

A NOVEL

*Faye*TED

THE FAYANA PROJECT

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DEDICATION

This large-scale fanfic is dedicated to Andrew Miller, Shelley Hennig and Phoebe Tonkin.

The Fayana Project was inspired by literary mastermind Andrew Miller, and sought out a creative outlet to give back to him as well as the amazing community that supports his work, and of course the great ship that has come to be known as Fayana. The printed version of this book is limited and exclusively for the several people who wrote it as well as the three recipients stated above as **NOT FOR SALE** memorabilia. Fans are encouraged to read the book in a free online format. We want to reiterate that absolutely no profit is being made and we're merely fans driven by our passion of storytelling. We sincerely hope you enjoy the contents of this book.

The Fayana Project:

McKenzie, Head Writer

Ashley, Graphic Designer

Michael, Writer

Siobhan, Writer

Fernanda, Writer

Ari, Writer

Maddy, Writer

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PROLOGUE

Amelia's breaths were getting increasingly shorter as her kitchen illuminated with the heat of an ever-growing inferno. What started as just a small spark quickly engulfed the entire room and soon began to explore every crevice of her house. In an instant, she saw the safe life she always wanted for her daughter Cassie crumble to ash. The oxygen was decreasing at rapid pace and the smoke from her burning home filled her lungs; she collapsed, gripping at the island counter for any support. She pleaded for mercy. But it was too late; the heat was scorching her flesh, and her finality was all too near. The windows burst open, shards of glass shooting in every which direction, fire racing to consume anything in its path. And just a few yards away, there stood John Blackwell, the father of her child, a shy smirk on his face and a clenched fist by his side.

"Let's go," he whispered confidently to the person by his side. They got in the car and drove off opposite to the sounds of tardy sirens fading in from the distance.

"It's her. It's Cassie Blake." Diana spoke softly but surely in close distance to Adam, who was preoccupied with entering items into his locker. Diana stood behind him, staring at new girl Cassie down the hall; she was having some trouble opening her locker. "We should say hi."

"Who?" Adam was still stuck trying to decide whether he should take all of the books for the rest of the day and avoid returning to his locker later on.

“Cassie,” she reiterated. But Adam was still quizzical. “Blake,” she stressed. “Adam, she completes the circle.” Diana and Adam, along with their — well, they wouldn’t exactly call them *friends* per sé, more like schoolmates. No, that was too impersonal. Their acquaintances, people they had befriended and then grew apart from due to circumstance. Diana and Adam, along with their acquaintances Nick, Melissa, and Faye had discovered they were witches, thanks to Diana finding her family’s book. A full circle was at least six different families: Meade, Conant, Glaser, Armstrong, Chamberlain...and now Blake. With Cassie, Diana could bind their witches’ circle.

“Isn’t that too...forward?” Adam’s question fell on deaf ears; Diana was halfway to Cassie by the time he finished his sentence. Cassie was a small girl, with fair skin, flowing blonde hair, perky peach lips like her personality, and blue eyes full of innocence. They glistened, even in the unattractive florescent lighting of the school’s hallway. Or at least, they glistened to Adam.

“Hi!” Diana was anything but passive. Cassie turned from facing the locker, a bit stunned.

“Um. Hello,” she responded.

“Okay, sorry, that was a bit strong,” Diana said with a slight chuckle. “Let me start over: Hi, my name is Diana, and this is my friend...” she trailed off to let Adam state his own name. But Adam was a bit flustered at the moment.

“Uh... um...” he struggled.

“Adam.” Diana helped with furrowed eyebrows. “This is Adam.”

Cassie smiled and offered her hand, “Hi, Cassie Blake.”

“Jane’s granddaughter!” Diana was all too enthusiastic.

“Oh, so you know?”

“It’s a small town.” And with that, the bell rang. “Oh, where are you headed?”

“Uh,” Cassie began to fumble through her folders. “108B, wherever that is.”

“It’s just down the hall and to the left.” Diana tilted her head slightly. “Don’t worry; I think they’ll forgive you for being late. Maybe we’ll see you around,” she yelped walking in the opposite direction and dragging Adam with her.

“Yeah,” Cassie whispered to herself, turning towards her jammed locker. “Maybe.”

Out in the school’s parking lot was Faye Chamberlain, rushing to get to class. She had lied and told her mom she was leaving to school this morning when she actually wasn’t; otherwise she would never be tardy.

“What’s the point of magic if you can’t turn back time?” she was thinking aloud as she opened the doors to the school’s entrance. Down the hall was Cassie, yelling at her locker. Cassie banged her hand up against the locker and Faye scoffed. Suddenly her tiny yelps and cries began to grow increasingly louder, much more intense. She finally screeched in frustration.

