced through me. I did *not* want to spend my Halloween locked in the caves below the magic shop, chanting with the elders all night.

Elora crossed the distance. "Marcelene and the crones are going to Hallows. Someone had a vision of a great malevolence there tonight. I think it's best if you sit this Halloween out and contribute to the work of Moon Halo." She put a hand on my shoulder. "There's no telling what evil lurks in the forest right now."

There it was. The gentle patronization. They all thought I was a child. Just because I was twenty-one, and they ranged from twenty-five to, like, a thousand, didn't mean I was a baby. My powers needed some fine tuning, but I was strong, and I could take care of myself.

I had to play it cool. Elora was an elemental, and not a psychic witch, thank goddess, so she couldn't read my mind. But who knew what abilities we all hid from each other? The members of our coven were notoriously secretive.

I sighed. "You're right. I will sacrifice my selfish desires for the good of the coven and Ash Grove."

Elora smiled and checked her watch. “I will sing your praises to Marcelene when I see her. Now, let’s head downstairs—”

“Oh no,” I gasped, putting a hand to my mouth. “Percy.”

“What about him?”

“I can’t leave him alone for twelve hours; he’s blind. Please, I have to go get him.”

The high priestess narrowed her eyes, her tongue fidgeting with her silver lip ring. “Straight to the house and back, no stopping, got it?”

I lifted my broom. “I’ll fly. It’ll be super-fast. Don’t wait for me; I’ll join in quietly.”

Elora’s mouth tensed as I ducked out the door, the plastic grim reaper laughing behind me like he knew exactly what my game was. *Oh, like you wouldn’t do the same?*

My coven was great, it really was, but they all took themselves so damn seriously. There was always some great doom looming overhead that only we could contend with. Dude, I wanted to party with vampires; I wanted to find that hot pirate guy from last year; I wanted to dance my ass off with shifters. Some crones complained that the Halloween Boys were playing at the festival. I’d never heard them play, and I’d only ever heard whispers about how evil they were and to steer clear. That was fine by me—but I knew evil beings could shred a fucking guitar, and I wasn’t about to miss it.

I straddled my broom and kicked my heels. Floating through the air effortlessly, I let out a small laugh. Goddess, flying never got old. Maybe I couldn’t control the weather or tell the future or create gardens with my touch, but damn if I couldn’t fly like a hawk. My story to Elora wasn’t all a lie; I needed to fetch Percy.

I arrived at the big creaky house, which was like a sorority of witches. We single folk lived in one big cantankerous house that liked to randomly shuffle rooms and lock doors. Thankfully, it was in a good mood today. I climbed over pumpkins, so many goddamn pumpkins, on my walk through

the yard and up the porch stairs. The front door swung open with a flourish.

“Thank you, housey-house,” I purred.

The sight of someone unfamiliar startled me as I stopped in front of the kitchen. “Felix? Y-you’re—”

“Bald? Yes, I noticed. And I have whiskers, too,” they replied, spooning colorful cereal into their mouth. “I only wanted the cat ears ... I don’t know where my spell went wrong.” They sighed. “Why are you here? Isn’t everyone supposed to be at Magia, fighting the big bad powers that be?”

I loved Felix. They were irreverent and didn’t take life or magic too seriously.

“I’m ‘fetching Percy,’” I said, using air quotes.

Felix chuckled, putting their bowl in the sink. “By that, you mean sneaking into Hallows, don’t you?”

“Please, please, please don’t tell. I’ll give you flying lessons for a month.”

Their green eyes twinkled. “You know I’ll cover for you, Merimange. Just be careful. Not to be a stuffy old crone, but it does feel ... odd tonight.”

“Yeah, yeah. I’ll be careful. Aren’t you going?”

“I’m not going to Magia or Hallows tonight. Elora took pity on me and my new ears and lack of hair and said I could stay here. Or maybe she didn’t want my shitty magic.”

I scurried over the green and yellow seventies tile and gave Felix a hug. “Don’t say that. Your magic is just fine. I think you look hot bald. You look like a badass hairless cat. It really brings out your eyes ...and the whiskers.”

They snorted. “Little furry kitten ears would have been cooler.”

“Next time.”

I turned to leave, but they stopped me. “Oh, Percy is over there, on the faucet.”

Thanking them, I carefully unfurled my garter snake from around the waterspout. “You’re such a good little familiar, even if Marcelene says you aren’t a familiar, just a blind snake.” Goddess, the coven would hate to admit that I was blessed with a familiar. It would confirm that I was indeed powerful and those jealous bitches would have a fit over that.

Felix chuckled. “It would seem Percy has no supernatural abilities. Maybe you did just find a garter snake, Mer.”

“Hush, don’t hurt his little feelings. Percy is magical, and he’s my familiar. Don’t pressure my baby snakey into magic until he’s ready.”

Felix pulled a wine cooler from the fridge. “You sure you don’t want to stay here with me tonight? We can pass out candy to trick-or-treaters and watch *Jaws*.”

Any other night, I would have said yes. I should have said yes. But something was pulling at me, as if there were a rope hooked to my ribcage. It tugged me toward the woods.

If I were smart, I would have questioned that feeling. If I were smart, I would have recognized that energetic chord and the evil on the other side of it. And I would have cut it with a selenite wand and told my high priestess.

But Halloween was for trouble and tricks and treats.

And I was about to dive headfirst into all three.

11

“Are you a good witch, or a bad witch?”

-The Wizard of Oz

RULE NUMBER ONE OF THE HAUNTED WOODS:
DON'T SCREAM.

That was one of many of the many rules bestowed upon me. Because I came from an undiluted line of powerful witches, expectations for me were high. While flying and discovering my magic thrilled me, the politics of covens and crones were exhausting. I didn't want to sit around a stuffy circle and chant incantations for an alleged sinister event. I didn't want to soak in the moon water pool, meditate with crystals, throw bones, or read tarot. Not all day, at least. I wanted to have fun. To ride my broom as fast as it would go. To find a way out of Ash Grove and into other worlds.

The weight of Marcelene's and Elora's stares pressed on my shoulders anytime I was in a room with them. Marcelene's lips would form a straight line when I interpreted the tea leaves incorrectly or made an inappropriate joke during group spells. The other witches seemed to thrive. Dancing naked in the light of the full moon and drinking pumpkin spiced lattes under the willow trees. But something inside me was restless. Like a rat in a cage.

Percy twisted around my wrist and up my forearm. I ran a gentle finger down his yellow stripe. "You're special, even if you don't have magic. But I know you do." I gripped my broom and kicked off just as three trick-or-treaters toddled down the dirt pathway to our house. They pointed and giggled. I waved back and grinned. Just for them, I shot up into the air and did a flip. They clapped and jumped in place as I soared away. My mother and grandmother and all the mothers jabbered on in my mind, demanding I go back to Magia. At least I imagined so. A twinge of guilt snapped in my gut as I neared my turn. Percy's hazy black eyes met mine.

"I'll listen to the first half of the Halloween Boys' set, then I'll go back. How about that?"

Percy flicked a black tongue. "I knew you'd agree with me." I passed my turn, the wind whipping through my long

black hair, straight toward the haunted forest.

I didn't want to walk the pathway, instead I chose to fly right to the Brew Pump, where the concerts raged. An abandoned gasoline station was a weird as hell place for shows, but whatever. Ash Grove was weird as hell. Closing my eyes, I inhaled the autumn breeze. The celebrations were a dull roar ahead of me. I flitted over the trees, ready to make a flamboyant landing in the middle of the venue ... until I was jerked to the left.

Startled and gripping my broom handle, I straightened out. "What the hell?"

It was probably just a strong wind current—but then I was yanked again, only this time, I didn't regain control. The wind pulling me was its own wind, like an isolated tornado, and I screamed. The feel of my broom slipping from my palms sent jolts of terror through me, as it pulled me through the air on a riptide in the sky. My boots flicked against the sharp bare branches of the treetops. It was then I knew I was going to fall. Whatever I'd gotten stuck in, it had carried me far into the haunted woods, away from Hallows Fest. After what felt like an eternity of struggle, my broom flew from my hold, and I fell. Screaming, hoping someone, anyone, heard me, I braced for the hit.

Somehow, miraculously, I landed on a patch of grass and soft earth. Breathing heavily, I felt my body from my curvaceous hips to my head. Not a scratch. Gasping, I looked at my wrist. My empty wrist.

"Percy!" I yelled. My better sense shouted at me to not make a lot of noise. My mother always told me to never go into the woods alone, and if I did, to never scream. "*Screaming lets out your quintessence, and there are a great many dark creatures who'd love to eat you up.*" Then she'd tickle me and kiss my mom. My chest constricted because my mothers were now dead. They'd be so disappointed ...

"Percy!" I yelled again, standing and brushing myself off. I wiped a tear from my cheek. The forest was nothing but shade and frozen wood. It was quiet ... way too quiet. Even near

Hallows, there were chirping crickets, squirrels, and bunny hops, but out here, there were only bare and looming trees. Their outstretched, crooked arms looking as if they could snatch me up and break me in an instant. I looked around for my snake, my broom, light from Hallows, anything, any sort of indication of which way to go. I took a step forward. A twig broke somewhere behind me. The sound so innocent, so minor, but out here and on this night, it was deafening. Fear flitted through me. I wished I had paid attention to Marcelene's lesson on shielding myself from evil, making myself invisible to eyes with ill intent. Instead, I was sneaking my phone under the divination table and playing Tetris.

Maybe it was a bunny.

I took another step, and another twig snapped behind me, only this time, the sound was closer, louder.

Turning on my heel, I looked into the darkness. Another rule broken. "*Those who stare into the forest see things for the last time,*" my grandmother would warn. But maybe it was Percy or my broom finding their way back to me.

I froze as a deep and otherworldly voice spoke slowly. "I smell a witch."

“A witch ought never be frightened in the darkest forest because she should be sure in her soul that the most terrifying thing in the forest was her.”

