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She blinks in confusion. “No, I didn’t.”

“You did,” Jonas confirms in a voice filled with suspicion. “And you smell of wolf.”

Briar sniffs. “I donot. What’s going on? Why are we—” She halts so suddenly that the events in the witch’s cabin must have just hit home.

I risk taking my eyes off Jonas long enough to glance at her pale face. I’d guess that one of three things is about to happen: she’s about to faint, throw up, or something else. Something I’m going to want to get out of the way of. “Briar.”

“Abigail,” she whispers.

I don’t know what gives it away. Maybe it’s the wolf scent that disappears without a trace, or a flutter of something in my gut, or it’s just wolf instinct after it happening so many times before, but I throw myself to the ground a quarter of a second before a surge of heat blows over my head, ruffling my hair and grazing my cheek.

Several meaty thuds later, I lift my head and take in the now-empty clearing outside the cave.

It’s incredible how satisfying it feels to have whatever power lurks inside Briar smack someone else down for a change.

“She’s dead, isn’t she?” Briar’s whisper draws my gaze.

Even after seeing firsthand what she can do with that power of hers, the vulnerable twist to her lips and the pain clouding her eyes make me forget what this witch is capable of. Right now, she doesn’t have control of it, but if she did, what else could she do?

And if I can believe what Abigail said before whatever strange force flattened her cabin right on top of us, if Briar is no witch at all, then what is she?

I push myself to my feet. “I don’t know. She wasn’t there when I dug around the remains of her cabin.”

When her expression doesn’t change, I know she doesn’t believe me. “I’m not lying. She wasn’t there.”

“You’re just saying that because you don’t want to tell me what really happened.”

After gripping her arm, I turn to lead her back into the cave. “I have no problem admitting to killing. Why would I lie about finding a dead witch?”

She sighs. “I guess so. Where are we going?”

“To find a place to defend ourselves. Jonas and whoever else he brought with him will recover from that blow, and they’ll come after us.”

For several seconds, she trails me in silence as I lead the way deeper and deeper into the cave. “Why not go into the forest, or back to the truck?”

“I can outrun them. You can’t.”

I feel her glance at me, but keep my focus on the important thing. Namely, finding a place of safety that’s easy to defend our position. Somewhere that has a narrow entrance that means only one wolf can enter at a time.

“You could have just left me behind and saved yourself,” she suggests.

“You’re carrying the souls of my pack, which means you’re not leaving my sight.”

“She was the only one who could remove them. And—” Briar trips on something and tips forward. I’ve caught her by her arms and set her straight again before I know what I’m doing.

In the cave’s darkness, her blue eyes stare up at me, and I’m suddenly reminded of our near kiss.

I drop my hands from her arms and turn away. “Come on, and watch where you’re going.”

Her soft sigh snakes around me. “It’s not that easy. You have those big eyes to go along with those big—”

I peer over my shoulder and her mouth snaps shut.

Even though it's dark, the dull heat spilling over her cheeks makes me shake my head as I resume leading our way through the cave. "There's another witch we can go to."

"Sera? We don't have white asphodel, and even if she did, I don't—"

"Not Sera," I interrupt. But I hesitate to tell her more, because it was the scarred witch who told me to come looking for Abigail—and minutes after we find her, something destroys her house and either takes Abigail or kills her.