Faye felt a damp, cold spot form at the zenith of her head. She crinkled her nose a bit. Another drop landed on her arm. She glanced at it, but before she could even process it, she was drenched in water.

Cassie stood yards away, sopping wet as well, her locker door open. Kids poured out of classrooms, but Faye just stood there, staring at Cassie, and finally looking up. The fire sprinklers continued.

“I know what you’re gonna say, and I did *not* do this.” Faye was adamant.

“Then who did?” Diana was incredulous. She was standing in front of a sitting Faye inside of their hideout house, located in the middle of the forest. It was here that the unbound circle had realized they were witches and had practiced spells. Nick was sitting on the couch’s armrest, one foot up on the couch seat. Melissa stood to the side with Adam.

“I love getting out of school early, but that was *not* me. It was her — the girl you were talking about!”

“Cassie? Please, Faye. Cassie just moved here; you’re always out of hand with your power—“

“That bitch!” Faye stood up, closer to Diana’s face. “I bet she even knows she’s a witch.”

“Look, even if that were true, it just further proves that we need to bind the circle,” Diana persisted. Nick laughed. They all turned their glances toward him. “What?”

“All of this talk about binding the circle and you don’t even know what it will do to us...” he responded.

Faye’s eyes lit up. “See! Nick agrees. It’s a stupid idea, Diana. If it ain’t broke...”

“Hey! I think Diana has a point here,” Adam defended, moving behind Diana.

“Of course you do.” Faye’s eyes widened as she lifted her eyebrows and turned her head slightly. She rolled her eyes as subtly as she could.

“I’m serious. It’s all in the book Diana found. I mean, our parents bound their circle.”

“Yeah, and where did it get them?” Faye asked. The room fell silent for just a beat. Adam shrugged in a manner that suggested he wasn’t budging from his stance. “Okay, I guess that’s two against two. Melissa?” she turned her gaze towards her, and suddenly all pressure lied on

Melissa's shoulders.

"Uh. Uh...well, I don't know," Melissa was puzzled. "I mean...you *are* always getting into trouble because of it..." the muscles in her face twitched at the idea of upsetting Faye.

"Okay. Fine." Faye stressed every syllable, feeling defeated. She began to storm down the stairs. "Have it your way. I'll go get Cas—"

"No!" Adam shouted out. The group stopped dead in their tracks; Faye's eyes widened yet again in disbelief with a slight tilt of her head downward. "Uh...I just mean you're a little strong Faye. I'll ask her to come over."

"I don't know, this all seems to be going so fast," Diana commented.

"Yeah, I don't think you should ask her Adam." Nick waited for a slight moment. "How hot is she? I'll ask."

"Ugh!" Melissa waved a hand and sat down on the couch.

Adam sighed. "I'll be back. Stay here." On his drive over to Cassie's house, he thought about all the ways he could re-introduce himself to her. They say you only get one first impression, but if that were true, then Adam was doomed. His first impression, to Cassie, must have made him look like a completely loser.

"Hi, Cassie, come with me!" He thought aloud. No, that made him seem like a creep. In fact, he didn't realize the gravity of his task. How exactly was he supposed to get a girl he had just met a few hours ago to just get in his car? He struggled with the idea of him not being more smooth. Suddenly, he was at her front door, knocking.

"Adam!...?" Cassie opened the door, a mixture of enthusiasm and confused on her face. She couldn't deny that she was somewhat happy to see him standing on her stoop. Her eyes still glistened. "What...are you doing here? How do you even know where I live?"

“Well...”

“Never mind. Small town.”

“Right.” He smiled and she reciprocated. But the moment was dragging out longer than Cassie would have liked.

“So...what *are* you doing here?”

“Oh! Right!” Adam punished himself mentally for allowing himself to just stare at her. “Uh. This is going to sound a little crazy — well, not as crazy as things will sound in about ten minutes — but...you need to come with me. Now.” He shook his head slightly; his ideas had not evolved much since the car ride.

“Ha! What?” she asked with a smile, but her sentiments were anything but.

“You need to come with me as soon as possible,” he reiterated.”

“You’re right. That does sound crazy. Why exactly?”

“I want you to meet the gang!” Adam was mostly excited that he had found a better reason to convince a girl to enter a strange guy’s car — and he meant that in both senses of the word. “Everybody...Diana, you met her, Melissa, Nick, and...” he sucked his teeth a bit before continuing, “Faye.”

“Oh! Oh, okay.” Cassie was a bit relieved. “Sure. Just give me, like, two seconds.”

“Okay.”

