

THE LAST WITCH III

Free Chapter I

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Three spells.

Three Bloodstones.

Three keys.

Only she, who is able to manipulate all realms of power, can unite them.

And save us all.

A ring, close to my heart

An heirloom handed down from mother to child

And finally, the heart of all power.

'HELP ME! PLEASE, SOMEONE! ANYONE? I'M BURNING... OH GOD! MY LEGS! THEY'RE ON FIRE!'

The woman's desperate and agony-filled voice pierces the night's air, but I fail to see her through the thick smoke. She coughs and chokes on it as it billows out in all directions. The jet fuel is spreading the flames fast and creating a toxic smog in its wake.

As I stroll through the plane wreckage, past the severed wings and the twisted metal, her shrieking gets lost amongst the countless others. The passengers of this fateful flight are all screaming, sobbing and pleading like children. Their hands reach out for anyone who may help, but everyone is just as mangled as they are.

There is no one to help.

No one except me.

The din of the still roaring engine and the fierce flames setting off explosion after explosion make my ears ring and the heat causes my eyes to stream. The emergency air masks sway uselessly in the breeze, splattered with soot and blood. And I feel sick as I see several bodies dangling from their seats, still buckled in and limp, all torn up or half burnt away.

That doesn't mean they're dead though.

A few have crawled free from their seats and they roll themselves on the floor in a desperate attempt to douse the flames smothering their bodies. But the ground is steeped in fuel. It's pouring out from the plane and only increases their torment and makes their screams more shrill.

Some *have* managed to get to their feet. They run around, hollering and choking on the smell of their cooking flesh, the scent of which does nothing to help my nausea.

A man stumbles towards me, his back covered in fire and his face slack. As he reaches me, his injuries claim his life and he falls dead at my feet.

I simply step over him and carry on.

Towards the cries of a man who sounds both enraged and in agony.

'There you are!' I call out, my arms wide and a relieved smile on my face as I head towards the rear end of the plane. 'I was worried for a minute there. Thought maybe you hadn't survived.' I step over more bodies and pieces of wreckage as I make my way closer, dodging the odd hand that reaches out for me and the many puddles of blood. I stop and rest my hands on my hips with a long sigh. 'That was close, huh? You easily could have died.'

'Goddammit... Lilly?' Collins whines as he pulls against the strap pinning him in place in his seat. He dangles upside down, blood spilling from his nose, his mouth and a rather hideous gash on his cheek. His right arm has been badly burnt and his left leg is so broken, I can see bones

protruding from his ripped jeans. His blonde hair is a lot longer than it was the last time I saw him. It's also disgustingly unkempt and greasy. There's stubble on his jaw. His clothes, which are covered in food stains and dirt, hang off his thin frame. His lips are dry and cracked from dehydration, and his face is grey and hollow. There's a strong smell of stale whiskey and sweat coming from his pores, strong enough to unsettle my stomach.

'Jesus,' I scoff. 'Collins. You look like shit. Even without the whole... bone poking through your skin thing going on.'

'W-what happened? Where am I?'

'You've been in a plane crash, Collins!' I reply, rather obviously. 'Your plane has just been shot out of the sky! You, my friend, are lucky I was here. I managed to slow its descent, but I couldn't stop it completely. It landed rather badly, I'm afraid.'

As he moves, the protruding bone shifts. A wet squelch accompanies a long and agonising groan from him and I recoil at the gross injury.

'I'm really hurt, Lilly...' he gasps, almost sobbing. 'I need your help.'

'Well, why do you think I'm here, silly?' I scoff. 'Now calm down, will you? I'll get you down in a jiff-'

'FREEZE!' A male voice calls out from behind me, failing to hide the tremble within it or the terrified and quickened breaths he takes. I hear the click of a gun and can't help but smile as I turn to face him. The human police officer looks petrified. There's blood smeared on his cheek and a little burn on his left hand where I am assuming he has tried to extinguish some of the fire burning around us.