-Wintersmith

I KNEW BETTER THAN TO SAY WHAT HUMANS WOULD SAY.

Who are you? Immortals hated that question, and this was definitely something not of this world ... and it had me in its clutches.

Steeling my voice and feigning poise, I inquired, “What is it I need to do for you to let me go?”

A specific question. One that showed I knew the rules and was willing to bargain. Spirits and devils alike loved bargains. After a beat of silence, it replied, voice deep and graveled. “Tell me your name, witch.”

“Tell me yours,” I countered.

It growled a response. “Romus.”

Something you don’t want mixing with terror? *Surprise.* As I fought my racing heart to piece together what this thing was, it evaded my conclusions. Ghouls whispered; they didn’t speak deeply. Vampires would never stay hidden; they loved to be seen as the beautiful creatures they were. A werewolf wouldn’t fuck with me; they were generally agreeable as long as it wasn’t their mating season. I’d landed on a forest spirit until it told me its name so willingly. Spirits, if they had names, or could remember them, never shared them. That could only leave ... I swallowed, realizing I was truly and utterly fucked.

“What do you want from a witch, demon?” I clutched my fists at my side. What power did I possess alone in the woods if this was a demon? Damn near nothing.

The silence was horrible. Suddenly, an icy breeze brushed behind me. I turned, feeling a wall of cold on the back of my neck. “Stand still. I want to smell you. Do not look at me, or I will kill you,” Romus rumbled plainly.

My breath froze in my lungs as I felt a frosty chill slither from my neck to my shoulder, then down my back and over

my ass. My hands shook at my sides.

“You’ll do,” he said as the icy chill retreated. “But you need to be broken first.” I jumped back with a yelp as something landed with a thud at my feet. After a moment of shock, I quickly picked up my broom and clutched it to my chest. “Take the mushrooms growing under the moss of the tree behind you.”

My heart sputtered in my chest. He hadn’t killed me yet. And something about talking to him and the way he’d sniffed me sent billows of confusing feelings through me.

“Now,” he snarled, impatient.

I turned, looking into the forest again and seeing nothing but darkness. I located the mushrooms at the roots of a mighty oak. As you can probably guess, I didn’t pay attention during my herbal studies either. I had no idea what kind of shrooms they were.

“Ugh, please don’t make me eat these. Surely, there are more interesting ways to kill me.”

“Squeeze them in your hands,” the voice instructed.

I did as I was told, and a thick white substance flowed from the plump mushrooms. In the light of the full moon, they looked pink, and the sticky substance on my palms glowed white. Something touched my shoulder, and I yelped again. “Shit,” I said, looking at my broom as it hovered in the air before me. Had he done that or had I?

“Why am I doing this? Are you going to let me go?”

“Coat your broom.”

I raised an eyebrow into the darkness. “Goddess, demons are so fucking weird,” I muttered under my breath as I slathered the stickiness over my broom handle.

“Now remove your undergarments.”

“Hold up now,” I retorted, cocking my head to the side. I was speaking to an invisible or hidden force, and it was a pervert. “Listen, you little freak, I don’t know what you think this is about, but—”

The ground shook, and the trees swayed. The tops of the branches cracked and broke. I ducked, covering my head as twigs and leaves fell from above me.

“I am not little. Do as I say, sex witch.”

I looked up, fully terrified but suddenly very interested in what this creature had to say. This monster was big and had a very sexy voice. Many a woman could be led astray by a baritone, and he was tall on top of that.

“I’m not a sex witch,” I said without confidence or conviction. The truth was, I didn’t know what kind of witch I was, other than an untalented one.

“Your coven stunts you. Do as I command.”

How would he know I have a coven? Not all witches did. And how would he know what kind of witch I was? The awareness that this wasn’t just a rogue spirit alarmed me enough that I did as I was told. I shimmied off my black lace thong and kicked it into the woods. Whatever this thing was, he could have my underwear, and I’d ride a dirty broom to get out of here.

“All right, well, see you never,” I said, slipping my broom between my thighs and jumping. Fear held me tight as I worried this ginormous mystery monster would grab me on my way up, but it didn’t. I exhaled a long breath as I levitated higher and higher into the sky, the trees below becoming tiny. I was searching for the lights of Hallows Fest or from the town when my chilly inner thighs warmed. It was as if a heating pad had been put between my legs. My cheeks flushed as I held on. The mushrooms had likely had some sort of warming effect. Lots of herbs did that; I knew that much. But then my broom pulsed. I yanked up my dress. The sight of my broom between my pussy lips sent a jolt of passion through me like I’d never felt.

“Oh my god,” I sighed. The pulsing continued along with the warming sensation. My slick broom felt so good. My hips bucked against it. This was sacrilegious and indecent, but it was so fucking hot. What had gotten into me? What had Romus done?

I didn't care. This felt amazing. My arousal pooled onto the broom handle as I rode. Every divot in the wood tightened my lower stomach and pushed against me in all the right ways.

"Fuck," I breathed, feeling the rise of something deep within me. Then my broom buzzed, vibrating against my pussy. "*Ohhh* my..." I broke, breathing heavily and seeing explosions behind my eyelids. I was orgasming. A real orgasm. No, two—three—of them. There was no guessing about this. Comparing this to the times I'd tried before ...

When I came off my ripples of pleasure, my feet were on the ground again. The same patch of grass I'd been on before.

"Lie down," the voice from the woods instructed. "Use your broom again."

That heat in my lower belly returned. My thighs were soaked in shroom-juice and my arousal, but instead of feeling sated and content, I felt ... I felt rabid with need. I thought that must have been what the werewolves felt when their spring came. Insatiable with the need for sex. And the thought of this monster from the darkness watching? He was the one who'd told me to do that with the mushrooms, and now he wanted to watch. If he was going to kill me, I didn't care; I had to feel that pleasure again.

"Okay," I replied, breathless. I lay back in the grass and pulled up my dress. My bare knees looked like beacons in the moonlight as they trembled. Where was he? Who was he? I took my broomstick's knobby end and slowly touched my center. I gasped, feeling the heat still raging there.

"Rub it up and down, just like that," the deep voice instructed.

I obeyed. The thick grain of the wood slick and hard against my softest places. My opening ached for more.

"Put it inside you. Fuck yourself with your broom, little sex witch."

This was so wrong. But I didn't fucking care. I nudged the knobby end of the wood against my opening and pushed in. I gasped at the feel, the stretch and pull. My broom was

certainly bigger than the pirate I'd had last year. The buzzing changed then, pulsing at a rhythmic pace. I arched my back as I pushed more and more into me. "Fuck," I whined as the broom heated again, highlighting my awareness of my tight inner walls.

"Yes, keep going," Romus said. *Did his voice sound a little breathless as well?*

The thought that I was turning him on sent me over the edge. Another orgasm tore through me as I writhed in the grass, coming on my broom handle.

When I'd slowly removed the knobby wood, I sat up, smoothing out my dress. "What is this all about?"

"I need you," the deep voice replied from somewhere in the darkness.

My breathing was slowly normalizing, though my brain was spinning. I still wanted more. And I wanted to see what was hiding in the dark, who or what could make me feel this way.

"Can I see you?"

"Not yet."

"Why do you need me?" Silence. "You just watched me fuck myself with my broom, and you can't just be honest with me?"

Something moved in the brush, and I jolted, feeling a cold breeze graze my cheek. The deep voice spoke again. "The witch yearns for more ecstasy, though the flowers' effect has waned." The cold air suddenly concentrated on my nipples, hardening them instantly.

"Are you the cold I'm feeling?" I shuddered. My crones would have told me to run or fight, but I was doing neither. I was interested in neither. Whatever was happening, I was in it now, and I was ... intrigued.

A small growl rumbled all around me. Something ferocious and archaic. "You need to come again—and I will facilitate that."

Something like a frozen whip snapped against my longing pussy. I gasped, leaning back into something solid yet not solid. Shadow and darkness enveloped me. Where I should have seen the arms of a man or woman around me, only thick limbs of night appeared, blocking out all else. “What are you doing?” I sighed weakly, leaning into the force. The cold had snaked its way between my thighs and was nudging at my core.

“Give in, Merimange. I’ll reward you for each orgasm you surrender. Deal?”

I swallowed, my head spinning. I wasn’t a new witch by any means. Within the pit of who I was, I knew you never made deals with immortals, especially dark ones like the thing that had me in its clutches. But honestly, I’d been presented with worse bargains in my time. This entity could have let me go right there and then, and I wouldn’t have run. I wanted answers, and I wanted whatever other gifts of pleasure it had in store. I nodded like an idiot. “Okay.”

It snarled with deep approval. A long, shadowy hand appeared, illuminated by the light of the moon. Its fingers alone were half the length of my broom. My head lolled back onto something firm, its chest, maybe, as it reached under my dress, easily reaching my breasts. Romus’s touch was frigid as death as he sank his touch down my abdomen.

When he reached the apex of my thighs, he paused for a beat. “If you don’t scream as loud as you can when I make you come, I’ll kill you. Do you understand?”

Fear mixed with arousal dried my mouth while wetting my throbbing pussy. “I understand—”

Before I could finish my thought, two of his long fingers plunged into me. I cried out, the feeling like two broomsticks at once. But I was wet, really freaking wet, and his cold-as-ice digits almost instantly brought me to another climax.

“Your cunt is so needy for this, you wretched little witch. Has your dreadful coven neglected you for an eternity?”

The question sounded so formed and not as echoey as it had before. His voice rumbled behind me as his body hardened into a solid thing. He was taking shape somehow. Into what I didn't dare look over my shoulder to see. His fingers pumped in and out as I constricted around him. I bobbed my knees, desperate for release, knowing he wouldn't need to kill me, because I would surely scream soon.

"This isn't enough," he said.

"What?" I asked in confusion as his fingers retreated. My heart dropped. "Did I do something wrong?" The thought of disappointing him devastated me, and that alone should have caused me immense worry. But I didn't want to anger him. Suddenly, my broom levitated without me asking. It floated over, parallel to the ground.

