

REJECTED: CLAIMED BY THE ALPHA MAFIA

THE CURE

Kiara:

The musty scent of the room hits my nostrils as I stand before it. Doubt gnaws at me, but I have no choice-this might be my only shot at getting healed since Zane won't give me the cure.

Taking a deep breath, I mumble a quick prayer to the moon goddess, then reach for the flashlight on the table. The weight of it feels strangely reassuring in my hand.

I step into the hallway, the flashlight beam cutting through the darkness. My fingers graze the rough concrete walls, pricking my delicate skin. Suddenly, something drops onto my shoulder. My heart skips a beat as I aim the torch upward, revealing a cluster of bats. The light startles them, and they scatter, hitting the walls erratically. I crouch, shielding myself, my pulse racing.

Eventually, I find myself in front of a door. I push it open and step into an old, cobweb-covered room. The air is thick with the scent of herbs and earth, a bizarre comfort amidst the unease.

I fumble for a light switch, finding one and flicking it. The lights flicker weakly before dying. "Shoot!" I mutter, frustration seeping in. I sweep my torch around the room, revealing shelves lined with jars of dried plants, their labels faded but meticulously arranged under a veil of cobwebs.

In the center stands a wooden table cluttered with crystal vials, a mortar and pestle, and a leather-bound grimoire. Dust tickles my nose, making me sneeze. I wipe my nose with the back of my hand, then approach the table, running my fingers over the grimoire's yellowed pages.

Each turn of the page seems to echo with the witch's presence, sending shivers down my spine. Suddenly, a gust of air flips the pages to a sigil-marked page. My breath catches in my throat. "A witch truly never dies," I whisper, my fingers brushing the ancient ink. Warmth spreads through me, making my veins and muscles come alive.

It's as if I've inherited her gift, clarity washing over me. I scan the grimoire, noting the ingredients I need. I search the jars, my hands trembling slightly, and gather everything required. I grind the herbs with the mortar and pestle, following the book's instructions to the letter. I toss the mixture into a large pot on the stove, adding the final ingredient-a ghost dahlia.

The pot hisses, filling the room with black smoke. I cough violently, pounding my chest as I struggle to breathe. When the smoke clears, I rush to the pot, peering into the bubbling black substance. I double-check the grimoire's instructions, then let the mixture simmer before pouring it into a rinsed bowl.

I drink it all in one go. Instantly, my body stiffens, bones and muscles resetting with agonizing cracks. Pain tears through me, sending me crashing to the floor. I scream, gripping the ground, and then everything goes black.

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When I open my eyes, it's morning. Birds chirp outside, and sunlight streams onto my face. I sit up, feeling stronger than ever. I touch every part of my body, lifting my dress to check for wounds-there are none.

"I'm healed. Completely!" I scream, a mixture of disbelief and joy flooding me. I rush to the grimoire, kissing its pages, and dance around the room. "I don't need you, Zane. You can keep being an asshole for all I care."

"I can't believe it, Bailey!" I exclaim, feeling my wolf's excitement match my own. But my stomach rumbles, grounding me in my hunger.

For the next three days, I revel in my newfound strength. Zane's absence allows me to focus on the grimoire, experimenting with potions and spells. Little do I know, he hasn't forgotten about me...