But the fire, the bodies and the plane wreckage are not what causes his nervous disposition.

It's me. The small young woman standing before him. That's what has him shaking like a leaf in the middle of a hurricane.

'P-put your h-hands up!' he stammers, fumbling as he cocks his gun.

'Look. I'm just here to fetch my friend.' I nod to Collins, who is still desperately trying to get out of his upturned seat and struggling to cope with his pain. 'As you can see, he's badly hurt and-'

'I SAID P-PUT Y-YOUR HANDS UP!' he repeats in a fretful panic, spit flying from his lips and the gun waving wildly as he tries to keep his aim.

His eyes dance around at those still writhing and burning, and I in turn, examine this brave little man standing up to me. His uniform is filthy but not damaged. His eyes are wide and blood stains his skin. But it's not his own, and I see no injury other than a burnt hand. He must be in his fifties at least, and the size of his belly tells me he's used to sitting on his arse for large portions of the day.

'You weren't on the plane,' I surmise. 'No way you would be able to stand as well as you are if you had been. You know, rather than pointing that silly weapon at me, perhaps you should focus on helping the injured.' I nod my head to the nearest unconscious person. But he doesn't move from his threatening pose and the barrel of his gun remains pointed straight at my chest.

'I-I know y-you,' he stutters. 'I've s-seen your face on the n-news.'

'Is that so?' I reply.

'Y-you are Lilly H-h-h-'

'Yes. I am.'

'Y-you, You're a a a w-w-w-wi-'

'The word you're looking for... is Witch.'

'Murderer!' he hisses hatefully, despite his fear. 'Filthy killer. Sadistic child!'

'Oh. That's new. I usually get "Devil whore" "Bitch" "Satan's mistress". Good for you.

Choosing to insult beyond my gender.'

One of the engines explodes and sends chunks of metal in all directions. The police officer throws his hands over his face as an incredibly sharp strip of steel hurtles towards him. It takes a few seconds for him to realise that he hasn't been hit and he lowers his arms to see a deadly jagged point an inch from his face, floating gracefully in the air, dancing slowly to some unheard melody.

'Holy-Mary-mother-of-God,' he whispers, eyeballing it intently and shuffling back a few steps.

'Are you here alone, Jones?' I ask.

'H-how do you k-know my name?' he replies, his focus still firmly on the debris hovering before him.

'Well, I can read your mind, you know. But to save time, I just read your badge.' I step closer, still manipulating the metal in front of him, making it turn menacingly. 'Now. Tell me. Are you here alone?'

He can't stop looking at the debris slowly spinning by his head. Perhaps this is the first time he has seen real magic?

'Why did you save me? That metal should have cut my head clean off.'

'Why would you assume I wouldn't save you?' I shrug.

'Because you are Lilly Hooper.' He swallows dryly and finally looks at me. 'You are a Witch. The A-arcane Witch. I know your face. It's on the news every day. You have killed hundreds of us these past few months. T-thousands.' He watches my ashen hair blow across my face before I tuck it behind my ear.

'Is that right? That's what I've done, is it? Huh. And just to clarify, by *us*, who do you mean?' I enquire. 'Police? Men? Humans? Or do you mean Hunters? I'm going to need you to be a little more specific.'

His brow furrows in disgust before he replies, 'All of them. You killed all and many more.'

'Shouldn't you be helping these people then? If saving others is so important to you, go ahead. I won't stop you.'

'Killing you would help them. It would help everyone.'

'But you're willing to let them die in the vague hope that you can get a bullet to bury itself in my skull. A very, very, *verrrrry* vague hope. I'd say non-existent hope myself but you never know. And yet, *I'm* the monster.'

Collins howls as his chair dislodges and plummets a few feet. I reach out and stop it from falling any further, sparing Collins any more injury.

'I'm here for my friend. I strongly suggest you don't get in my way,' I state clearly.

