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My nose twitches and my eyes stream as I'm assaulted by a million and one floral scents. Even cigarette smoke would be a better alternative right now.

After swallowing a sneeze, I rub my irritated eyes with the back of my hand.

Three blonde women stand on the other side of a counter strewn with flowers they must have been in the middle of sorting. Or arranging. Or whatever. Anyway, they focus their sharp blue eyes on me and I know, I just know that getting in and out fast was a pipe dream.

The blonde women in eye-wateringly loud pink and green floral dresses don't even blink as I stalk toward them.

Briar was right, they are thin. Toothin. But beautiful they are not.

The closer I get, the further behind Briar falls. Without taking my eyes off the women who could likely reduce me to a pile of ash if I'm not careful, I reach out and snag Briar's arm, tugging until she's beside me.

When we've stopped at the glass counter at the back of the shop, I release her.

That's when the women turn to Briar. Their gazes dip in unison and something vicious skitters in their eyes. "Nice outfit," the tall one in the middle murmurs. "Very... brave of you."

My eyes narrow. "I need a spell."

Three pairs of eyes swing my way.

Silence.

I show my teeth. "Now."

The one in the middle steps forward and her smile widens, but her blue eyes don't get any warmer. "Unfortunately, wolf, we do not sell spells in Calla's Cauldron. Only—"

“Souls cling to you.” A soft murmur interrupts her.

I jerk my gaze to the other blonde one on the right.

Why the fuck do they have to dress and look the same? Is this Dahlia, Delphinium, or the other D that I can't remember?

“Um,” Briar murmurs. “Well—”

“More than one.” The woman continues to stare at Briar with her disturbing unblinking gaze. “A lot more than one. What have you been doing, playing with souls?”

“I haven't been doing anything. They were the ones who...” Briar's words trail off until she falls silent.

The tall one with the cold eyes lifts her already pointed nose. “You should know not to play with powers you can't control, Briar. Haven't you learned anything?” she says, delivering her rebuke with a gentle smile.

When I turn to Briar to see how she's going to take it, I'm not expecting to find a smile on her face. “I remember the lessons, Dahlia.”

The same woman tuts. “I doubt that. Souls cling to you, and that's never by accident. You haven't been trying to apologize to those dead parents for killing them, have you?”

The other two women smirk.

I snarl.

Bitchy fucking witches.

I lean over the counter, instantly regretting it when I get a noseful of yet more disgusting scents that I could do without. “The spell. Now.”

No one moves, so I sweep the flowers off the counter and place my right hand on the glass. It takes seconds to shift it to claws. “Or I'll start cutting bits off you, Del- whatever-the-fuck your names are.”

The women's smiles turn chilling. “Removing souls isn't a straightforward process.”

“No?” I leave my claw-tipped hand where it is, since it seems to be getting me answers, finally.

The woman on the left shakes her head. “No. There are flowers to communicate. White asphodel is one. It might be better to ask them what they want, if Delphine is right about them clinging to you.” Her lip curls. “Though why anyone would want to cling to you is something I struggle to understand.”