“Okay!” She headed inside. Adam let out a huge sigh after the door closed. Soon, they were in his car driving towards the abandoned house. He watched her profile as she stared out the window, taking in Chance Harbor. He wondered what she was thinking about, he wondered about the life she led, he wondered about how it would be like to kiss her. He wondered about why he was wondering so much about a girl he hardly

knew.

“So,” he began, trying to make small talk. “What brings you to Chance Harbor exactly?”

“Well, I moved here.” She attempted to be jocular. “But *exactly*, well...” she took a moment. “Um, my mom died.” She exhaled slightly and shifted her gaze outside again.

“Oh,” he began, feeling a bit disheartened. “I’m sorry.”

“No, it’s okay. It’s not like it was your fault.” The car grew silent yet again, so Adam tried to break it any way he could.

“Well. You’ll fit right in,” he said with a slight, perhaps disrespectful chuckle. “I lost my mom; Diana never even knew hers. We’ve all sort of lost a parent throughout our lives. Heck, Nick lost both.” He hadn’t really thought about the coincidence of the circumstance before this moment.

“That’s...unfortunate,” she responded. “I never knew my dad, actually.” They didn’t speak another word until they arrived at the abandoned house. Adam entered after Cassie.

“Cassie, this is everybody—Diana, Melissa, Nick, and Faye.” He pointed at everyone as he stated his or her name. “Everybody, this is Cassie.”

“Hi.” She looked around the house; it was old, rotting, filling up with nature. The air felt thick and she could sense the slightest tingle in her nose from dust that must have accumulated with time. It was most definitely abandoned; and while the lighting gave the ambiance its natural weary look, the comfort she felt inside was undeniable. The four of them surrounded Cassie in a semicircle; Adam stayed at her side.

“Hey, neighbor,” Nick said with a smile. “For some reason, I didn’t make the connection.”

“Cassie.” Diana took a step forward and continued, “This is going to

sound crazy.”

“What is going on?” she asked.

“I didn’t want to tell you like this—” Diana was cut off.

“She has a right to know,” Faye interrupted. “If she doesn’t already.”

“Know what?” She was getting a bit impatient. Faye smiled, hardly able to contain the information. But she knew Diana wanted to tell her gently. Diana was good with people, and she did always make responsible choices, regardless of her passive nature. Faye admired that...even if she didn’t let it show.

“Who you are,” Diana continued.

“Okay,” Cassie took a moment. She stepped back before continuing, “This is getting really weird.” She bumped into Nick who had snuck up behind her.

“Hey, you don’t have to be scared,” Adam assured her, brushing his hand lightly on her arm before moving next to Diana. He was now facing her.

“Can someone tell me what is going on?” Cassie was practically frantic.

“I told you this was going to sound crazy. But the fire sprinklers today...” Diana made a nervous chuckle; she exhaled audibly. “I don’t know how to say this.” Faye rolled her eyes. “We’re different. *You’re* different.”

“Oh, for god’s sakes, spit it out!” Faye began walking towards Cassie. Diana may be good with people, but sometimes she’s too gentle, she thought. When she reached a comfortable distance to be as close to her face as possible, she continued, “You’re a witch. You’re a full-blooded, hundred percent witch. We all are.” She twisted her neck to look back at Diana. “There. Done.”

Cassie was in disbelief. She had no options but to run out of the house, bolting.

“Good job, Faye,” Diana scolded.

“At least I actually got the job done, *Diana*.” She walked passed her and sat down. Adam went after Cassie.

“Cassie—Cassie, wait!” He was running behind her in the middle of the forest. When she finally stopped and turned around, he pleaded that she reconsider. “It’s not as crazy as it seems,” he assured.

“Yes it is! This is insane! *All* of you are *insane!*” She concluded, turning around to get as far away as possible.

“Our parents had a circle just like our—“

“My god! Do you hear yourself? My mother was *not* a witch; I would have known.” Her breaths grew shorter.

“No.” Adam shook his head slightly and stepped lightly closer to her. “Because it was all covered up. Something went wrong, people were hurt, and they were killed. So they abolished witchcraft.”

“I don’t believe you,” she stressed. Adam thought about how to convince her for a brief moment.

“Cassie, I already told you: we’ve all lost a parent.”

“There’s no such thing as witches and magic. I don’t believe it. I *can’t*.”

“Let me show you.” A faint grin drew over Adam’s face. He looked around and found a leaf on the floor. Precipitation from the morning dew had formed itself in its center; Adam was careful to pick it up without dropping the water. “Here,” he said as he placed it in her hand. She raised an eyebrow. “It’s okay,” he chuckled. “Trust me. Close your eyes. Okay, now concentrate on how your hand is connecting with the leaf. Then, how the leaf is connecting with the water. And say, ‘a drop of water as light as

air.’ And keep repeating it.”