"Bend over, hold on to your broom, and prepare for my cock." Panic and excitement trembled in my palms as I braced myself on my broom. "This should be sufficient," he rumbled, as if assessing my position. His fingers alone were so big, I didn't know what to expect from his cock.

"Is this going to hurt?" I whispered into the cold forest, though I didn't know why I asked. My core clenched in a deep ache, already wanting it, wanting him, whatever he was. This was what I'd been looking for tonight, even if I hadn't known it.

The surrounding wind stilled before he answered. "Yes."

Air gusted below me, blowing my dress over my ass. Two large shadowed hands held on to my hips. I braced for impact, but only felt the nudge of his large member against my opening. It felt big, but not completely unmanageable. At least, I didn't think so. He pushed in an inch, and I moaned at the burning pain. I'd never taken something this big before. The pirate last year had been an average, hour-long fuck aboard his docked ship. It was wonderful, yet plain in a way. Nothing like this. This was dark and wrong and sinful and so freaking good.

"More," I begged. "I need more ... and harder." I didn't know what I was saying. I'd never said those words before,

but they fell from my lips. “Fuck me hard,” I demanded as his grip tightened on my hips.

He growled deeply, and something wet nipped at my ear. Was it his teeth? They were pointed and sharp against my skin as they left my lobe and scratched down my neck.

“Curious ... but you please me.”

My heart fluttered at the praise. I was pleasing him. Me. No one else. I wondered how many people he’d been with and then immediately pushed the thought away as I felt jealousy twinge in my gut. I wanted to enjoy this.

His cock hit me hard, plunging so deep inside, I was sure I left our realm. Crying out, I wrapped my arms around his forearms—he had forearms now—and I came in thunderous bliss. Romus growled, and I felt his seed spilling down my inner thighs.

He backed away, leaving me cold and naked.

“Can I turn around? Please, let me see you.”

When he didn’t answer, I spun slowly. My gaze caught on only what the moonlight glinted off. A tall, dark-gray horned creature with a long skeletal face. I swallowed as he stood unnaturally still. Any human would have walked right past him.

“You were adequate, sex witch.” He took a step back into the forest.

“Wait!” I called after him. “Wait, don’t go!” I racked my brain for anything that could make him stay. What did I have to offer this evil spirit? “If I am a sex witch, I can continue to help you. I’m strengthening you, aren’t I? Each orgasm of mine has enhanced your form. I could keep doing that.” My words stuck in my throat. What was I even saying? All sense had been fucked out of me. Romus was all I wanted. The intrigue, the mystery, the potential for great power ... With a sigh, I reached for my broom. But then his voice rumbled through the trees.

“Agree to be my servant, my submissive little witch.”

My heart froze. The cries of agony from my witch mothers, my holy ancestors, were audible in my soul. *No! They shouted. Don't do this!*

But if I weren't a demon's servant, I was theirs. And Romus had just rocked my world with the best sex of my life. It was dark, dirty, and sinful ... and I loved it. I was done taking orders from the witches. My time as the Moon Halo Coven's bitch was over. Instead, I was going to be someone else's witch. We'd do horrid and exciting things together, this darkness and I.

I lifted my chin, clutching my broom, naked in the moonlight, as he approached. Tall, so tall, and so inhuman. Sinister delight radiated off his taut gray muscles, and his skull was like an ox. He was wicked ... and he needed my ecstasy. Romus asked me to be his submissive, his servant, but it was he who needed my power. And I needed his pleasure. As he grabbed the back of my neck and pulled my hair back, I laughed, the sound deranged.

Smiling up at him, I replied. "I'm yours."

IV

“You didn’t think you were the only magical girl in town, did you?”

-Wandavision

BROOMS ARE TO A WITCH WHAT A SWORD IS TO A KNIGHT.

They hold power, yes, but more importantly, they hold a piece of their witch. Our brooms had to find us, like all magic items should. We couldn't go to the store and buy one, just like fortune readers couldn't buy their tarot cards or runes. Magic had to be given or found. I found the stick of my broom on a walk in the woods under the full moon.

And now I'd been found by something else. Something cruel and terrible ... and I was utterly infatuated with him. Romus stalked away and returned holding my broom. The pale moonlight glinted on the white of his ox skull face, leaving the dark of his twisted horns and hollowed eyes untouched. I'd never heard of or seen a creature like him before. His body was that of an exaggerated man. Longer and wider, with the shoulders and form of a human with firm gray skin. He raised my broom as he towered several feet over me. With his horns, he must have been ten feet tall. I pulled up my ruined dress from the ground and covered my bare body as he sniffed my broom.

"This object will answer to me now. It is mine."

Why was it easier to give away myself and my loyalty to my coven than it was to think of parting with my broom? Before I could answer, a long red tongue unfurled from his mouth, wrapping around the wood and licking it from bristle to tip. He then inserted the knob and sucked. I blushed, thinking of him lapping up the remains of my pleasure. My thighs clenched as I wondered what his long, thick tongue would feel like on my sex.

After he'd tasted it to his satisfaction, he handed it to me. "You'll go back to your coven and speak nothing of this."

He stepped back to his spot near a maple tree.

"When will I see you again?" I asked, hearing the desperation in my voice.

“When I require use of you,” he rumbled plainly. Darkness enveloped him, and he was one with the woods again. I swallowed, feeling naked, used, and tossed aside. But the fucked-up thing was that I wanted more. I’d let him use me all he wanted. Maybe my sex magic was aiding in his evil schemes, but maybe I wasn’t as good as I was trying to be anyway.

Shrugging on my dress, I mounted my broom and kicked into the sky. Hope squeezed inside me that my beloved snake would find his way home to me. As I flew higher and higher, a breath left my lips at the feel of Romus’s saliva that still coated the wood. Even after several orgasms, I wanted more of his dark presence. And knowing that he’d shown me all my broom was good for ... I found the ridge in the center and lined it up with my clit. Riding it, pushing my sore pussy over it until it hurt, I panted as I humped through another release. As my bliss broke, I pretended the spit on my broom as his tongue outstretched as I mounted it. What had gotten into me? It was as if meeting this freaking monster had unlocked my own darkness. I was wanton and aching and dying for more.

* * *

AFTER SNEAKING by Felix as they slept on the sofa in the blue light of the television, I crashed into bed without bothering to change my ruined dress. It smelled like sex and evil, reminding me that what had just happened wasn’t just a dream. Sunlight assaulted me as a door slammed, jolting me from my sleep.

Elora’s eyes scanned me and flitted through my room as if searching for evidence of my treachery. “It’s noon, and I’m really fucking pissed off at you right now, Merimange.”

I rubbed my eyes and yawned. “If my magic is so weak, why do any of you care if I don’t show up for your stupid circle time?”

The high priestess’s eyes widened at my blatant disrespect. “No one thinks you’re weak, but you’re untrained, reckless,

and irresponsible. As evidenced by lying to me and ditching us last night.”

“I didn’t mean to. I got lost.”

Elora snorted. “Sure, tell that to the crones.”

Groaning, I buried my head under my pillow. “Nope, I’m avoiding them forever.”

After thumbing at the line of amethyst crystals along my window pane, Elora smirked. “Good luck with that. They’re downstairs waiting for you.”

I sat up and screeched, “What?”

“You did this to yourself, baby witch.”

I swore as the door closed behind her. Peeling off my filthy, sex-worn dress, I showered. Everything in me wanted to keep the smell and fluids of my demonic friend on my skin, but a small part of me was terrified the elder witches would sense it somehow. So I scrubbed with my lavender and tea tree oils and slipped on a plain black dress, tying my long dark waves into a ponytail. Each step down the stairs, passing by the moving portraits of great witches before, my anxiety grew. My plan was simple: lie, then lie some more. I hoped for a nice crone, someone like Opal; she was kind and gullible.

My feet froze in my boots when I heard the rich chuckle of the last crone I wanted to see. Why was she here? Swallowing, I tiptoed into the kitchen, passing a smug-looking Elora leaning against the sink.

Felix, still donning whiskers and cat-features, turned to give me a panicked *what the fuck?* look as Marcelene sipped her tea at the breakfast table.

We met eyes, and I felt the blood rush from my cheeks as she smiled. “Well, if it isn’t Merimange. Sit and tell me, child, have some good sex last night?”

V

“A witch never gets caught. Don’t forget that she has magic in her fingers and devilry dancing in her blood.”

-Roald Dahl, ‘The Witches’

MY KNEES WOBBLED AS THEY ALL STARED AT ME.

Marcelene gestured to the chair beside Felix, and I shuffled over. What the hell would I tell her? How did she know?

She smiled, adding a sugar cube to her mug. “It seems your Halloween was much better than mine. So, please, regale us with your tale. Who is the lucky soul to awaken your gifts? I must say, when I came by, it was to punish you. But the force of your magic is palpable, child.”

Taking a seat, I tapped my long nails nervously against the table. “Wh-what do you mean awaken my gifts?”

“You’re a sex witch—pleasure witch, love witch, whatever you want to call it—Merimange. Sex magic is a tricky business. For most, it’s quick and subtle. For a rare few, it takes a powerful counterpart to awaken, and the powers that ensue ... well,” she patted my knuckles reassuringly, “let’s just say it’s a good thing you stay in the light with us and your gifts.”

My throat tightened. I wasn’t exactly in the light anymore, was I? I’d sworn my allegiance to an evil entity and had left the pure behind. Now, I was lying to my crone. Fidgeting with the tablecloth, I took a deep breath, avoiding eye contact with the small crowd around me. “It was just some pirate; nothing too exciting. Forgive me for wandering off. It was just—”

“Oh, sex magic is near impossible to resist when it awakens. I’d say it’s a good thing the pirates leave port soon after Halloween.”

“Why?”