'I will kill you where you stand,' the police officer promises, the hand holding his gun starting to steady. 'I am a damn good shot.'

'R-run...' Collins splutters, still pulling on the belt around his middle. 'Save yourself!'

'You should listen to your friend,' he says darkly, nodding to Collins. 'Because neither I nor anyone else will show you mercy-'

'NOT HER!' Collins bellows. 'YOU! RUN YOU FUCKING IDIOT! *RUUUN!*'

Collins' voice echoes through the wreckage and repeats over and over. Jones blinks at me as I smile and create my black and white lightning on my hands. He listens to it crackle and flinches at the sight of its intensity.

'Y-you did t-this,' Jones whispers. 'The lightning... *that* lightning.' He nods to my hands. 'It grabbed the plane. It pulled it down. W-why?'

I step closer to the man and narrow my eyes.

'Why what?' I ask.

'Look at all these people! They're in agony! They're dying or... or dead! Your friend was on this plane.'

'Exactly. I needed to talk to him and he stopped taking my calls.' I turn and look at Collins who breathes hard, furious breaths. 'And then the silly fool tried to leave the country.' I tut three times at Collins and shake my head. 'Silly goose. You're not going anywhere.'

As Jones goes to raise his gun, I release my lightning and smother his body with my black Energy magic. He writhes and judders before falling to his knees, the gun slipping from his hand as he loses control of his faculties.

'Evil... whore!' he manages to throw out.

'Oh, Jones. You were so close to leaving here alive. But then you had to go and call me that. Oh well. Was fun chatting. But I really hate that word so...' With a twitch of my hand his head spins and a loud click signifies a successfully snapped neck. I watch him slump sideways, the back of his head facing me and the skin on his neck all stretched and wrinkled.

Letting out a sigh, I turn to face Collins.

'Now. Collins, my dear fellow.' I walk towards him and rest my hand on his cheek, ignoring how he thrashes and hollers at me. I simply smile. 'I think it's time you and I had a little conversation. Don't you?'

'Lilly, please. Please don't do this! You can fight your Break. Think about your family. Think of-'

With a flick of my wrist, the belt locking him into his seat opens up and Collins lands in a heap by my feet, screaming in pain and bleeding absolutely everywhere. Another flick and he quickly spins so he is on his back. My foot slams onto his neck and I push down, cutting off his air. My Physical magic makes me strong. Stronger than even him and after a moment of thrashing and gasping, Collins falls unconscious.

'You didn't need to kill him, you know,' a familiar timid little voice comments off to the side. Followed by some shuffling sounds as he moves his feet.

'He's just unconscious,' I reply. 'And incredibly drunk, might I add.'

'Not Collins. I meant the police officer. He wasn't affected by the Hunter's mark. If he were, he would have just tried to shoot you. Not speak to you.'

'Think I care? The man pointed a gun at me and called me a whore.'

'And for that, he deserved to die? You can stop a bullet easily. You knew you were in no danger, but you killed him anyway-'

I use my Telekinesis to yank at his arm. A satisfying pop echoes around me as his joint dislocates and an even more satisfying cry of pain follows it. When I turn, Tobias Kendryk, formerly Toby Smith – my psychotic Unbroken ex-lover – is on his knees and cradling his left arm. He never looks away from me or lowers his eyes. Fear prevents him from turning away. He's a little rabbit caught in my headlights.

Wonderful.

His ragged and worn clothes hang off his thin frame. His eyes are encircled with dark shadows, his skin is pale and grubby. The side of his face is still heavily scarred from my attack back at the traitor camp over six months ago, when I pressed my palm and my fire hard into his skin. But the bruises, cuts and scrapes that mark his body now, they're all new. Well, he does irritate me so, and his constant sobbing at night annoys the hell out of me.

Even now, I can't get used to the hazel colour of his eyes. Nor the dark brown of his hair.