“A drop of water as light as air,” she began to chant, her eyes closed. “A drop of water as light as air. A drop of water as light as air.” Her attempts were futile so she opened her eyes. “I don’t feel anything.” Adam spooned his hands with hers and they both felt a tingling sensation shoot through their arms.

“That’s our energy connecting,” he explained. “Now try again.”

Adam was close enough that she could feel his warmth. They continued in unison, “A drop of water...as light as air. A drop of water as light as air. A drop of water as light as air.”

The water droplet in the leaf rose, defying gravity, centered in the space between them. Cassie opened her eyes, amazed at what they had accomplished. She looked around: dozens of water droplets ascended midair, reflecting the sun’s light.

“This has never happened before.” Adam was just as amazed as Cassie was. He looked down at her, at her lips. And he couldn’t stop himself from leaning over. Cassie couldn’t help herself, either. The both of them felt a connection they had never truly experienced before. Adam’s heart beat a bit quicker and Cassie’s breaths grew shorter yet again. Their noses caressed each other, bating for the moment.

“I’m in.” She stopped herself from kissing him. “You’ve convinced me.” Adam had to take a moment.

“We’re all going to try magic together tonight; you should come,” he said. She nodded her head briefly.

That night, the circle found themselves at the old carnival. It was deserted; pieces of debris roamed the pathways in the night breeze.

“Gee, you people sure do love abandoned places,” Cassie commented.

“That’s because there’s no one here,” Nick said dryly.

“I got that. It’s just creepy. What are we doing here?”

“We’re going to try to turn on the light,” Diana said with a smile, walking inside.

“So how exactly do we do this?” Melissa asked.

“Gather in a circle, human sacrifice, magic potions...” Nick was being facetious.

“Uh, no.” Diana tried to pretend she knew what she was doing. “But that circle one doesn’t sound so bad.” They all took that as a sign and huddled up. Adam held onto Diana and Cassie, whose other hand was scooped up by Nick. Melissa grabbed at his free hand instantly taking Faye’s in her other hand. Faye exhaled and rolled her eyes, grabbing Diana’s hand in hers; she noted how smooth they felt. They stood there for a moment.

“Um. Let’s see,” Diana continued. She let go of Adam’s hand and reached into her messenger bag to find her book. “Okay, to turn the light on: ‘*convertam en lucem.*’ *Convertam en lucem.* Say it.” The circle obliged and Diana grabbed Adam’s hand again.

“*Covertam en lucem,*” they chanted in unison. “*Convertam en lucem, convertam en lucem...*” One light post’s bulb began to flicker. They all began to smile, encouraged by the results. Soon, every light post lit up, illuminating the entire park. But the park’s marquee stood there, lifeless.

Faye made a note of this and made it her mission to turn on the park’s sign.

“*Convertam en lucem,*” she began to stress. “*Convertam. En. Lucem.*” The park’s Ferris wheel began to turn slowly; other booths began to go bright. “*Convertam en lucem,*” she continued chanting but the marquee would not give in. Diana grew concerned. “*Convertam. En. Lucem!*”

Every light post’s bulb shattered in all directions. They closed their

eyes and ducked their heads for cover. The park returned to its natural, abandoned-looking state, masked in darkness.

“Ugh! My god, Faye!”

Faye wasn't listening, she was briskly walking over to the marquee. It stood at least twenty stories tall, held up high with bolts fastened onto a thick metal pole.

“Faye!” Diana shouted out. She decided to go after her. “Faye! See, this is why we need to bind the circle; we can't control our magic.”

Faye only stopped when she reached the marquee.

“No we don't.” She turned around. “What we need is for this freaking sign to turn on already.”

“Stop!”

“God, you're *so* uptight.” She was practically whining. “You need to relax...or maybe get laid,” she mumbled.

“That is none of your business.”

“It doesn't have to be my business for me to know that no one's been in your business since...” she looked around, back to where they were previously chanting. “Adam!” She plastered on a teasing smile. “Seems like he's coying up well to the new girl.” Faye turned around and stared up at the marquee sign. Wind began to blow harder the more intently her gaze grew. “Come on...”

“Faye.” Diana was once again concerned. Bolts holding the actual sign up began to loosen and she could spot it swerving a bit from up above. “Faye, seriously stop right now.” But Faye continued, determined to prove she could control her magic. In an instant, the sign went unbalanced and tipped over, falling down twenty stories, targeting Faye. “Faye!” She yelled out, stretching out her name. She ran over, pushing her out of the way and tackling her to the ground. The sign fell just several yards away.

