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I can't remember the last time anyone talked about Mom and Dad. Just the Calla sisters, but nothing they said was anything I wanted to hear. Whether people in town thought that mentioning their names would trigger my power and I'd blow them up, or they just wanted nothing to do with me, I don't know and I never asked.

Even Aunt Mel found a reason to change the subject whenever I brought them up.

After Sera found me hunting for aloe vera in the forest to rub over the worst of my burns from my lessons with the Calla sisters, I didn't want to remind her of what I was capable of, so I didn't talk about them with her either. She became my first and only real friend, and I didn't want to risk scaring her away.

But now I have someone who knew Dad, someone who could tell me things no one else in town can or would.

Family.

"Your father was a powerful witch, Briar," Abigail says, her soft words drawing me from my thoughts.

"I know. I remember. He would teach me spells."

Abigail raises her eyebrow. "And this enslavement spell. I hadn't thought he would—"

The door slams open with enough force to shake a teacup off a shelf and smash it against the gray stone floor.

"Witch," Keane growls as he stalks in.

My gaze dips before I quickly wrench my eyes away, because now is not the time to be paying attention to his—

“Wolf,” Abigail murmurs calmly, “I was wondering when you’d stop by to destroy my priceless china.”

Priceless? I wince.

“If you think I give a flying fu—” His mouth snaps shut before his curse can emerge.

Abigail rises from the couch and crosses over to him. A tendril of pure power crackles around her, making my eyes widen in surprise. “I don’t like foul language at the best of times. I like it even less in my own home, so you will not swear. Do you understand me, wolf?”

My teacup rattles as I lean toward the chest to place it down, but I don’t dare look away from the fury burning in Keane’s gaze, nor the muscles straining beneath his skin. Face mottled red and death in his eyes, I calculate the distance between him and Abigail. Too small. Far too small.

“Uh, Abigail. Maybe you should—”

“So,” Abigail interrupts, “you can agree to sit quietly while I talk with my goddaughter, or you can wait outside.”

Claws burst from the tips of Keane’s fingers and tawny fur ripples over his chest.

Abigail mutters a familiar incantation from a long time ago, and Keane flies back out of the cabin. She’s pulling the door closed when a meaty thud marks the moment he hits a tree. Or something.

I rise to my feet, my eyes big. “That was the go-away spell.”

Abigail turns to me with a warm smile. “You remember it?”

I nod. “Dad taught me. But…” The wooden door draws my attention. “I didn’t know it could do that. And against a wolf. Dad got rid of ants when they invaded the kitchen, and the squirrel in the attic.”

“Isn’t a wolf just a living thing?”

I turn to gape at her. “Well, yes. But they’re wolves, and wolves are—”

“Stronger than a witch?”

“No wolf is stronger than a witch. We don’t fear them. They should fear us.” The words fall from my lips without conscious thought. All witches know the mantra, because it’s one we learn from childhood.

Frowning, Abigail crosses over to the smashed teacup. “You don’t sound like you believe it, dear.”

Magic tingles against my skin, and the broken shards smash together to reform a white and lavender floral teacup that Abigail bends and picks up. After eyeing it from all angles, she nods approvingly before she returns it to the shelf with the others.

“I don’t have a coven or a grimoire to protect me from wolves who want to kill me, so I don’t believe it as much as I did before.”