

Enslaved

“And the witches in town. How many in the coven?” The answer doesn’t matter. One witch, or a dozen of them, will die tonight at my hands.

Or claws.

“Three. But I—”

I rise to my feet and stalk away, back to my truck. The sooner it’s done, the sooner I get paid, and the sooner I get the fuck out of Indiana before this newest hunt drags old nightmares back to the surface.

With the similarities between this dead pack and mine, it’s wishful thinking on my part. Looks like I have another long night of being torn from sleep, my body bathed in a cold sweat, and the screams of my dead family rattling in my head to look forward to.

Fucking fantastic.

My wolf snarls a warning in my head, much as he has since we arrived.

Quiet down. Three witches is nothing.

The snarls continue, but I block them out. After the last witch attack on a wolf in San Francisco a couple of months ago, I nearly didn’t stop with just the witch. I’d have killed the whole town if I could. I’m hoping that controlling my wolf when I shift doesn’t go the same way. But if it does, I can’t find it in me to care.

So what if I kill a town?

“I’ll be back in thirty minutes,” I bark. “Have my money ready for me.”

The shifter, whose face I can’t remember and whose name is just as forgettable, speaks as I walk away, but like my wolf growling in my head, I ignore that and climb into my truck.

The witches are right where the shifter said they would be when we spoke on the phone the day before.

In an old farmhouse with a wraparound porch, they gather in the attic around an old leather book. A grimoire. Said to be the biggest source of a witch's strength.

Not that their spells do a damn thing to stop me.

I've killed two of them before I realize something I should have picked up the second I entered the forest. Something my wolf was trying to tell me, but I refused to listen.

Their scents aren't familiar.

So I shift back to human to confront the sole witch, a trembling woman who looks to be in her thirties tucked behind a worn couch.

"You weren't beside the stream." I already know the answer to a question that isn't a question at all.

Tears slide down her face as she shakes her head. "No. Who are you? Why did you—"

Spinning on my heel, I stalk out of the house, leaving the dead witches where they lay.

But back in my truck, I sit for a minute, staring into the night. "He played you."

I grip the wheel a little tighter.

"And you made it so painfully fucking easy," I breathe. It wasn't like he hadn't heard of the fifty-strong Destin pack wiped out by a witch in a matter of minutes. News like that spreads. And fast.

In my ten years of hunting, no one has ever asked me about that night, but I know they have the same question buzzing around their minds: why were you fucking a tourist when, as the best fighter and heir apparent, you should've been defending your pack?

A part of me is relieved because I wouldn't have an answer for them. Another part knows, probably just as well as they do, that I'd tear into them so hard and fast they'd be dead before their body hit the ground.

All I have now is my guilt and my rage, and I cling to both because what the fuck else can I do?

There was no witch scent at the stream, only wolf, and I should have known that—but all I heard was that a witch had slaughtered a pack of wolves, and I went blind, deaf, and dumb.

Exactly like the shifter who hired me would have wanted.

Put this to rest, Keane. It's making you stupid. You have to end this now, before your stupidity kills you.