Faye stood up, brushing the dirt from her clothes.

“What the hell, Faye? I told you to stop! But you continued. Sometimes you can be so stubborn.”

“Stop treating me like I’m a child.”

“How’s about ‘thank you for saving my life, Diana’? Seriously? Faye, you could have gotten hurt. And as weird as it may seem, I do *not* want to have that happen.” Diana looked back and found the circle running towards them. “We need to bind the circle...so that things like this don’t keep happening.”

“Diana, the truth is our parents bound their circle and look what happened to them. The most I’ll do is practice my craft, but I’m not binding it.” She bumped Diana’s shoulder with hers and walked towards Melissa.

“You don’t know how dangerous magic can be!” Diana yelled out.

In the distance, hiding behind some attractions was Eben with several of his followers. He was a tall man, dark-skinned, eerie to even look at. He was the witch hunter responsible for murdering half of the circle sixteen years ago. They had taken the abandoned carnival as one of their gathering stations. They all peered, observing the witches’ misadventures.

“Should we attack?” one of them asked.

“No. We should wait until they bind the circle. If they don’t kill themselves first.” He chuckled

Weeks passed since the incident. The not-yet-bound circle waited in the abandoned house for Cassie, who supposedly was coming with some information they would all want to hear.

She walked in.

“Cassie, what is it?” Diana asked immediately after she entered. “You sort have had me—everyone—nervous with how you sounded over the

phone.”

“Someone came to me yesterday.” Cassie’s voice was practically a whisper, and her speech was broken a bit. “I don’t know how to say this.”

“Ugh, you too?” Faye seemed uninterested, lounging down on the couch. Adam walked from the other side of the room to get closer to Cassie. Meanwhile, Melissa and Nick remained still, waiting for the news.

“My dad,” she said a bit exasperated.

“Yeah?” Adam asked.

“He’s alive...!”

Their eyes grew wide as the room fell into a deep silence.

“What?” Diana was incredulous. “I thought he died during the boathouse accident sixteen years ago.”

“Me too,” Cassie began. “He says he had to pretend he was dead because some witch hunters were after him. He told me everything about the circle, and where I come from, and...well, other things. He wants to help us.”

“Wait, wait, wait...” Adam shook his head a bit fiercely. “Who is this? I mean, for all you know, it’s just some random stranger.”

“Adam.” Cassie stressed the following, “I looked into his eyes. He’s my father. And that’s not all.”

“There’s more?” Diana was feeling a bit ill.

“I learned that I come from a line of Balcoin witches. And we all have dark magic. *I* have dark magic.”

“Ooh!” Faye stood up, intrigued. “Now that sounds interesting.”

“*Dark* magic?” Melissa asked, exchanging glances with everyone in the room.

“What does that even mean?” Nick followed up.

“I don’t know. It’s supposed to be stronger...and—and—“

“Darker?” Faye helped her finish.

“Yeah, I guess.”

Adam and Diana sat down simultaneously, trying to gather the information. It felt like getting hit suddenly with a brick wall of deceit. Everything Diana knew about her circle was getting turned on its head.

“And I think I have a brother or sister in the circle,” Cassie continued. Everyone looked up at her, deadpanned and shocked. “Meaning one of you has dark magic too.”

Faye’s grin could not grow any wider at that point. She practically pranced with excitement.

By the time Cassie left the abandoned house, darkness had settled in. It was a cool, chilly night; the stars were on full display, and the light that reflected off the moon helped illuminate the town’s most garish features. Cassie was driving to the bay to talk to her father, John Blackwell, some more. The news she gave the circle surely must have felt like an overload, she thought.

It felt the exact same way when Blackwell had shared the news with her. She remembered how it overwhelmed her. But, eventually, she grew to comprehend it, live with it, and ultimately share his vision.

She got out of her car and walked the bay’s boardwalk towards the shadowy figure in the distance, her father. The boardwalk was the tinge of the florescent orange that hovered above and shone down below. Each step she took closer to her father, she grew a sense of calm and ease.

She could be her true self with her father, she learned.

“Hey,” she said candidly.

“How’d they take it?” he asked. His voice was deep, breathy almost, and had a bass that would frighten most but made her feel at peace.

“As you’d expect,” she responded. “A bit overwhelmed.”

“Did they buy it?”

“That I just met you yesterday? Yeah.”

“Good.” He turned his gaze into her eyes and held her face with both of his hands. “This is what it was all for, Cassie.” He whispered intently, “The sacrifices we made—Amelia—this will make it worth it.”

“They have no idea what’s yet to come.” Cassie flashed a coy smile.