Elora cleared her throat. “Obsession, Merimange. Many sex witches become utterly obsessed with the individual that awakens their magic. The wrong partner could take advantage of that, harness the magic, and—”

“That’s enough, Elora,” Marcelene interrupted smoothly, flicking the high priestess a small glance. “You have your coven to guide you. And now that we know what abilities you possess, it will be easier to train you. Meet us around the willow one week from today and avoid any ... pleasure until then.” The wise elder stood and rubbed my shoulder. “I’m proud of you. Your mothers would be proud, too.”

Shit, shit, shit.

When they exited, the house squeaked and popped in an audible sigh. Of admiration or relief, I couldn’t tell. Felix’s whiskers bobbed as they joined me at the sink. “What aren’t you telling me?”

Lying to the other witches was easier than I expected, but could I truly endure deceiving my best friend? “I don’t know what you’re talking about,” I replied, washing out the mugs. “I guess I’m a sex witch.”

Felix raised an eyebrow. “Which means you had the best orgasms of your life and you’re not telling your bestie? I find it hard to believe that it was some scoundrel pirate who made you come so hard they ignited your powers. If you’re going for a convincing lie, you should have said a vampire.”

I swallowed, scrubbing the porcelain saucer a little too hard. “It’s not exactly easy discussing my orgasms with a room full of my nosy coven. Maybe I know what I’m doing, Felix. Please, just drop it.” Focusing on my task, I didn’t turn to see what I knew was hurt and disappointment on my friend’s feline features.

“I’m going to talk to Opal about fixing my face. I’ll get out of your hair,” Felix responded softly before disappearing through the door.

“Add bad friend to the bad witch list,” I mumbled to myself. Water from the spicket sprayed my face, and I shrieked, shutting it off and grabbing a dish towel. “Oh, you hate me, too, House?” I asked. “Perfect.”

Grabbing my bag, I stomped outside and slumped onto the porch stairs. Ash Grove had been so boring until last night.

Everything had made sense before Halloween. My broom sat propped against the railing, its knobs like eyes staring at me, judging me. “You can also shut the fuck up,” I hissed ... at my broom.

Resting my head on my knees, I groaned. “I’m losing my mind. All for what?” *A hot creature in the woods that lays the pipe so good I sold my soul for more.* I wanted to text him, but dark forest demons probably didn’t have phones. It had been over twelve hours, and I hadn’t heard from him. What if he’d changed his mind about me? What if he didn’t want me anymore? Panic swirled in my belly.

The pirate I’d hooked up with last Halloween had walked me home and thanked me for a lovely time. He was a gentleman. Mr. Ox-Skull was *not* a gentleman. I shouldn’t have desired Romus, but I more than wanted him. I needed him. How could he fuck me so hard, so good, and, you know, *demand that I be his servant*, and not at least check on me the next day?

The good inside of me told me to go find Felix. To sit with them as Opal worked on their spell-mishap and apologize for being an asshole earlier. The bad inside of me only wanted one thing, though. And now more than ever, the bad was winning. Grabbing my broom, I straddled it and kicked off into the sky, feeling the cool October breeze graze my cheeks. I told myself I was flying toward town, toward Magia Eclectic’s, but I guess along with lying to my coven, I lied to myself now, too. My broom wasn’t pointed toward the magic shop; it was pointed toward the woods.

Toward him.

VI

“The magicks I used are very powerful. I’m very powerful. And maybe it’s not such a good idea for you to piss me off.”

-Buffy The Vampire Slayer

THE THICK CANOPY OF RED AND YELLOW
LEAVES CAST THE FOREST FLOOR IN SHADOW.

I munched on a honey and oat bar from my bag as I stepped over smiling jack-o'-lanterns left over from Hallows Fest. For once, I was glad I'd missed the party. What I found was so much better. How could I ever go back to everyone else's dull existence? Practicing spells, making my bed, watching movies with Felix, the same shit every single day. Romus was unknown, exciting, and oh so tempting.

"Percy!" I whisper-yelled through the brush. My poor snake was still missing, leading me to believe I was a terrible reptile mom. Hopefully he was just chasing mice and would find his way to me soon. When I was sure I was near the spot I'd been in the night before, as I said the name, my heart pounding in my chest. "Romus?"

The fluttering leaves and chirping birds silenced, as if the word alone was frightening. Clutching my broom to my chest, as if it could protect me, I ventured farther into the trees. My heart fluttered when I spotted the mushrooms from the night before. The ones he'd had me slather on my broom, the goo creating a warming, buzzing sensation that made my body tingle in remembrance. I plucked a few from the ground and tucked the fungi into my bag for later. Sitting next to them, I clutched my knees. I'd wait here for as long as it took. Maybe he could only come out at night. I should have thought of that. Looking around in the low, filtered light, I guessed we were somewhere near the creepy cemetery that was tucked away in these woods. With a sigh, I leaned against the mossy trunk and closed my eyes. Hoping to see him when I opened them again.

A loud noise jolted me awake. It took me a moment to take in my surroundings. Night had covered the grass and rhododendron bushes, making it almost impossible to see clearly. I rubbed my eyes, thinking I'd imagined hearing the

noise, when a twig snapped. My pulse quickened as I stood, brushing off my dress. I smoothed my hair, wishing I'd thought to style it. How did dark entities like their lover's hair?

"Romus?" I asked, my voice croaking.

Then the smell hit my nose like a smack in the face. I put a hand over my mouth, thinking it must have been a skunk, when something hissed like a teakettle. I froze, and my blood ran cold. Somewhere in my sex-crazed delirium, I hadn't considered what other monsters lurked in the woods of Ash Grove, especially so soon after Halloween. "Shit, I'm a fucking idiot," I whispered to myself, grabbing my broom. It couldn't be a—

"*Merimange*," it whispered through the shadows.

My hand trembled as my fingers wrapped around my broom. I dared a look up, barely spotting my exit through the thick branches. If I took flight and crashed, it would have me the moment I landed. Stunned, immobile. The werewolves of Fenrir always caught these things, so how was it here?

Another twig snapped, another whisper of my name. "*Help me. I'm lost*," It lied.

Fuck, fuck, fuck.

I scanned the space around me but quickly caught myself and looked down. My coven taught me that the best thing to do was pretend I hadn't heard anything. Carefully, quietly, I mounted my broom.

Then it appeared. Like an apparition, none of its abnormally long limbs moving. Its long, grotesque face was the stuff of legend, and it was the last face so many saw. I'd wandered right into a fucking ghoul. If I moved too quickly, it would kill me. Its frozen stillness only a mask of how deathly fast it was.

"I'm a witch," I said lowly, fighting to control my terror. Sometimes that was enough to deter creatures. The promise of power, the unknown of what that power may be.

The ghoul's brown, jagged teeth appeared, though I didn't see it move its maw. "Witch will taste good."

God, this was going to hurt. It served me right that I would die a painful death for pledging myself to evil cock for eternity. I squeezed my eyes closed as another branch snapped. Though this time louder; this time from behind me.

The sound of wind, something snapping, and wetness swiped against my ears all at once. When nothing touched me, I opened my eyes and choked on a scream.

The ghoul's face was inches from my own, the swampy smell burning my nostrils. I pressed my back into the tree when something dripped on my boot. The head of the ghoul swayed, its eyes wide and white and lifeless.

In the second it'd taken me to squint in fear, my rescuer had decapitated my hunter. I looked up, then up some more, and looked into the hollow eye sockets of the ox skull attached to the tall, muscular, leather-skinned form.

"Romus," I whispered.

VII

“You got involved with a witch, and when you do that ... weird stuff happens.”

-Bewitched

HE TOSSED THE SEVERED HEAD TO THE SIDE,
LIKE IT WAS NOTHING BUT A MELON, AND
STOOD, TOWERING OVER ME.

I swallowed, realizing I hadn't thought of what I was going to say when I found him. "Thank you—"

A yelp escaped my throat as my feet left the ground and I was flung over his shoulder. I opened my mouth to speak when a clap rang out and pain swelled across my ass. Romus took long strides deeper into the woods as I struggled to push myself up, my sweaty palms sliding down his taut gray skin.

"Did you just spank me?" I screeched. He didn't answer, only held me over his shoulder as he stalked through the forest. After a few minutes passed, we entered a damp, cold cave. Romus lowered me to the ground, though I was half expecting to be tossed onto the rock below. I rubbed my ass cheek. "Well, hi, hello. Nice to see you, too."

He crossed his muscular arms, surveying me. Even with no eyes, he somehow managed to look judgmental. The cave's ceiling was high enough that even with his horns outstretched, there was still a solid three feet to the top.

"Turn around," his low voice demanded.

My cheeks heated, and it was a struggle to pull my gaze away from him. I wished I could see him in the light. He was monstrous, and he had just ripped apart a ghoul with his bare hands. And I was alone with him in his cave.

I did as I was told. Something shifted behind me, and when I glanced over my shoulder, Romus was sitting against the wall of the cave, one elbow propped on a knee, so human-like.

"What are you?"

"Your master," he growled. "Remove your clothing."

"Thank you for saving me," I whispered as I pulled off my dress and kicked off my panties. The cold air perked my nipples, and I felt my arousal pool between my thighs.

“You are no use to me dead. Come, you need to be fucked, and I need to fuck you.”

When I turned around, he was stroking his massive, gray cock. How did that fit in me? How would I make it fit again? The idea of taking him both horrified and excited me. I padded over, careful not to slip on the slick rock, and stood between his legs. Even with him sitting and me standing, I didn't reach his eye level, or you know, lack of eyes.

He took my hips roughly and pulled me closer, pressing my pussy against his shaft. Pain stung through me again as he slapped my ass.

“Ouch!” I complained. “What is that for?”

“Your ignorance,” he growled, hooking a large hand under my knee, and pulling it around his waist, and then the other. I gasped as I felt myself open, feeling him against me. “You don't come for me unless I send for you.”

A different kind of pain peppered my throat. “Well, you were taking too long,” I replied, my tone breathy. “You don't just fuck a girl, make her pledge her soul, and then not at least send a good morning text.”

