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Abigail laughs so hard that she nearly upsets the other cups on the shelf. “Don’t be silly, child. You have more protection against the wolves than anyone in Madden Grove. More perhaps than anyone, anywhere.”

“You mean this out-of-control power that never does what I want it to?”

The door crashes open, and another teacup tips off the shelf—only this time, Abigail catches it before turning to the doorway.

Keane’s face contorts with fury. “You fu—”

He disappears back the way he came with another eye-watering thud. Abigail flutters her fingers at the door, and it snicks closed a moment later.

I clear my throat. “Um, Abigail. Maybe you should stop doing that. I mean, he’s killed witches before.”

Her tranquil expression doesn’t shift as she returns the teacup to the shelf. “I’m aware.” When she’s straightened a pink spotted teacup, she turns to me. “Now. These souls... explain.”

I frown. “Maybe we could talk about what kind of witch I am first. No. How can you know green witch spells and be an air elemental as well? I thought you could only be one or the other.”

She snorts as she makes her way to the snug kitchen tucked in one corner of the room. “Easy enough to answer. You aren’t.”

I study her as she places another teacup and saucer on the counter. “Aren’t what?”

“A witch.”

“What do you mean I’m not—”

“And the other answer is that witchcraft isn’t as straightforward as being one thing or another. Look at your father. He was one of the most powerful green witches in town, and if we listened to Layla Markham and her ilk, we’d all believe that no man could so much as light a match with their gift.” She turns to narrow her eyes at me. “And we both know that isn’t true. Don’t we?”

My mouth flaps open. I’m still working on closing it when the door swings open, though this time without the slam because a large, tanned hand grips the edge and stops it.

Keane takes a step inside and I tense, ready to dive out of the way of whatever attack he’s planning. His face is like thunder as he points a hard glare at Abigail.

“Tea?” she calls out.

He doesn’t say a word.

Abigail turns back around and tosses some dried mint in the cup before reaching for the teakettle on the stove. “Take a seat. Mint and honey tea is always everyone’s favorite. They just don’t know it until they have a taste. It’s also very calming,” she says with a pointed stare, in case he didn’t know she was talking to him.

When Keane doesn’t move, I tense even more as I shift my attention from him to her and back again, awaiting the inevitable explosion.

“I’m going to kill you,” he grates.

“Of course you are, dear,” Abigail says before she promptly ignores him. “Briar, we need to discuss the matter with the souls. Since you can’t cast spells, you need to tell me who did, because this whole business with souls is—”

I explode from my seat. “You knew that spells don’t work for me. Did Dad? No, answer the first question first. No. Explain what you meant when you said I wasn’t a witch.”

She pours a long stream of hot water into the cup. “I would think it would be obvious why they wouldn’t work for you. I’m sure your parents would have—”

“What do you mean, she’s not a witch?” Keane shoves the door closed harder than is strictly necessary, drawing my gaze that way—at least until I remember he’s naked and jerk my head away again. “And if she’s not, then maybe you can explain how she was able to cast a spell that enslaved the souls of my pack?”

His voice ends in a roar loud enough to rattle the teacups on the shelf above her head.

After measuring the distance between me and Keane, I move toward Abigail, since she's proven more than capable of dealing with Keane.

Halfway there, Abigail holds her hand out toward me. "No, Briar, stay with Keane."

I frown. "What do you mean, stay with Keane?"

Releasing a gentle sigh, she smiles a little sadly at me. "I wish we had more time."

Alarm spikes through me. "That sounds like a goodbye. Why does it sound like you're saying goodbye?"

"Briar..." she breathes my name. There's so much sadness filling her eyes that I know she's not about to tell me anything good, so I continue toward her.