Sometimes, I miss the lilac sparkle I would see when he looked at me. And the way he ran his fingers through his stark white hair. I wonder, occasionally, if I should re-Break him. Might be fun. But probably a bad idea. Toby Smith was nothing if not trouble and I have currently got my fill of

that. Besides, his suffering at living with his soul and the memories of all the evil he has done brings me endless joy—no way I'll give that up.

I walk towards him and crouch down, so I'm level with his terrified face.

'You seem to be under the illusion that I care, even a little bit, that I just killed that man. I don't, Mutt. I really don't. And I don't care that this plane lies in pieces, along with the people inside it. It's like I just swatted a fly. I don't care.'

'I know,' he says sadly, still clutching his arm. 'It breaks my heart. What you're doing now... helping that monster, you're breaking my heart-'

My fingers are wrapped around his neck so fast; he fails to finish his sentence before I grind his bones together and cut off his air.

'You don't have a heart,' I tell him. 'I know that because if you did, I would have taken great pleasure in tearing it to fucking pieces!'

I narrow my eyes on my little Mutt. I'm ready to cause some more pain. To vent my temper onto him as I have done so many times before, but instead, I scream and grab my head. Searing hot pain shoots through my temple and I'm unable to keep myself upright.

In the quickest move, Tobias pops back his shoulder with a grunt and leaps into action, catching me in his arms and stopping me from falling to the ground.

All I can do is tear at my hair and cry my pain out into the world.

'LILLY! LILLY, WHAT'S WRONG? WHAT'S HAPPENING?' He takes my face in his hands and looks into my eyes which I know have gone ghostly white. They always do when this happens. 'Oh shit... you're having a vision! It's okay. The pain will pass.'

Tobias Kendryk fades from my sight, and I'm hurled instead into a dark woods to watch a most unwelcome scene play out before me.

One that really, really pisses me off.

*

It's dark and stormy. Must be the middle of the night. I'm ankle-deep in mud with the rain ferociously hammering down on my skin. I can feel it. Like I'm really here. It's cold. The wind howls around my body and soon my clothes are soaked. I wrap my arms around my waist in a weak attempt to keep myself from shivering. When the sound of snapping twigs echoes behind me, I spin. A hooded figure stalks past me. Their large frame is hunched over and tired as they trudge through the dense woodland and thickening soil. As they pass, a male voice travels out from beneath the hood. He grunts and groans, limping badly and stinking to high heaven of old sweat.

'Who the hell are you?' I demand, but my voice carries like a hushed whisper and he fails to acknowledge me in the slightest. As he passes, I go to grab his arm. My hand slips through his form and I see that I am nothing more than a shimmer. A ghost, stalking the mysterious and pungent unfortunate before me. He carries on, ducking beneath branches and dragging his leg behind him.

I have no choice. I'm pulled after him by an invisible magnetic force. As I move, the woods blur. I rub my eyes, hoping to bring everything back into focus. When clarity returns, we're outside an abandoned, partially collapsed house. I watch as the figure uses an old flashlight to start digging through the wreckage. The brief moments, when lightning streaks across the sky, offer a little more visibility. He wears a large duffle coat with the hood covering his face and no matter how hard I look, I can't see who he is beneath it. He holds his ribs with his left hand and grunts with every bit of movement. He's clearly in pain but determined to find what it is he came here for.

We slide in through a crack between two wooden support beams. The house is in darkness. With an annoyed sigh, he pulls out the flashlight so he can see where he is going. The light flickers as it struggles to get enough power from the old battery inside. He gives it a whack and the beam steadies.

Further in we go. Through the lounge, past the kitchen, and towards the door under the stairs.

'Guess we're going into the basement,' I mutter, following his lead and curious to see what my vision has to offer.

The stairs groan under his weight as the flashlight guides the way. Down the steps, along the corridor and past an open metal door.

I pause and instantly recognise where I am.