His grip tightened on my hips, and when I dared look up, his fearsome skull head tilted. I wished it were possible to read emotions on a face like that. When I thought he was going to speak, he lifted me, swiftly lining me up with his tip and slamming me onto his cock. I screamed, both at the excruciating sensation and the heavy, unpracticed stretch that burned at the intrusion.

“It hurts you. Good,” he remarked, picking me up and moving me up and down his length. “Understand this, witch—I do not care about your soul.”

I cried out again as he plowed into me, pushing his hips up with the movement.

“Touch yourself and give me your grand magic. It belongs to me. Your cunt and every bit of power within it are mine and mine alone. Say you understand.” He growled, picking up his pace. His voice had shifted into something more primal, and

despite his harsh words, I felt a prickle of satisfaction. I was affecting him. He wanted me. He was getting off because of me.

I nodded, stray strands of hair falling from my braid and sticking against the sweat on my forehead. “Yes, I understand.” My fingers found my clit and rubbed an unsteady rhythm against his pounding.

“I’m going to come inside you, and this time, don’t you dare wash me off. Your punishment for being a stupid whore and wandering into the forest alone, risking my source for magic, is for you to keep my cum on you until I say otherwise.” He spanked me again, and I broke, my orgasm fracturing through me. Purple lights danced behind my eyes—no, in front of my eyes. Purple shimmers and sparkles danced around us. A scream left me again as Romus pulled me hard onto his cock and stilled, his roar echoing through the cave as his hot cum filled me.

“My magic is purple,” I said, out of breath and bracing myself on his hard shoulders.

He jerked me off him and stood. My knees were weak, and I almost fell but caught myself. No cuddling or pillow talk, I guessed.

“My magic. You are my servant; your sex spells belong to me.”

I gathered my dress. “Where do you come from?” When he didn’t answer, I tugged on my dress and sighed. “You told me if I give you magic, you’d reward me with answers. Is that not our deal?” Immortals loved their stupid bargains.

After a minute, he replied, “I have been trapped for over one hundred years. Ensnared, tortured by an archdemon who took pleasure in my suffering.”

“That’s awful,” I whispered, taking two steps toward him.

“Ghost will have his reckoning.”

“I can help,” I offered.

“The archdemon is not my present concern; not what I need you for.”

I stared up at him, afraid to reach out and touch his abdomen like I so desperately wanted. How was it that he had been inside me a few moments ago, but I felt I couldn't touch him now? “What can I do? I'll do anything.”

He tilted his head in contemplation. “Such eagerness and obedience. This pleases me. Perhaps you will be more useful than I anticipated.”

Pride bubbled within me, and I decided to risk it. Reaching out, I placed a palm on his hand.

“Use me.”

He turned and strode into the darkness of the cave and stopped, waiting for me. My heart fluttered as I followed after him. The dark was abrasive and disorienting. I racked my mind for an illumination spell and finally remembered one.

“*Theia*,” I murmured, watching as a faint blue glow radiated from the moisture in the cave. It was as if the walls were spray painted with glow-in-the-dark light.

Romus led me wordlessly down the cavern until we reached the end. A solid, flat rock wall. He pressed a large hand over it and stared at it for a moment. It didn't look like anything special. Then again, it was hard to get a read on someone who didn't have a face.

When he spoke, his voice was harsh and rough again. “You will do as I command, or I will kill you.”

“Romus, you don't have to threaten me. I'm in. I want this. I want to help you.”

“Why?” he questioned, turning around and crossing his arms. Damn, his arms looked good. Thick tendons and muscle wrapped beneath gray. I was more attracted to a monster than I had ever been to a human man. Maybe this was the obsession Elora was talking about. I felt hopelessly enthralled and feverish with need for him.

I gazed up into the hollow eyes of the ox skull. “This is the first time in my life I’ve felt like I belong. When I’m with you, I’m excited; I feel alive. Maybe that makes me evil,” I shrugged, “but I don’t really care. Being evil sounds kind of fun, honestly.” When he didn’t answer, I kicked at a pebble. “Can I stay with you?”

“No.”

“I don’t want to leave,” I whined. “Let me stay. Let’s do this together. I can help you. Together, who knows what we could do. We could find a way to get the hell out of here.”

“You wish to leave Ash Grove? Leave your coven?” His deep voice rumbled in the echoes of the cave, though somehow, his voice sounded more ... man-like now. Less of a beast; more conversational than before. Maybe each time we had sex, he evolved ... maybe after a few more fucks, he’d cuddle me after, and maybe hold my hand ... That was what I wanted; I decided in that moment. I wanted to make Romus just as obsessed with me as I was with him.

I nodded. “With you? Yeah.”

He made a vibrating sound low in his throat. “You will do. I have your first task, little witch. Complete it and meet me here.”

I could have jumped up and down clapping and squealing like a little kid. “Anything. I’ll do anything.” We were going to run away together. He liked me. Or at least, he was about to. I’d make him; force him into it somehow.

Taking a step closer, I felt the warmth of his body radiating off his massive form. My insides ached to have him again. And then he gave me my task.

“Find the witch who cast the Protico spell.”

“That’s easy,” I answered, relieved. The Protico spell was the first big incantation that Felix cast using potions they brewed. The work was so well done, the crones were impressed. I didn’t even remember what it did, but apparently, my friend had done a good job.

Romus nodded, and I almost jumped at the feel of his hand as it cupped my jaw. Oh, it felt so nice. And then he finished the command.

“Find them and kill them.”

VIII

“The day he left me was the day I died. But then I was reborn as a witch.”

-The Love Witch

MATURE, DIGNIFIED WOMEN REALIZE WHEN
THEY'RE IN OVER THEIR HEADS.

They own their mistakes, seek help, and make things right. I was neither mature nor dignified. No, my dignity was stained on my inner thighs with the cum of a monster who'd ordered me not to shower. Instead of womaning up and figuring shit out—like how to get out of murdering my best friend and how to fall out of my deep infatuation with a creature with no face—I sulked in bed for two days.

Lying to my fellow coven members and house mates, saying I was suffering from a migraine. Felix texted, asking if I needed anything, and their kindness was salt in the wound. What the fuck was I going to do? And the most messed-up thing of all was I was fighting the urge to go and find Romus again. I thought of him every waking moment. As I watched stupid teenage dramas on my laptop in bed, all I could think of was his growl. When I ate my dumb yogurt and berries, I wished I knew what he tasted like. We'd only ever had sex with the goal of my release, and maybe ours combined, but I wanted to pleasure him; just him.

But he didn't see me that way, did he? To Romus, the powerful dark being, I was a tool, his magic source. But I could be more. I could convince him of it. But how could I do that without submitting to his most recent demand? I couldn't kill my friend for him ... could I?

I swallowed down the twisted feeling that whispered back a disturbing answer.

There had to be other solutions. Somewhere within my coven's wealth of knowledge, I could find a way to make us all happy.

I knew where I needed to go.

The house opened my window before I'd even changed into another black dress and mounted my broom. The house wanted me out, which surprisingly hurt my feelings. Could even the house sense the changes happening inside me? A week ago, I'd never thought I'd be twisted and tangled in the evils that now haunted my thoughts and pulsed between my legs. But now that I'd had a taste and knew how good evil felt, how could I ever be anything but bad again?

My lack of knowledge, the way I'd only haphazardly paid attention in my coven circles to lessons and spell craft, weighed on my back like a chain of ignorance. I'd never cared about our magical history or abilities until now. Now that I needed use of that knowledge. The Moon Halo Coven had always taught me that magic was to be used to help others, to protect, and to serve the world around us. That idea was boring as hell. But this new thought that magic could be used for my own gain, to draw in what suited me, to find adventure and fun ... that had my fingers tingling atop my broom as I flew toward Ash Grove High School's library.

This stupid town with nothing, and no one interesting. Filled with old people who were stuck here like flies in a web. I guessed I was a stuck bug, too. But not anymore. Not with Romus. My monster and I would escape, and I wouldn't be an insect anymore. I'd be a spider. I'd craft my own webs. And web number one would be understanding my new master and how to thwart my old crone overlords without, well, killing them.

The library was musty and dusty and dead, like everything else in Ash Grove after Halloween. At least all our spooky books were hiding in plain sight. I stopped in front of a black bookshelf among a row of chestnut browns and gave the book spines a gentle stroke. They shimmered violet, the same shade I'd beheld with Romus during our last sexual encounter. Interesting. My magic had never had a color before. Aside from flying, my witchcraft had always been nonexistent or weak. But now it thrummed inside me. It had life and colors, and it was begging to be set free. I wondered what else it could do.

My fingers buzzed above the navy spine of a thick ancient-looking book, and I plucked it from its spot. As I opened it, something fuzzy and black unfurled in the empty spot on the shelf. I raised an eyebrow before reaching out to pet the cat. One of my mothers' rules was always *pet that cat*, and that was one commandment I'd never disobey. The animal purred before I dropped to sit on the floor and thumbed through the pages.

A History of Demons and Dark Spells sat propped on my knees as I lazily turned the pages. Imps, ghouls, lesser demons, higher order of demons, archdemons ... I paused. Romus had mentioned an archdemon torturing him in Ash Grove. Did Ash Grove house an archdemon? There was no way. And if it was true, why wouldn't the crones tell us?

Purring sounded beside me as the cat nuzzled against me. I scratched under its chin and turned the page. My heart beat wildly at the illustration of a long, horned skull. Above it read *ankole demon*. This had to be what my new sexy friend in the forest was. Greedily, I consumed the words on the page.

Ankole demons are an ancient class of demons created by devils for the purpose of doing their bidding. When humans were scarce or deemed unuseful, devils would take the strongest ox from a farmer's herd and bestow powers, giving it its demon form. The body of a long, strong, powerful man and a head like an ox's skull. These demons are rarely made anymore, being that the devils did not prefer their insatiable desire for power and other carnal needs.

Other carnal needs? That sounded intriguing. "Of course, just like a witch book. Nothing useful, like how to make an ankole demon fall in love with you," I muttered to the furry black house pet.

It stretched and yawned. "You could always try making it banana pudding. The way to any male's heart is through its stomach."

