

## **Scattered Dreams Chapter 15 - FIFTEEN | LONG WALKS IN THE PARK**

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Jenna POV

"I can't! I could barely make that freaking potion, and you two broke the steps down to where a child could understand them. I'm just a regular girl, why can't you get that through your head?!" I jumped to my feet and screamed. I didn't mean to get loud, and I knew that as soon as I'd cooled off, I would apologize, but no one was listening to me. I may have had Wiccan blood, but I didn't want to be a witch. I didn't want to practice spells or make potions for the rest of my life; I just wanted to be me.

"Do you know any other witches who may be able to help us? Someone from one of your old covens, maybe?" Gio asked.

"We cut ties with our covens twenty-two years ago when Jenna was born and haven't seen or spoken to any of them since. I know that this isn't what you wanted to hear, but it's the truth. We are willing to help you as much as we possibly can, but only you can rid Gio of the spell, beloved. Only a high priestess can break those bonds," Ezekiel took my hands and said.

"A high priestess? Are you kidding me right now? Clearly, you've got me confused with someone else," I stated.

"You were conceived during Ostara or the spring equinox. Then you were born December 21, in the middle of Yule, or our winter solstice. These are major markers on the Wiccan calendar when the spirits and the gods are closer to us than normal, and souls who enter the world during these times of celebration are always powerfully blessed. Couple that with the fact that both your grandmothers were high priestesses, and yes, you have the makings to be a priestess as well," Estelle explained.

"Why aren't you a priestess then? If your mother was one, why can't you be the one to break the bonds for Gio?" I asked.

"Remember when Ezekiel used the term 'transference of power' a little while ago? It wasn't metaphorical; we literally transferred vast amounts of our power

to you when you turned sixteen. We didn't have to, but we wanted to give you a gift that you could keep with you always. Circumstances prevented us from raising you, but they couldn't keep us from providing you with all that we could."

"Well, transfer it back. I don't want the power or any of this. Gio, can we go back to the hotel now? I need to lie down," I asked him. Ezekiel and Estelle both looked so hurt that I would throw their gift back in their faces, and that made me feel like shit. They didn't deserve to be treated this way, and I knew better.

"I'm sorry for how I'm behaving, and I appreciate everything you two have done for me. This is just a lot of information to process, and I'm overwhelmed. I just need a short break so I can think clearly. Is that alright?"

"Take all the time you need, beloved. We'll be here waiting if you decide to come back," Estelle smiled at me and stated.

"I'll be back, I promise. I'd actually like to get to know the two of you, even if it has nothing to do with Wicca."

"I'd love that, so much. Honestly, come back whenever you want, I don't even care what time it is."

We said our goodbyes before they walked Gio and me to the door; I could tell that he was a little disappointed in the way things were ending. We'd driven all the way up here in hopes of riding him of the binding, but that wasn't happening anytime soon. It felt like it was my fault. "I'm so sorry about all this; I wish I could be the person you need me to be," I said as I settled in the passenger seat.

"Don't be an idiot Pix; there's nothing for you to apologize for, and you're exactly who you're supposed to be. That's all I care about; we'll figure this out."

"We shouldn't have to figure anything out. Sasha is an evil bitch, and now I have to transform myself into a super witch to fix what she did. It's not fair," I sat back and said. I was pouting like a kid, but I didn't know what else to do.

"I know all about 'not fair' beautiful; I lived it for years, so I understand, I honestly do. But you know me, and I won't ever ask you to do something that would hurt you in any way. Please don't worry about this; it's not the end of

the world." How Gio could remain so positive in all of this crap was beyond me. I would have been in a corner somewhere crying my eyes out, but here he was reassuring me when it was his life that was an absolute mess.

"Are all of you Stone boys this sweet and understanding, or is it just you?" I looked over and asked. He laughed and shook his head before responding.

"I'd love to say it's just me, but that's a lie. Matt is the golden child; I'm pretty sure he's been perfect in every way since birth. I always wanted to be just like him when we were growing up, so I guess I picked up a few of his personality traits. Luca is the baby, so he's a bit more self-centered, but he can be cool when he wants to be."

"Well, James and Gianna both deserve a medal, a big shiny one. They raised incredible kids, one of which I'm so lucky to be able to call my friend."

"Aww, I love you too, Pix."

I could tell by his tone that he was joking, but that didn't mean that my heart didn't beat twice as fast hearing those words come from his mouth.

"So, what's the plan for the rest of the day? I didn't expect to be out of there so early, so we've got all day to kill," Gio asked.

"We can go find food, or maybe grab a movie or something? Whatever we do, I just need it to be low key," I replied.

"I can manage low key."