'The cellar where Toby Smith brought me,' I ponder aloud, seeing the room where Grayson was held. His former chains still lay abandoned on the stone floor.

The stranger carries on, and so must I.

Straight to a closed metal door. One I know all too well.

The bolt is still in place, sealing it closed. He pulls it back and pushes it open.

The stench that pours out burns my nostrils and turns my stomach. The need to vomit overwhelms us both as we simultaneously gag and bury our mouth and nose into the crook of our elbows to shield our senses.

'Jesus... that's disgusting!' I hiss. It's like I am really here. Down in Toby and Ava's torture chamber where they held me captive for days, tormenting me with images of my brutal past.

The stranger trails the light from his torch across the floor and finds the source of the smell.

'Urgh... Gross.'

Lying before us are the remains of a woman. Her corpse has decayed and rotted. Her shrivelled organs trail around her body and bone pokes through the remainder of her flesh. Even underground and sealed up, the flies and maggots have discovered her. He can't contain the

disgusted groan that escapes his lips and neither can I.

'Damn. Ava. You look like shit,' I scoff at the corpse. Ava Sinclair. The woman who encouraged Toby's sadistic cruelty when we were together. Who, out of spite and revenge, slept with the only man that I ever loved. Who held down my ankles in The Millers' Barn while yelling at Toby to stomp out the life growing inside me. And then again, in this very room, only a few months ago when I discovered I was pregnant with Gabriel's baby.

The hooded man guides the light further across the room, following a trail of blood which has dried and cracked, to a pair of feet wearing heavy black boots. Then legs, until finally, I understand precisely what happens when you leave a vampire to rot in a cellar.

Hendrix's skin is mottled and grey. It looks as dry as parchment. Dark black veins cover his features and his eyes stare blankly into the distance.

I wonder if he's dead. I recall Hendrix telling me that when a vampire fails to feed, they dry up, like a walking, talking, mummified corpse. Well, he sure isn't walking or talking right now.

The hooded figure walks closer and kneels before Hendrix, keeping the light on his face. He examines the pale grey of the vampire's eyes before nudging the lifeless man's boot.

Hendrix's eyes dart in his direction, making both the hooded man and I jump.

'You are still alive then. Good. Does it hurt? Slowly petrifying? Feeling your muscles turn to stone and your skin to leather?'

'You fucker...' I whisper, recognising the hooded man's voice in an instant. Grayson. The bastard. No wonder he was limping. Having his balls snipped off and being held by a pretty angry sibling, whose wife he tried to rape, would undoubtedly leave you walking wonky.

Grayson laughs darkly, enjoying the suffering of the man before him, of the traitor who betrayed him.

Him and me both.

The vampire manages a low growl but fails to move.

'I have a job offer for you,' Grayson explains.

Another low growl travels through the air.

Grayson pulls out a flask from his pocket and opens it up. Hendrix stares at it longingly and tries to grab the container. But he's unable even to twitch his fingers, so just whines in frustration instead.

'Look at me, Hendrix.'

Hendrix's eyes flick upwards.

'You betrayed me. Turned against me and sided with a man who plotted against me. I lost my coven. I lost my brothers. I lost my magic. And I lost my Arcane Witch.'

I cross my arms over my chest and laugh.

'HIS Arcane Witch? Yeah. Sure.'

Grayson tips a few drops of blood from the container into Hendrix's mouth. Hendrix moans in disgusting pleasure. His voice returns, but that is all. He needs more blood if he is ever to move again.

'She took your magic as well as your eye... huh? Branded you?' Hendrix mocks as he looks up at him.

Grayson lowers his hood and nods.

'Not looking too good there either, Grayson,' I murmur. Hendrix's gaze lingers on the scar covering Grayson's lost eye. The one I gouged from his skull shortly before he threw me over his desk and ripped off my knickers. My legs clench together at the memory.

The months Gabriel has held him prisoner have certainly taken their toll. I notice the thinning of his face, the thick stubble on his jaw, the dark bruises and heavy lines that tell of days of pain and sleepless nights.