CHAPTER ONE

It was a chilly January night in the town of Chance Harbor. The sun was setting and darkness began to gulp up the streets. The pier lights flickered on, along with the street lamps, and the boathouse. Diana came out of the restaurant looking for Adam, she had found something new in her Book of Shadows and out of habit assumed her ex-lover would be psyched to hear about the discovery. She looked around the pier, only to find Cassie and Adam holding hands at the edge of the dock by the water. Diana looked away then looked back. She knew she shouldn't be jealous. Adam and her had been over for quite some time. But still, the stinging sensation remained. The two seemed to be having an all too deep conversation and Diana wanted so badly to confront her ex and her new best friend. She thought for a moment and fumbled to make her way to where Cassie and Adam stood. It pissed her off even more that they were so involved with each other that they didn't even notice her heels clanking on the dock as she approached. She stopped half way, and the skies roared. At first a few drops, then a steady drizzle. The clouds, now a dark gray opened up and water poured from them. Overwhelmed with resentment Diana quickly spun around and ran to her car. She sat there for what seemed like an eternity, hurt. She had no reason to be jealous. Too many times after Cassie surfaced in town Adam's dad reminded her, reminded all of them, of Cassie and Adam's future being written in the stars but it didn't make it any easier to actually see. Tears trickled past her cheeks as she

revved the engine and drove off.

Diana's mind raced, as she sped down the coiled roads. She didn't know who to turn to: she clearly couldn't confide in Adam anymore, and Cassie, someone who had proved time and again that she could be relied on was the last person she wanted to talk to. Her emotions were running wild and she couldn't bring herself to go home, to an empty house and a dad who just wouldn't understand. She had no other choice... she knew where she had to go.

She parked the car, got out, and walked to the front door. The rain hadn't let up the whole way over, and Diana was drenched. She lifted her hand and banged three times. Not long after, the door flung open, and there stood Faye.

"To what do I owe this pleasure, Miss Meade," Faye beamed sarcastically. "Come to yell at me some more?"

Diana sobbed silently as she peered at the dirty blue floorboards of Faye's porch.

Diana had really wanted to go to Melissa's house, seeing as they were closer than Diana and Faye were, but Melissa and Nick had been spending an increasing amount of time together over the past few months, and Diana knew she'd be preoccupied with her own drama. She didn't want to end up on Faye's porch, but here she was... with no place else to go.

"Come on Diana, I don't have time for this. What do you want?" she tried to hold her firm attitude but the girl continued to sob and make minimal eye contact.

Faye was normally a cold, and heartless girl when it came to Diana, but even this ice queen couldn't deny that something wasn't right. Diana's visits normally consisted of empty threats and leadership tangents, but this one was different. She hadn't even scolded Faye for her many attempts to

utilize her untamed and independent magic, and this weirded her out.

Faye hesitantly put her hand under Diana's jaw, undoubtedly unsure why she was even pursuing contact with the girl, but lifted her chin up anyways to see her face clearly. Diana had been soaked from head to toe, her face sopping with water. Faye couldn't tell which were tears and which was rain, but she knew her estranged circle mate had been crying for quite some time. Faye dropped the evil grin she normally wore, and invited Diana in.

Once they arrived at Faye's bedroom, the two stood there, not entirely sure what to say.

"What happened?"

"I-I.." Diana couldn't seem to form a sentence in between her blubbering.

"You knocked up or something?" giggled Faye.

"No! I shouldn't have come here." Diana stopped crying and turned to leave the room.

"Wait," Faye shouted. "I'll play nice. Now tell me... what's the matter."

Diana took a few steps back and faced Faye. She explained to her about what she had seen earlier and expressed how she wished she could redo the past three years. If Diana knew what she had known now she never would have put herself in this situation. If she were never romantic with Adam, she wouldn't feel as crappy as she did now. Diana continued to ramble to Faye, who surprisingly acted interested.

The dark haired beauty being the vengeful minx that she is suggested that they do a spell together, to rid her mind of both Adam and Cassie. Diana was apprehensive.

"We can't just fix everything with a spell Faye, it's not ethical."

“Stop being such a stick in the mud, Diana. You came to me... and I think this is just what you need.”

An almost relieved smile appeared across Diana’s face. It’s not like I’m doing a spell on someone else, she thought to herself. This is my body, my choice, and if I choose to erase a few painful memories from my life... no one can blame me.

Diana opened her mouth and exhaled the word “fine.”

Faye looked shocked for a moment, and then that evil smirk reappeared.

“First things first, you need to get out of those wet clothes, you’re starting to smell like dog,” snickered Faye.

“Charming...”

