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“Instead of just Abigail, who they could say was acting alone?”

She nods.

I never would have believed there was so much politics amongst witches, but it has me wondering what else I don't know about Madden Grove. Not just amongst the witches, but about the wolves.

“Why didn't she just leave? This Abigail?”

“Because this is home.” A female voice utters from behind me.

I spin around to confront the husky female voice coming from behind me, and there, standing a few feet away, much closer than I believed a witch could get to me without my noticing, is a woman with long reddish-brown hair in a braid, large pale blue eyes, in a white cotton dress and bare feet.

Abigail.

Just like Mara, it's impossible to guess her age.

There's not a hint of magic on her, just a scent of nature and something minty. If Mara hadn't told me this witch was powerful, I would never know it.

But Briar doesn't look powerful, and she hits hard enough to kill a normal human.

“I'm guessing you must be the witch we're looking for?” I ask.

Her gaze moves past me and settles on Briar, softening as she focuses on her. “Briar, I hadn't thought I'd ever see you again.”

My gaze moves from Briar to the witch. “Why?”

The witch drifts closer, paying not the least bit of attention to me. “I'm Briar's godmother. I was a good friend of her parents.”

Briar slips out of my grasp and moves toward the witch. “A good friend? Does that mean you know—”

“A lot that I need to tell you,” Abigail interrupts. “But first, how about explaining how you managed a spell to enslave the souls of the Destin pack?”

“Enslave?” My voice is barely human.

My wolf bursts free. Witch. I lunge for Briar’s throat, ready to clamp my jaws around her throat and end her.

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BRIAR

My eyes go to the scarred wood door for what has to be the fifth time since Abigail—the godmother I never knew I had—led the way to her wood cabin, a ten-minute walk from where we left Keane. “And you’re positive he’s okay? You did hit him pretty hard.”

Not that I should care, given he was two seconds away from ripping my throat out, but still.

“Fine. Wolves have hard heads.” Abigail’s voice is airy, completely unconcerned, so I turn back to her.

“I don’t feel right just leaving him on the ground like that.”

Abigail, sitting with one leg crossed over the other on the plump but age-worn purple couch we’re sharing, lifts a delicate blue china teacup to her lips. “Well, I had no intention of dragging an unconscious wolf into my home. Think of all the damage he’d cause when he woke up.”

When I take in her cabin, a snug but cozy space crammed with more teacups and china than I’ve ever seen in my life, I can believe her. How she found the space to stack so many on the rough-hewn wooden shelves lining the walls, I have no idea, but if Keane got in here... well, let’s just say that it would take the better part of a week to clean the mess.

That’s if he left her alive to do it, but after seeing how hard she hit him, I have my doubts about that.

“What spell was that?” I ask.

After taking a small sip of the peppermint and licorice tea she brewed minutes before, she returns her cup and saucer to the wooden chest in front of us. “Oh, it’s just something I cooked up.” She pauses. “Well, it wasn’t all me. Your father helped me create it.”

The teacup in my lap rattles as my heart lurches hard in my chest. “Dad helped?”