We drove around for a while, taking in the sites, and eventually ended up at Riverfront Park in the heart of downtown Salem. The park had gorgeous, full walking paths circling the entire area that Gio and I couldn't help but take full advantage of. It was a beautiful summer day, and being outdoors like this was just what I needed. After walking around for an hour, we took a seat on a bench facing the river and watched as Bald Eagles fished in the river. I'd never seen an eagle in person before, and to see them in their natural element was insane. If the water, the birds, and the perfectly manicured grass wasn't enough, there were also tons of fragrant flowers filling my nostrils and making me smile like a madwoman. I loved it here. "Are you happy? You look really happy,"

Gio took my hand and said.

"I am, this place is so pretty; thank you for bringing me. I know I wasn't too specific on what I needed, but it turns out that it was this, all of this," I said, motioning to the entire park.

After we relaxed for a while longer, we went back to the hotel room, and I offered to order a pizza for dinner. There was a spot one of the patrons in the park had raved about right by our hotel. Gio, of course, wanted to pay, but I insisted. I could afford a \$20.00 dinner, and I wanted to take a few minutes to myself when I picked it up. He argued but eventually agreed after he looked out the window and saw that he could literally see the front door of the pizzeria from where he was standing.

I took my time going and coming back, thinking through everything that had happened that day and wondering whether I could be the witch Gio needed me to be. He was always so willing to help me out, and I hoped I could be that same type of person for him. After my fifteen-minute solo trip, I walked back into the room and placed the pizza on the counter of the small kitchenette. When I rounded the corner into the living area, I found Gio fresh out of the shower, rummaging in his duffel bag. He probably didn't expect me to be back so soon, and he more than likely didn't even know that I was. I could hear the music from his AirPods blasting and wondered how he wasn't deaf already.

When he finally looked over in my direction, he smiled before pulling out the pods and tossing them on the desk. "Hey, sorry about the nudity. I figured I could grab a shower and be dressed before you got back. I promise to stay fully clothed for the duration of our trip." he joked.

He had turned to face me, and when I saw his bare chest, once again, my body took over my brain, and I reacted. I slowly walked over and ran my fingers across his skin. It was still damp from his shower, and the little beads of water glistened in the light. And his smell, it was so masculine and sexy; how did he always smell so damn good?

"Uhh, Pixie? What are you doing?" Gio asked after a few moments.

"I'm touching you, what does it look like I'm doing?"

"I see that. But why?" I ignored his questions; he was distracting me from the mission at hand. A mission whose details I still had no clue about. After a few moments, my hands had satisfied their curiosity, but it was time for my lips to have a turn. I leaned forward and placed a slow and gentle kiss between his pecks, savoring the feeling of his skin so close to mine. I could feel his heart

hammering in his chest, and the sound of his ragged breathing emboldened me. He wasn't going to stop me, at least not yet. I slowly dropped my hands to his waist, just at the top of the towel and rested them there. I wanted to see him so badly, all of him. But it would forever change us, and I didn't know if I was prepared for that.

It seemed that my body didn't give a shit what I did or didn't know. My hand grabbed on to the knot at his hip and gave a gentle tug. "Jenna, look at me. Do you know what you're doing?" Gio asked.

"I am looking at you, Gio. I'm actually trying to look at all of you, but this knot is too damn tight. And no, I have no idea what I'm doing; I'm a virgin, remember?"

He gently took hold of my wrists and lifted them to his lips, giving each one a sweet kiss.

"Of course I remember, honey. And that's why I'm stopping you. I'm not the guy you want to give your virginity to; I don't deserve it. Especially since we both know what will happen when I find my mate, I won't do that to you."

"You're the only guy I want to give it to, the only one I've ever wanted to give it to. I know you feel something for me, something more than friendship; I can't be feeling this all by myself."

"What do you mean? You said you only see me as a friend; that's what you've always said."

"I was lying to myself and everyone else. Isn't it obvious that I'm in love with you? Why haven't you seen that? My mom saw right through the lie almost immediately." Gio took a step back, putting some very unwanted space between the two of us.

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"You've had an emotional day, I get it, but don't make this mistake; you can't ever take it back. Why don't-"

"Do you love me or not? I'm not some crazy chick trying to trap you into a relationship, or the jealous woman who selfishly wants you for herself. I'm just a girl, telling her best friend how she feels. So if you feel anything for me, tell me now. Please," I begged. I understood that his feelings were all over the

place, and even he didn't know what he did and didn't want, but what Estelle said was so real. The heart and soul can only be fooled for so long; eventually, they would find their way home. This man was my heart's home; I just knew it.

"You know I love you, I tell you all the time," was his reply. That was a cop-out, and he wasn't getting off that easy.

"Are you in love with me? Yes or no, it's a straightforward question. If it's a no, then fine, I'll never try to push myself on you again. But if it's a yes, then get back over here, and let's finish what we started in your kitchen." He looked at me for a few moments, then groaned and scrubbed his hands over his face. Then he turned his back and walked into the bathroom, leaving me devastated.