“No really, you wreak,” she added.

Faye shuffled to the closet and handed Diana a Buffy The Vampire Slayer t-shirt, and sweat pants that read “juicy” on the ass. Diana found it hilarious, and ironic that Faye put a supernatural shirt and comfy girly pants in the same pairing. Without hesitation Diana stripped and put the dry clothes on. Faye hadn’t noticed the half naked girl in her room since she was eagerly gathering materials for the memory spell.

“Are you sure we should do this?”

“Everyone always walks all over you, your boyfriend of three years is playing house with dark magic Barbie and you’re worried about a little memory spell. Grow a pair.”

Diana thought about what Faye had just said, everything was true and she couldn’t blame her for being so forward.

“You’re right, let’s do it.” Diana smiled.

Faye motioned to Diana to come sit on the floor on the circular rug by her bed, she followed suit and plopped down, Indian style across from

Faye. They began to place the crystals around themselves and proceeded to light some candles. Faye instructed Diana to think of the people she wanted to forget and to feel the feelings she didn't want to feel anymore. The girl in question focused, inhaling and exhaling, still a tad bit apprehensive but determined to follow through. As Faye started to mumble some mumbo jumbo about forgetting records and freedom, an overwhelming feeling washed over Diana's entire body. Out of fear, she reached for Faye's hand. Before she knew it, Diana's palms were in the other girls.

Diana's eyes were still closed; Faye stopped the "incantation" and found herself looking at her supposed friend, like really looking. The way Faye's clothes fell on Diana's body intrigued her. How could someone still look so beautiful in scrubs like those? A million things were running through Faye's mind, why was she thinking about how hot Diana looked? Diana's dark brown hair was wavy now from the aftermath of the rain, and her skin still appeared like silk.

"What the hell," Faye mumbled as she leaned in to kiss Diana.

Faye's lips lingered then she pressed them firmly against Diana's. Diana's eyes sprung open and she rushed to her feet.

"What are you doing?"

"Chill out Diana."

"Chill out? Chill... out!?" Diana was scrambling for her clothes... clothes that had made a puddle on Faye's floor, and were clearly nowhere near dry.

Without hesitation Faye sprung to her feet and grabbed Diana by the wrist before she could make her way to the doorknob.

"Don't go."

She turned around and just stared at the kissing culprit, "Excuse me?"

Faye's grip had loosened a bit, but she still held her tight enough so she couldn't bolt.

"I said don't go," Faye cleared her throat. "You know, you're this goody-goody leader of a group of witches—"

Diana interjected, "Yeah—so..."

"Let... me... finish," said Faye as she clenched her teeth, trying extremely hard not to be the complete and total bitch that she normally is. "You're this goody-goody leader of a group of witches, your boyfriend who you thought you'd spend the rest of your life with is hooking up with your new best friend and you're hurt and probably need some comfort."

"So by comforting me, you think, 'oh hey, let's make out?' What happened to eating a gallon of rocky road ice cream and watching *The Notebook*?"

"Diana, this wasn't my intention... I swear. But, why the hell not?"

By this time Faye had let go of Diana's wrist and the girls stood facing each other.

Diana wavered... "I don't know what to say." She was now staring into her rivals honey glazed eyes. "Oh my god, do you think the spell backfired on us!?"

Faye didn't make a sound, rolled her eyes and glared at the floor.

"Faye..."

She looked up at Diana, "Okay, don't be pissed... but."

"But what?"

"Well, you see... the spell couldn't have backfired," Faye reassured her.

"What do you mean?" Diana looked confused and was growing even more agitated by the minute.

"It couldn't have backfired, because I wasn't chanting a spell, I was

singing the lyrics to Keith Urban's 'You'll Think of Me.'" She smiled.

For a moment Diana had that look in her eye, the look that Faye was all too familiar with, the 'I'm going to yell at you' look. But, Diana didn't yell... in fact, within twenty seconds she burst into laughter, smacked Faye on the shoulder and hugged her.

"I guess I was trying to make you feel better," whispered Faye.

After a long embrace, Diana was still, Faye's face looked confused, but they remained silent. Diana took a deep breath and moved her body closer, she had never been in this situation before, let alone with someone she had shown such hostility towards, but ever since Faye had invited her in she had seen something in her fellow circle member that she had never seen before: compassion, and she liked this side of her. Diana inhaled deeply and took another step closer to Faye.

"What are you doing?"

"I guess it's my turn to do something crazy," said Diana as she leaned in for a kiss.

This time their lips didn't awkwardly press against each other's in a firm manner but rather in a soft and sensual way. After a few seconds the girls untangled their mouths and gazed into one another's eyes. Without hesitation they continued to exchange supple kisses as Faye guided them to her bed.

