

Enslaved

Starting up the engine, I head back the way I came.

My headlights hit him as I pull the truck to a stop at the edge of the forest, illuminating his figure. The shifter straightens from the tree he's leaning against, holding aloft a thick, white envelope in one hand. But the envelope isn't important.

Now that I'm paying attention, the deception in his shifty brown eyes is so fucking plain to see that I can't believe I missed it. He wanted a territory free of wolves and witches, and he used me to get it.

Stupid.

I shove open the truck door and get out as he approaches.

His eyes dart down, taking in my naked, blood-splattered body. "Did you get them all? Are they—?"

I drive my fist into his jaw. Bone crunches under my hand, and his body flies back. As he's falling, I shift to wolf, follow him down, and rip out his throat before shifting back.

For several seconds, I stare into his blank eyes. His death doesn't make up for the fact that two people died tonight who shouldn't have. Maybe I'd feel a little more sympathetic if those two people weren't witches.

Doubt it.

Between the drinking, the lack of sleep, and the constant hunt, I can barely remember if it was a week, a month, or a year since I last felt something other than rage.

Or numb.

Pausing long enough to wipe the blood off my body with an old towel that I leave for that purpose in the trunk, I tug on a clean pair of jeans and a t-shirt before climbing into my truck.

Madden Grove is going to be a good ten-plus-hour drive, which gives me plenty of time to think.

No ordinary witch could hit a pack of fifty wolves hard enough so all that was left of them was blood and bone. Not in a matter of minutes.

Only one kind of witch could do that. A powerful one. A coven leader.

Madden Grove had two witch covens, which means two leaders—and out of those two, one wiped out my pack.

It's about time I figured out which one it was.

Right after I pay my respects.

3

BRIAR

A witch without a coven is no witch at all.

Maybe it's different among the human witches, but here in Madden Grove, the biggest source of a witch's power comes from the coven—the sisterhood. Or, if she's alone, then it comes from her grimoire, the collection of spells collected from generations of witches before her.

Even the local wolf pack knows to respect a coven.

But a single witch with no coven or grimoire?

There's no reason for anyone to fear or respect her.

It's a truth I've had years to accept, and as I stare at the kitchen door where a low thrum of conversation, fragrant teas, and sweet cakes drifts from the café on the other side, I think about it again.

Here is safety.

Out there I'm a witch with a crazy out-of-control power who can recite spells that will never work for her, no matter how perfectly she says them.

And I'm a killer.

As long as I stay in Madden Grove, that's all I will ever be.