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I glance at Briar. She's still wearing a pleasant smile on her face. The customer service one. It's one I recognize from all my years in motels and diners. Too much teeth, no emotion in the eyes, and just a little too wide for it to be genuine.

"But how would talking to them help? And what if they want something I can't give them?" Briar asks.

The tall woman sniffs, and I know the moment before she speaks that more venom is about to spew out. "Perhaps they want to escort you to the afterlife."

My eyes narrow. "Why would they want that?"

She shrugs. "Whatever thing is inside Briar Fenix is bursting to get out. Look at the damage she did to her house. There weren't even any bones of her parents left to bury."

I dart a glance at Briar, but she doesn't lose her smile.

No one deserves a blow like that. Not even a witch.

My focus returns to the blonde woman that I can envision all too clearly ripping to pieces. "That wasn't her fault."

She snorts. "Perhapsthatmight not have been. But setting fire to her aunt's bedroom as she slept? And as if we didn't all feel that spike of power the other day, or see the state of your shirt when you wandered out from the back of the café." She tuts. "Whatever Briar Fenix is, she will blow herself up before the week is out. Mark my words. Even Mother thinks so. She should just leave before she takes the town down with her."

The vitriol delivered with a gentle smile, as if she's doing Briar a favor, is the final straw. I drive my hand through the counter. Glass shatters. No one moves.

I let silence reign for several seconds.

“Give me what I want, or the only piece big enough to identify you will be your head, and even then...” I let my silky threat hang in the air. “I might not get you all, but you’ll be mourning at least one sister before I’m through.”

Fear bleeds into the air. This time it isn’t Briar’s but the three blond witches, and it’s a million times more satisfying than Briar’s ever was.

The tall witch smiles. “You haven’t said what it is that you want.”

I dart a glance at Briar.

She clears her throat. “White asphodel. We can ask the souls what they want with me, and maybe convince them to leave.”

I swing my gaze back over the counter which is now just a pile of glass shards. “You heard her.”

The taller of the witches doesn’t take her eyes off me as she sticks her hand out. “Daisy. Get the flower.”

The witch on the left slips into the back room. We wait in terse silence for her to return. Moments later, she reappears with a small bundle of dried white flowers that look like starfish, and the tall, vicious witch pulls a white drawstring cloth bag from somewhere I don’t see.

I glance at Briar. “Is that it?”

She nods, her gaze fixed on the flower that the witch is stuffing in the bag. “Yes. That’s it.”

“Here.” The witch shoves the bag under my nose until I take it. Once I have, I promptly hand it over to Briar in case I need both hands to attack. “Now leave, wolf, and don’t come back.”

With half my attention on the witches, I angle my head toward Briar. “Let’s go.”

All the way to the front door, I brace myself for an attack.

But for whatever reason, it doesn’t come.

The silver bell over the door tinkles as it closes behind us, and I feel the three witches’ venomous gazes track us as I lead the way back to the truck.

“I don’t think they appreciated you threatening them,” Briar mutters after we’re back in the truck and I’ve started the engine.

While I’d have preferred a spell to undo whatever Briar did in the forest, this flower opens up an opportunity I never believed I would have.

I can speak to Dad. I can finally find out who killed him, and it will be from someone whose word I trust completely.

Anticipation flutters in my gut as I drum my fingers against the wheel. We’ll get back to the cabin, where Briar can do whatever thing she needs to do to talk to Dad, and then I’ll finally be on the path to putting an end to all of this, once and for all.