'You look like shit, boss.'

'I have been held captive for the last few months by a rather angry and vengeful brother, who took my treatment of his wife rather badly. Gabriel now also controls the Nomads.'

I watch their conversation, gripped by their every word.

'And what of Little Witch? Where's she?' Hendrix asks.

'While you have been rotting away down here, a lot has changed. Theo is controlling the Hunters. He intends to destroy every Descendant on the planet and perform a spell which will return his old mistress from the dead, and to do that, he needs to be the sole recipient of the power from the Arcane realm. It turns out he was the creator of the Hunter Mark and is responsible for the start of the war.'

'Damn.'

'Indeed. There are public executions daily. Descendants are being arrested left, right and centre. The Traitors and the Nomads have joined forces. Gabriel is in charge of them all, with Jensen Hartley and Collins as his seconds in command. They fight Hunters, attack executions, save who they can. But Gabriel... he's changed. It seems that when Lilly healed him and restored the arm Tobias cut off, she not only fixed his fertility issue but amplified his Mental magic. He can control actions, words and thoughts. And for as long as he wishes. Myself included.'

Tell me about it. My husband's new powers have been most... unfortunate. I can agree with them on that.

'And Lilly?' Hendrix pushes. 'Where is Little Witch? I really would like to get my hands on

her.'

'After the death of Amara Jayne...'

A sudden pang of grief stabs at my heart. I soon force it down and continue watching with an interested smirk.

Look at these two, conspiring in the dark.

Bless.

Grayson continues. 'And after the slaughter of hundreds of the Nomads, Miss Hooper Broke. She left Gabriel behind and went on a rampage. Murdered countless Hunters and attacked groups of humans without mercy. Gabriel's been trying to catch her ever since she left. Her powers have grown beyond anything anyone could have ever predicted, and she carries a baby within her who will hold the same power she does. But Gabriel's magic is strong too. And he wants his wife and his baby back more than anything. Especially as it is coming up to the Blood Moon, and if she fails to perform the second part of the spell, their hope of survival will disappear for good. Rumour has it that last time he faced Lilly, he was able to control her completely. She fled, with the help of Tobias, and no one has seen them since.'

'Fled. I didn't flee. I'm just busy!'

'And what of Toby Smith? Where's your little brother these days?' Hendrix asks.

'With Lilly. Unbroken and suffering from what I hear. Toby taught Lilly his cruelty long ago. She learnt it well, it seems. I understand she calls him "Mutt".' He gives a derisive snort at that, rolling his eye at the weakness his once fearsome brother now embodies.

'And what do you intend to do, huh?' Hendrix taunts. 'What are you gonna do against a supreme mind controller who hates ya and an all-powerful Arcane with no soul that will do far worse than kill ya? Little Witch branded ya. Without your magic, ya can't fight her. Can't stop her.'

Without magic, you're just a dead man walking. Same as the rest of us.'

'I may not have my magic. But...' From his pocket, Grayson pulls out a notebook. *'I do have this.'*

'Hey! How did you get those?' I snap, knowing that I won't get any form of response but unable to contain my indignation. *'You little bloody thief!'*

'They're the translations taken from Rebecca Hooper's journal.' Grayson informs him, waving the pages Connor and I worked so hard to translate. *'And some of them have been very interesting to read. I can get power. I can get stronger. But I need you to help me.'*

'Help you?' Hendrix snorts. *'Look at me.'* He flashes his toothless grin. *His gums are all scarred and deformed from when I compelled him to remove every one of his teeth. Good times. 'The bitch castrated me,' he grunts.*

Grayson flinches at that word "castrates", and shuffles uncomfortably as I snigger. Witnessing him cutting off his testicles and then being forced to watch his own brother squash them underfoot is a memory I treasure.

'All I need is vampire venom, these notes, and an ally.'