I jumped, dropping the book. "You talk?"

"And dance if you're nice. Hi, I'm Cat, and you've discovered one of my napping spots."

Looking around the space, it appeared we were alone. This animal had to be a familiar and belong to a powerful witch. If anyone had the answers I sought and the good sense not to rat me out, it would be this feline.

Closing the book, I scooted closer. “Good to meet you, I’m Merimange. Tell me, Is there an archdemon in Ash Grove?”

Cat lazily fell onto her back and wiggled. “Lions and tigers and bears, too.”

I rolled my eyes but smiled. “Do you know of ankole demons and what they desire? What they might want?”

She stopped wiggling. “My, I haven’t heard tale of an ankole in a hundred years. We have one in our —” She straightened. “Perhaps you should consult your crone. I’m sure Marcelene will tell you what she wants you to know.”

Desperation made me tap a nervous palm along the front of the book. “That’s the problem. They all just spoon feed me the information they want, in the way they want, for the reasons they want. What about what I want, huh?”

Cat licked a paw and inspected her claws. “Ankoles were made from bulls or something, right? One would assume they want bull things. A herd, a nice cow to come home to. Are you a heifer, Merimange? Oh, lions, tigers, bears, and cows. Moo ...” The cat cackled like a maniac.

“Okay, now you’re just being an asshole,” I said, standing and putting the book back on the shelf. “I’m telling *everyone* about your secret napping spot.”

The animal hissed behind me as I stormed away. Familiars were jerks, and I was sure the black cat’s master was a real piece of work.

But my venture to the library wasn’t a complete loss. I’d discovered Romus’s demon type. Now I could figure out what he wanted. I could become what he wanted and make him want me somehow. Want me for more than just my magic. Though I did really enjoy giving him my magic ... and I really needed a shower, even if Mr. Ankole forbade it. He wasn’t here, was he? He hadn’t checked in; he was probably off

finding another sex witch to seduce. Jealousy warmed my cheeks as I imagined finding the witch and ending her.

After I made it home, the house door pushing against me as I tried to enter, I showered in cold water (another gift from the house that was mad at me) and made a sandwich downstairs. As I was on my second bite of peanut butter and banana, Felix shuffled in and sat at the table, resting their big, pointed ears in their hands.

“Shit. Still a cat, huh? At least you have fur now. Calico suits you.”

They groaned.

My chest squeezed at the realization of what a bad friend I was. “Opal couldn’t fix it?”

Another groan.

Which reminded me of Romus’s other command. I’d already disobeyed him and showered. Because fuck him. I would do a lot of things for cock, but being stinky wasn’t one of them. He wanted me to murder Felix for casting the Protico spell. But there was no way I could do that. I loved Felix. We’d been besties since we were little. There had to be another way, and I had to find it before I sought out my monster lover again.

I eased into the topic. “Have you tried fixing it yourself, like, how you did the Protico spell the crones were so impressed with?”

My heart ached in want for Romus. He was all I could think of. His towering and twisted body, those long horns. The way his huge cock stretched me to the point of pain. It’d been days, and I needed him. I could see him; I could see him today if I wanted; all it would take was one flick of my wrist. One forbidden spell. One mistake ... My palms itched to a near burn, and when I inspected them, they were glowing deep purple. My magic had awakened, and it was becoming fierce and unwieldy. I could call it an accident; say I was trying to help Felix reverse their cat-curse and it went awry ...

No, no, no ... but maybe ...

When I looked up, I met my friend's new slitted green eyes. Their whiskers twitched. "A gift from the sex god?"

Shoving my palms in my dress pockets, I nodded. "Guess so."

"You going to tell me who it is yet?"

"I already told you it was the pirate—"

"Merimange, bullshit." *Interesting word choice.* "Tell me and get my mind off the fact that I'm going to be stuck in this form forever."

Forever won't be so long if I kill you.

I forced a sigh as I sat beside them as if I weren't contemplating their demise. Maybe I could convince them of my cause. Maybe they'd agree with me or support me. "You have to promise not to tell."

"My stupid furry lips are sealed."

"He's kind of ... amazing. Tall, dark, and handsome." *Fifteen feet tall, dark spirit, hot if you love fucking a nightmare.*

Felix's ears perked up. "And fucks like a goddamn champ. I'm happy for you, M. When do I get to meet him?"

I nervously rubbed my neck, my palm singeing the hair there. My magic wanted to kill my friend. Shit. And then a plan took root as deep purples swirled behind my vision. "Hey, let's order pizza and watch *Jaws* tonight. Witch-bitch night?"

"Goddess, that is exactly what I need. Yes, sign me up. I just need to polish some runes and cleanse a few tarot decks for Marcelene, and I'm free."

My unsuspecting friend gave me a furry hug and took off with a spring in their step.

What I was about to do was the vilest thing I'd ever done.

But it would win the affections of my master.

And that was all I wanted.

IX

“I know what you want. It is very stupid of you, but you shall have your way, and it will bring you to sorrow, my pretty princess.”

-The Sea Witch, Hans Christian Anderson's The Little Mermaid

I'D GATHERED THE AMBER BOTTLES, SIMMERED
ROTTEN APPLE CORES FOR HOURS, AND
CHANTED ALL I COULD CHANT.

The next step led me behind our house, down a stone path, and into the fatal garden. I wasn't a plant witch by any means. Flowers were impractical and made me sneeze. But these blooms were different. I sighed and kneeled next to the hooded lilac-hued plant. I plucked it just as twilight began to set over the shrubbery that flanked the woods. Sniffing the bitter bulb, I plucked it and another—and another for good measure—and placed them in a basket. When I looked up and into the trees, my heart nearly stopped. My gaze caught on his silhouette. Massive, even bigger than he was before. Had he grown? Horns outstretched and hollow sockets pierced straight through me. Any girl would have run or screamed. I wanted to do both. But I wanted to run toward him, and I wanted to scream with his cock down my throat.

A deep growl reverberated, calling me forward. With a glance over my shoulder, I peered at the darkened house; no one was home. I tiptoed barefoot through the garden and into the woods. He'd come looking for me. He wanted me, didn't he? No, he needed me. That was different.

When I'd made it several yards into the woods, he stepped out from the misty fog. My breath caught in my throat. "You're bigger."

"Perhaps you're smaller."

Mirth fluttered in my chest. "Was that an actual joke?"

Romus stalked toward me, each step heavy with darkness and promise. When he stood before me, I craned my neck to look up at the horns and skull I so desperately loved. *Loved, loved, loved.*

"Lying." He ran large, pointed gray fingers through my wavy hair, and I panted at the contact. "Traitorous whore of an evil sex witch."

My pulse quickened and my pussy throbbed with need. “Yes,” I agreed.

He jerked his hand away. “You displease me.”

My heart sank. “What? No, how?”

He stepped away, and I made to follow after him.

“Washing my scent from you, choosing your wretched coven over me. You are not who I thought you were.”

“Never!” I argued. “I’m killing the witch tonight. It’s all in motion. Please, please don’t leave me. Don’t give up on me, Romus. I can do it; I’d do anything for you.”

He hummed low in his throat and reached down, picking me up like I was nothing but a feather. When he placed me on a thick tree branch, I sat at eye level with my ankole demon. “Take my punishment as a mercy, whore.”

Swallowing my relief, I nodded. “Yes, I’ll take whatever you give, master.”

That growl again. I loved that evil noise. He grabbed my chin roughly and jerked it up toward the sky, straining my neck until it hurt.

“What—”

A sharp, stabbing pain shot through my nose, and something weighed between my nostrils. But before I could inquire, his long, boney fingers pushed up my inner thighs and prodded at my entrance. I reached out, holding on to his horns for balance as my hips thrust forward, begging for his touch.

“You belong to me. Your magical cunt belongs to me,” he snarled. Suddenly, he gripped my thighs and turned me over, ripping off my panties and leaving me ass-up on the branch. I held on for dear life as the bark cut into my stomach. He let go, and the sound of something crackling made me dare look over my shoulder. When I did, he was back, his long skull face making me jump in surprise. He held tightly to my leg before threatening, “Disobey me again, and I’ll do this once more on the other side.”

“Do what?”

And then I felt it. The singe, the sizzle, and the scour of burning flesh on my ass cheek. I screamed, but the moment the hot iron was removed, a different kind of heat pooled in my core. I bucked my sore and burned ass backward. Finally, Romus obliged me and circled my entrance with a finger. “Is this what you want? You want to be fucked?”

“Yes, please,” I begged. My nose throbbed and my ass burned, and I was hanging from a tree like a blouse on a clothesline, but all I wanted was him.

He inched two thick fingers inside, and I let out a desperate plea for more. He rumbled low in his throat before smacking my scarred ass cheek. I hissed in pain, and my pussy clenched around his fingers. “This is your branding, witch. A constant reminder of my ownership of you. Disobey me again, and I will gut you on this very tree. I’ll watch your blood trickle down its leaves, and I will find another to do my bidding. If I say do not wash, you do not wash. If I say kill, you kill. Do you understand?”

It was all kinds of fucked up that the only part of that statement that bothered me was the part where he said he’d find someone else. I couldn’t let that happen. It was him and me—only him and me—forever. I nodded, feeling my cheeks slick with hot tears. “I understand, master.”

“Now give me my magic. Come for your ruler, whore.” His fingers shot in and out before he somehow added a third. The pain radiated all over my body. From my face to my ass to my pussy, it all hurt. It all sucked, and it all felt so fucking good. My mind went deliciously blank from the thunderbolts of agony that bled into elation. A release split me in half as I convulsed through its waves. Romus neared, and I felt his bone jaw near my ear. Unable to control myself, I turned and kissed what I guess was his cheek. I wasn’t sure that hollow eye sockets could make expressions, but I was sure his looked surprised.

He exhaled deeply before scooping me up and setting me on the forest floor. My dress fell back over my hips, and I winced in pain at the contact. That would be a wound inspection for later. I looked up, admiring him, feeling dizzy

and delirious. Romus stretched his arms and neck and took a deep breath. Again, such a human gesture was jarring.

