

Font Size: AA+A++

---

My smile is watery. “Sera...”

“No, I know you said you didn’t want me to be in danger, but I don’t care. You’re my friend. My best friend. Screw Layla Markham and the coven. I’m helping.”

“Who’s Layla Markham?” I jerk my head at the unfamiliar drawl coming from the forest. Sera must lose control of her spell, because she launches it right at the voice.

A guy with black hair and gray eyes, wearing black jeans and a blue flannel shirt—a wolf I’ve never seen before—leaps out of the way just in time. The spell hits the tree he was standing in front of, leaving it smoking and looking very much dead.

“Just what the fuck kind of spell was that?” Keane growls from somewhere behind me.

Sera stares at the tree in horror. “Wow... that was...”

“Vicious,” the new arrival murmurs, sounding more impressed than pissed at a witch aiming a deadly spell right at him. “And not very friendly.”

Sera jerks her gaze toward him. “Stay away from me, wolf. If you even think about kidnapping me like your friend did to Briar, I will—”

“Blow you up,” Keane interrupts, stepping around me.

I’d have thought the wolf would either attack or keep his distance, but instead, he cocks his head at Sera. “You can do that?”

She narrows her eyes. “Yes. I can.”

And even though I know Sera has to be lying, she’s doing a better job of it than she has before because she sounded convincing as hell.

But the wolf, whoever he is, is eyeing Sera with not a small amount of interest. “You’re not from here, are you?” I ask because if Liam Wolfe saw the way he was looking at Sera, he wouldn’t survive one day.

The wolf turns to me. “I’m Bodie. Just passing through. But with the amount of excitement over these last few days, I might just stay.” His gaze dips. “Why are you in a nightgown?”

It hits me again like a stone. Aunt Mel’s death. The stretcher with the body.

My eyes fill with tears, and before I’ve even known she’s moved, Sera is there, drawing me into a hug. “Oh, Briar, I’m so sorry.”

“Look, you—” A vibrating phone cuts Keane off before he can finish what he was about to say. “Stay here, and no running or—”

I pull away from Sera. “Crazy or dead,” I murmur. “I remember.”

“What?” Sera asks.

I shake my head because, with the way she’s feeling about Keane right now, there’s no way she wouldn’t launch another spell at his head.

Or you could not get in the way, and then you’d be free of Keane Destin.

I’m still thinking about why I would even want to stop Sera from her attack when Keane speaks into the phone. “Yeah? What did you want?”

Silence.

Keane’s face settles in a mask unlike one I’ve ever seen before, and his hand tightens around the cell phone in his hand. “No, I don’t know them personally, and no, I won’t be in the area soon.”

More silence.

I glance at Sera, who looks as confused as I am, then at the wolf shifter Bodie, who has his brow furrowed.

He must be able to hear what this is about.

When I turn back to Keane, his cell phone is a mangled bit of plastic, which he tosses into the forest.

“Keane?” I ask, “what was that?”

He doesn't even look at me. Just stalks into the forest. “You have five minutes to talk with your friend. After that, we have things to do. Don't run.” His order doesn't come with a warning this time, but I know what will happen if I did.