'I'll give you an ally. But I ain't got my venom. Like I said, Little Witch took my teeth. Made me pull 'em out myself, with my own goddamn hands. Sadistic little bitch.'

From his other pocket, Grayson produces a small metal tin that rattles as he shakes it. Opening the container, he shows Hendrix the teeth he has within it.

'I can give you back your bite. Your venom. But in return... I want you to give me what you have.'

'What I have? Look at me. I ain't got shit.'

'I want you to turn me into what you are.'

'A vampire?' Hendrix laughs and rolls his eyes. But I fail to see the joke. 'She take your senses as well as your magic? I can't turn anyone till the Veil is down. And my teeth are in a goddamn box.'

'You don't know?' Grayson asks. 'The spell Lilly is doing will not return magic. They plan to flee this world, and live in The Arcane Realm.'

'Let 'em. Further away from me they are, the better.'

'You think that they can do what they have done to me, and leave for their happy-ever-after?' Grayson shakes his head. 'That will never happen. I won't let it. I can get you back your bite. And I can work it so you can turn me into something resembling what you are.' He holds the notes higher. 'It will take some experimentation, but I know loyal people who still want me as their leader, that will be all too happy to volunteer. Once we create the perfect creature, I'll turn myself and together, you and I will return to glory.'

'And then what? What do you plan to do exactly? What the fuck can two make-shift-vampires do in a world where witches and humanity are at war with each other? Where your wealth, as well as your house, went up in smoke? And where ninety-nine percent of the world fucking hates us both?'

'Revenge,' Grayson says simply.

'Revenge?'

'Lilly and Gabriel have taken everything from me. Theo is the reason the war started. The reason my wife and child died five centuries ago. I plan to take what they love most from them. For Theo? His life. His hope of seeing his mistress. And for my brother and his bitch of a wife?'

'The kid?'

'I have big plans for that child.' He holds the notebook higher. *'World ending, vampire reviving type plans. The witches will not flee and live out their days in safety with free access to their magic while I rot away, crippled and shunned. If I am ever caught again, my days of endless torment will continue. And it is only a matter of time until they figure out how to sever their links to the mortality spell and I am no longer needed to be kept alive.'*

'You know how to sever yourself from your family?'

'Of course I do. I've known for centuries. And Gabriel has been looking for a way to sever us for months. But that link has been my safety net. The only ones who have been able to kill me are the only ones that need me alive. If I die, so does Gabriel, Collins, Tobias and my bastard father, Theo. I want to become a vampire. I want to stop their spell and keep the witches in this realm. I want to take their child, Hendrix. Mould it into whatever we want. With an Arcane under our control, we will be unstoppable. No matter how make-shift our vampirism may be. And if all else fails, we just kill the fuckers and let the world burn.' Grayson leans in closer to Hendrix. *'If we don't get our happy-ever-after... no one does.'* He lifts the flask containing human blood to Hendrix's mouth. *'Are you in?'*

Hendrix laughs. 'Hell yeah, Boss. I'm in!'

I'm hurled away from the scene with a yank before I can see or hear anything more. And with a throbbing head and a racing heart, I return to the plane wreckage and back to Tobias.

'Are you okay?' Tobias asks as I come back to reality. *'What did you see-'*

'Grab Collins. We need to go.'

'Go?' he asks. *'Go where?'*

'To see some old friends. Hendrix Spencer and your dear sweet Ava Sinclair. Or what's left

of them,' I add in a chuckle. 'Come. We'll drop Collins off at the safe house first.'

'Hendrix?' he repeats, terror gleaming in his eyes. 'And A-Ava? N-no. I really don't think we should go back to that place. I don't think-'

'Good job I'm not asking you to think then. I'm ordering you.' My eyes blacken. 'Grab Collins and take my hand, Mutt. Or I will skin you alive and make you do it wearing nothing but muscle and bone.'

Thank you for reading

Free Chapter I

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