“You’re getting stronger,” I breathed. “You’re marvelous.”

“You are satisfactory.”

“I’ll take what I can get with you, I guess. Though I’ve been called more by lesser men.” The forest had grown dark, and I looked back toward the house. “Where is it you want to go when we leave Ash Grove?”

“To my people,” he grumbled, shifting his weight as if discovering his body anew. I could feel it, my magic seeping into him from my bliss, bolstering him. “I have been caged for a long time. I am eager to return, and now that I have thwarted the distracted archdemon and the curse on this place is lifted, that time is near.”

“The curse on Ash Grove is gone? How do you know?”

“I taste it. As I will taste you when we meet next. When you have completed your tasks. I want to drink your magic straight from the source. Suck it out of your weeping cunt.”

My heart pulsated wildly. “I want to ride your face, know what that skull feels like under my wet folds.” *Did I say that out loud? Shit, I could have made that sound sexier. Wet folds? What was I, a smut author?*

Stepping forward, he kneeled and nudged his nose at my chin. I froze, unsure of what he was doing. Then he slowly repeated the motion, nudging my cheek. Oh my god. Was he kissing my cheek like I’d done for him earlier? He leaned back, as if judging my reaction. I smiled the biggest, happiest fucking smile.

“Get to work, and I will find you,” he said, softly this time, before standing and disappearing with long strides into the darkness.

Every bone in my body wanted to chase after him. We should never be apart. Always together. He understood me and my potential, and I understood him and his. This was it; everything I’d ever wanted all wrapped up in wicked pleasure

and pain. So different; so unique. I'd be going with him back to his home, wherever that was, and I'd be going soon.

But first, I had to kill my friend.

X

“A witch is a woman who worships herself as her own god. She is the creator of her own life, the healer of herself.”

-Maura Dillon

SITTING IN FRONT OF A PEPPERONI AND PINEAPPLE PIZZA WITH A CHAMPAGNE FLUTE FILLED WITH ACONITE POISON MIXED WITH A WINE COOLER, I WONDERED HOW SHITTY I'D FEEL AFTER FELIX DIED.

But I had to. There was no other way ... or at least I had to make it seem like it. My plan to skirt past Romus's rules was to trick the spell that Felix had cast. If the charmed wards thought Felix was dead, they'd weaken. The Protico spell was a protection spell, keeping bad out and good in. It was old and trustworthy, like a security system of sorts. I assumed Romus needed it gone so he could leave undetected. Though with an archdemon on our tail, that would explain his desire to be thorough. I respected that. And he'd kissed me. My evil dark-skull ankole demon had kissed me. He was learning, growing. Maybe even falling for me. I couldn't imagine my life without him now.

The amount of aconite flower I'd plucked from the deadly garden, mixed with the blooms of foxglove, would send Felix into a death-like slumber. Their heart would slow to the point of breaking the magic they'd tied in to the Protico spell, giving Romus and me time to haul ass out of Ash Grove. Felix would wake up tomorrow feeling hungover as fuck, and I'd be gone with my master, who thought I'd killed my best friend for him. My plan was flawless.

The door creaked open easily for my friend because the house was only being rude to me, apparently. And they dropped their backpack of selenite crystals and leaned in the doorway. "Hey, Mer. Don't be pissed. She basically invited herself. I couldn't say no."

"Who?" I questioned, sitting up on my knees.

Felix shot me a pained expression before raising a surprised eyebrow. "When did you get your septum pierced?"

“What?” I cupped my nose and brought the pizza cutter to my face, checking my reflection. Somehow, I’d forgotten the stabbing pain in my nose and the burning pain on my ass. How could that be possible? I was so wrapped up in Romus that I wasn’t thinking clearly. I inspected the silver ring and found that I rather liked it. He’d marked me, branded me. It was humiliating, degrading, and ... sexy, tantalizing, alluring ...

A voice I didn’t want to hear crooned from the entryway. “I didn’t peg you for a facial piercings sort of person, M. You’re so ... not badass.” Elora smirked, slumping onto the sofa and taking a sip of beer from a glass bottle. “Sharks, huh? Let’s do it. I’m a fan of predators, aren’t you, Merimange?”

Anger bubbled in my bones as I crossed my arms, shooting my friend a *what the fuck* expression. They shrugged and mouthed *sorry. Great, Felix. How the hell am I going to kill you now with our high priestess here?*

“What are you two drinking?” Elora asked, eyeing the champagne flutes.

Felix took a seat on the floor next to me and reached for their glass. I grabbed them both and held them at my chest. “These are special. They’re for later—we’re celebrating.”

Elora snorted. “Celebrating what?”

My palms burned on the glass stems. God, she was annoying. “My new powers,” I replied lowly.

“Oh, not the fact that our coven lifted the curse on Ash Grove without you? Really, it’s a wonder we keep you around.”

Felix paused the movie. “Knock it off, El.”

As much as I wanted to throw the drinks in her smug face, she’d presented me with an opening, so I took it. “Right, so I guess that stupid spell you made Felix work on was for nothing, huh? Remember the one they slaved away on for weeks with potions and incantations? Funny you needed an inexperienced witch for one of your most precious tasks.” I set the glasses down, noticing the faint glow of my palms before shoving them into my dress pockets.

“Felix is a mirror witch. Do you even know what that means? Do you even know anything about your friend, or do you only think of yourself, Merimange?”

“Enlighten me, Elora,” I seethed as Felix took their drink from my grasp.

The high priestess set her beer on the coffee table and took a slice of pizza, carefully picking off the pepperoni. “If you’d paid attention in your lessons, you’d know that mirror witches reflect spells back onto their attacker. They can be harmed, yes. But if they are, their attacker is harmed in the same manner. Like a reflection; a mirror.”

A dry panic invaded my senses. I made to stand, but suddenly, my shoulders felt heavy. To balance myself, I grabbed for Felix, who likewise yawned as they saluted Elora. Their glasses clinked, and the last thing I saw was Felix knocking back the potion I’d concocted.

“Sweet dreams, you little traitor,” Elora hissed as the world went black.

XI

“Relax, it’s only magic.”

-The Craft

ARE VILLAINS BORN, OR ARE THEY MADE?

It was true that Romus had awoken something dark inside me. But that darkness was already there. It was a toxic butterfly in a cocoon, just waiting to grow big enough to break free. Smoke tickled my nose, coaxing me from my heavy dream. It was dark, and I was in the middle of the woods.

I made to move, but my hands were tied to a stake behind me. The fire burned at my feet under a pile of wood. Oh my god. That fucking bitch was going to burn me? I looked around frantically, but only sparks of ash and a few late season fireflies were visible in the night. But how was I awake? I should have been asleep for at least a day if Felix had drunk the entire potion. Or maybe they didn't? Had Felix fucking betrayed me, or were they coerced by Elora? I had to get out of my predicament, or I'd be a melted witch marshmallow in an hour.

I struggled against my bindings, but it was no use. The flames licked higher and higher as I was finally able to stand and press against the pole. What would Romus think when he found me dead? Would he even care? I was so close to getting him to love me back, and now, because of my stupid coven and my idiotic short-sightedness, I was going to die. Die. My coven was trying to kill me.

I swallowed my hurt and pain. They weren't sitting me down to talk. No one was checking in or asking if I needed help. No, they were burning me at the stake without a second glance. Maybe they'd found out about me sneaking away with my demon in the woods. Maybe they'd discovered how I was conspiring to escape with him. But did it warrant such drastic measures?

Slowly, as the fire cracked and popped, something else grew like flames in my soul. The cold and bitter pain was replaced with anger, fury, madness. *How dare they?*

I tugged against the ropes again and swore.

A cackle sounded from a nearby tree. "I'm glad you're awake. Burning a sleeping witch is just not as fun."

"Done this before, high priestess?" I asked, gritting my teeth.

The witch shrugged and ran a hand through her short hair. "Sometimes it's necessary to weed the garden. And you are very much a weed."

"And the crones, Marcelene, are fine with this? What happened to *do no harm*?"

She rolled her eyes. "Maybe they encouraged it, hmm? Or maybe they have no idea. It doesn't matter. Because you, my dear, need to be gone."

"Well, this is a dramatic way to kill me. I'll give you that. I feel so connected to the witches before me now. Hello, dear ancestors."

Elora walked around the circle like a vulture, her long robe flowing behind her. She stopped in front of me, and I jerked my arm, feeling something cold and smooth twist around my forearm. I almost struggled against it, but then I recognized the feeling of its scales ... it was an effort to hide my smile. *Percy*.

"I'm not killing you. Not today, at least." I raised an eyebrow, wiggling my fingers and feeling my snake brush over them. He was heavier. He'd gotten bigger. Elora took a deep breath and closed her eyes. "No, today I'll be doing something much better. Or worse. I suppose it depends on how you look at it. I'll be taking your magic, Merimange."

"The fuck you will!" I shouted. Wrath lit my palms as I fought against my binds. If she took my magic, Romus wouldn't need me. I'd be nothing. I wouldn't be able to fly or create magic or do anything cool ever again.

With a smirk, the high priestess extended her palms and began chanting. If I'd paid attention in spells class, I'd know what it was called, but it didn't sound good. Something flicked over my knuckles, and I felt my snake's cool underbelly weave between the ropes. And then suddenly the ropes went slack. *I knew he was my familiar. I fucking knew it.*

Elora paused her spell and looked behind me for a moment before collecting herself. “You brought this on yourself, Merimange. I’ve had my eye on you for years. You have a dark heart. Something inside you isn’t like the rest of us, and that’s dangerous. What you almost did to Felix was deplorable. If I hadn’t been there ... and all for what? So you can keep sneaking out to see your pirate? Oh, yes. I know what you’ve been up to. Your sex magic has only grown more activated with constant use. How sad to throw away your gifts for a man.”

“Not a man,” I said lowly, not recognizing the disturbing tone of my voice, the way it echoed slightly.

Elora’s hands began to tremble as she looked behind me again. A branch snapped, then a loud foot fall. He’d come for me. She backed up several steps. “Merimange, stay calm. There’s-there’s a—”

A startle shook my shoulders, and I let my bindings fall to the ground as a roar shook the forest. The low and feral sound of it prickled the hair on the back of my neck. I turned around to see my horned demon, the firelight dancing off the pale features of his bone snout, his stormy skin making him invisible in the night. I held out my arm and pet my snake. He’d gone from a foot to three feet in length. He was thicker, too, I noticed, as he twisted into position around my forearm and bicep.

“I knew you were magic,” I whispered proudly to my serpent. Percy flicked his tongue with pride. And that meant I wasn’t ordinary. I was powerful. Because only the most formidable of witches had familiars. It seemed Percy grew alongside me; we’d shed our skin together.

Elora screamed, shaking by a tree. “Run, Merimange!”

My ankole demon stopped next to the fire and reached for me, plucking me from the flaming pyre. I loved the feel of his hands around me. The high priestess’s eyes grew wide as she watched him set me down gently. An untamed laugh tore through my throat, echoing and surprising me with its ominous sound.

“You’re-you’re evil. Just like your mothers became. You come from a line of dark hearts, but you can turn to the light. It’s never too late.”

Surprise and recognition ignited my palms in a purple glow as I took several steps forward. “You never told me that. None of you ever did. What were you so afraid of, hmm?” I looked over my shoulder at Romus, who only gave a short nod. “But I’m proud to know I come from dark witches. You light witches are so goddamn monotonous. I’m a daughter, a dark heart, of the witches you couldn’t burn.”

She screamed as I unfurled my fingers. Streams of purple light zapped toward her in lightning-bolt flashes and sizzles of power. Another giggle erupted in my chest as she fell to her knees and cowered before me. It felt good; really good.

“I’ll return the favor of not killing you. I’ll simply wipe your memory of me and this night. But if you come for us, if you ever remember, I’ll behead you or something dramatic like that.” I kicked a mound of dirt over her pathetic shaking body and turned to face my monster. “I can get us out of Ash Grove. Show me where we need to go.”

I reached out for his hand, and he didn’t flinch, didn’t pull away. But slowly, he wrapped his fingers around me as I held on to one of his. He was falling in love with me; I could feel it.

XII

“You poor, simple fools, thinking you could defeat me. Me! The mistress of evil.”

-Maleficent, Sleeping Beauty

WE WALKED INTO THE FOREST IN THE LIGHT OF THE MOON, BACK TO THE CAVE HE'D BROUGHT ME TO BEFORE.

He rumbled, "I, like you, was created from a line of darkness. Made to be ruled over, to be in servitude to higher forms of evil. But no more. Together, we shall depart from this place and back to the land of my people."

"Together," I breathed. "Yes." And I could help us get there.

We stopped at the end of the cavern, my blue lights still twinkling for us. Romus reached down to my snake, and I was hesitant to acquiesce, but I allowed him to unfurl my familiar from my arm.

"You have done well in finding her for me and bringing me to her. You will be rewarded, Asmodeus."

My mouth dropped. "This is your snake?" I looked at Percy, er, Asmodeus. "You sneaky little bitch ... I think I just fell more in love with both of you."

"Love, I cannot give you," Romus thundered, surprising me. "I can give you loyalty and power." He draped our snake on a jagged rock. "You can be my servant, and you can be my pet. To do this, to break through this wall, I require your sex."

I nodded. He was lying. He could love me; I'd make him. But I'd worry about that when we got to wherever we were going. Some land of demons, I assumed. "Sounds hot," I coyly replied.

Before he could initiate, I dropped to my knees. He was already palming his cock, readying himself for me, but I'd been dying to taste him. He watched as I met his stare and opened my mouth as wide as I could to take him in. A breath escaped his mouth as I worked, sucking, licking, and sliding my hand up and down his shaft, coating him with my spit. After a moment, he growled and pushed me backward, kneeling. He spread my legs and ran a cold finger down my

slit. Propping up on my elbows, I watched him as he pinched my sore ass cheek.

“The marking looks acceptable.”

I guessed the surly cat in the library was right. I was a heifer, and I wore a brand.

But love, or maybe evil, meant doing some crazy shit. And maybe I wasn't Romus's romantic little something. Maybe instead I was his villainous ... cow. *Okay, we'll work on the nickname.*

I'd win him over. I'd become more than his witch, his spells, his magic. I'd start by being the one who brought him home. I'd become his pet, then I'd bait him into more. He was a monster, but still a male. And they were easy enough to manipulate. And I had sex magic on my side.

I watched with rapt attention as he opened his snout and unfurled his tongue. It hit my wanting pussy with a wet slap, and I jumped. “Your taste is enjoyable,” he murmured, licking at my opening like it was a delectable melting treat. My head fell back, and I moaned into the blue dimness of the cave.

“Your dirty talk is fucking sexy,” I breathed. “Like an ancient evil going down on me.”

“No more talking,” he demanded. “Let me eat your orgasm, witch.”

Groaning again, I relished the feel of his long tongue as it worked. Lapping my center. His bumpy roughness swirled around my clit. He pushed it into me and pumped in and out. I reached forward, grabbing his horns and grinding against his face. The bone skull was surprisingly warm, and his horns gave my hips the perfect leverage to ride and buck against him. As my breathing increased, I quivered against him. He growled into my pussy at the exact right time, and I fucking lost it. Purple shimmers fluttered around the cave like confetti. Romus growled, tensing his muscles, soaking in my magic.

“More,” he ordered, hauling me to straddle his lap.

Positioning myself over his massive cock, I lined up my center and took in his rounded gray tip. Much like a human

man, only *magnificent*. Romus grabbed my hips and jerked me down. No easy glide; no easing in. The ankole demon wasn't one for foreplay. He wasn't going to be gentle or loving or kind. This was passion of a baleful sort. One that benefited us both; a lust that created spells.

"My magic is glittering all over," I panted, still adjusting to the size of him as he impaled me, moving me up and down like his plaything.

"Our magic," he corrected.

Our magic.

That was it. Between his pummeling, my twisted brain devised a haphazard plan. That ominous voice inside me resounded in the voice of my dark heart ancestors. *This demon will fall in love with me. With this sex, this sex magic, I declare this demon mine. Seduce him, tie him to me, make him utterly obsessed with me. Bring me his worship,* I told my magic as I rode him. The enchantments within me tingled in response. The brightness of the purple intensified, but I could hardly admire it when all I wanted to stare at was him. His horns; his huge, muscular, menacing shoulders; his cock as it slid in and out of me, pushing me to new heights of pleasure.

He hooked his fingers under my arms and twirled my nipples with his thumbs. His ox mouth opening in a pant. I arched my back, pressing my tits closer to him. Finally, he released his long tongue and flicked and slurped as his thumbs worked. "Your breasts will leak with black demon milk for my offspring when I decide to breed you, little witch."

His pronouncement came out in a plainness that was both shocking and decisive. My head lolled back, and I moaned.

"Again," he commanded. "That sound, again. Perhaps I'll breed you now, send my seed into your womb, and grow my demon spawn inside you."

Moaning louder this time, I put my whole ass and back into fucking him. "Oh, I'll have your demon babies. You can count on that, Romus."

I imagined little horned witches playing with snakes in the woods while my monster and I prowled behind them. “Yes, yes, yes,” I groaned.

Mauve and violet hues enveloped us, fogging the room as I rode out my searing bliss. Romus’s release exploded inside me, burning and twitching and vibrating as if it were alive. I felt my magic take hold of it, and him, and wrap us in a prickly embrace of sorcery. I looked up through the purple fog to see something change and swirl behind Romus’s stare. The grip of his hold on my lower back softened, and his other large hand moved to cup my face. “Merimange,” he whispered softly.

But the purple got darker and darker, and the fog of it intensified until there was nothing left.

We were gone.

THE END.

XIII

“She ate the stars and swallowed the earth. She is the girl with all the power.”

-Labyrinth Lost

JUST KIDDING, I'M EVIL BUT NOT THAT EVIL.

When I opened my eyes, the smell of hot, dry air tickled my nose. Rubbing my eyes, I looked up at the blinding hot sun, wiggling my toes and finding sand beneath them. When my vision adjusted, I took in my surroundings. Cacti—their sharp needles and bright blooms a shock. It was a vast desert with a hazy horizon. An image took shape, becoming bigger and bigger as it approached. My heart jumped into my chest as Romus loomed and dropped to a knee in front of me. I admired him, his massive horns, his body long and more relaxed than I'd ever seen him. It almost appeared as if he were smiling.

“Come, my love, my only one, my revered. I will show you our land and introduce you to my kind.”

I could hardly believe what he was saying. Had it worked? I'd brought us here and bewitched him? I swallowed, taking his hand. “Introduce me as what? Your servant, your pet?”

He reared back in an animalistic move of astonishment. “Merimange, as nothing less than my ruler, my mate. You shall be our monarch.”

A smile curved my cheeks, and I opened my arms. “Carry me, my love. Show me.”

“Anything,” he rumbled, holding my hand as he placed me on his shoulder.

He'd come for a spell, and he'd sent a snake for me. A demon had sought me out and found me, pulling me from my home, leading me to betray my coven. He'd unlocked my dark heart, my evil origins, and ignited the terrible, wicked ecstasy within my soul that created wonders of beauty and pain. This ankole demon wanted to use me and make me his servant.

And somewhere along the way, I'd discovered I could do that, too. And I did. I made him mine, through magic. Fuck

being wrong or right or good or evil. Romus unlocked my bliss, and this darkness in the woods I dared to flirt with awoke the monster inside me. He had been formless when we met. But then so was I, in a way. We were the same, this dark lord and me. But now I was the terror, the darkness to be feared. I'd gotten what I wanted. And I'd spend my damnation with my monster, forcing him to love me and give me my every wicked craving.

AFTERWORD

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