The next morning, a loud thud on the thick oak door woke up Diana, as she fumbled to sit up in bed, she met an unfamiliar setting. She scanned the room only to find that the bed she had just woken up in was not her own, but Faye's. In her plum colored bra and matching underwear, Diana clutched the sheets to her body in astonishment. Disoriented, thoughts ran through her head, why was she practically naked? What was she doing in,

of all peoples, Faye's bed? The bang at the door became thunderous and a voice on the other end spoke sternly.

"Faye! Faye! Get up, it's almost time for school," screeched the woman.

The voice on the other side of the door was Mrs. Chamberlain, scrambling in fear Diana shook the girl again.

"Ten more minutes..." yelled Faye.

Diana nudged Faye with her elbow, this time, more forceful. The voice in the hallway grew more prominent, spewing words Diana couldn't process at that particular moment.

Diana shrieked, "Wake up now!"

Her hair was even more disheveled than before she had begun shaking Faye. Finally, the sleeping girl rubbed her eyes, sat up in her bed, and glared at Diana.

"God Diana, what's the deal?"

"Oh my god," Diana cupped her mouth with her hand. "We hooked up last night!" Both of the girls panned the room, their clothes from last night remained on the floor in a trail to the bed.

Faye's eyes widened, "Keep it down genius."

"No no no, what have I done..." Diana fumbled to get out of the bed and wrangle up her clothes. "I can't believe this is happening to me. I can't get a break."

"What's that supposed to mean," Faye shot an annoyed glance towards Diana who was frantically picking up her clothes from all around the room.

"You know exactly what it means Faye."

Before Faye could get a word in her mom banged on the door again, waiting for some sort of confirmation that her daughter was awake and starting to get ready for school.

Faye knew her mom would keep pounding on the door until she got an answer, or better yet barge in if she thought she was still in a deep slumber, so she quickly composed herself and answered.

“I’m up, mom! Stop banging on the damn door,” Faye’s voice grew louder. “I’ll be down in a little.”

Faye could hear a huff come from the other side, a more than likely reaction to an already aggravated mother. But eventually the girls heard Faye’s mother’s heels clip clopping down the steps and into the kitchen.

Diana struggled to put her clothes on behind the open closet door, she was attempting to hide from Faye’s wandering eyes, but it didn’t seem to do any good. She fumbled while putting her pants on and almost flew face first into the hardwood floor.

“How the hell am I going to get out of here, with your mother downstairs? This is bad, this is really bad.”

Faye whispered, “chill.”

“Don’t tell me to chill, Faye! I need to get out of this house, and away from you.” She had successfully put her clothes on and was finally headed for the bedroom door.

“You’re just going to stroll down the steps, have a nonchalant chat with my mother about you spending the night when we hate each other, and leave?” Faye laughed.

“You’re such a dick.”

“Oh, miss goody-goody isn’t too good to use the word dick. Shocking.” At this point Faye was hunched over in bed in nothing but a bra and underwear giggling at the failed attempts of Diana trying to be bold.

Diana’s eyes welled up, but this time not with tears but with dislike for the girl sitting before her.

She moved closer to Faye, crouched down to her eye level and said

without hesitation, “last night didn’t happen.”

Faye looked shocked, but immediately sprung from her bed almost knocking Diana over. She grabbed some pants and quickly slipped them over her bare legs and thighs.

“You’re a real piece of work,” she said continuing to get dressed for school.

“I’m not kidding, do not push me Faye.”

“Oh, I’m so scared.”

“I mean it, I wasn’t here.” Diana propped Faye’s door open, and peaked down both sides of the upstairs hallway. “I’m going to sneak out the front door, and you’re going to help me.”

“Whatever Diana, just get your crap together and leave already.”

Faye was pissed at this point, Diana had come to her house seeking solace and somehow Faye turned out to be the bad guy. She would have loved nothing more than to call Diana out on her crap and let her attempt to sneak out on her own. But, she knew the girl wouldn’t stand a chance up against Dawn Chamberlain if she got caught, and didn’t feel like answering a million questions about their activities last night so by default Faye agreed to help.

She strolled down the steps into the kitchen with a low cut tank top and jean jacket over it. She caught her mom’s eyes immediately.

“Put some clothes on Faye, you look like a street walker.”

“That’s what I was going for mom, the principal’s street walker daughter.” Faye heard the floor boards creek from the steps and immediately raised her tone.

“The whore of Babylon!” She then lowered her tone for a snarky follow up, “Or should I say Chance Harbor?”

She pulled her already low cut tank down even more so her bra was

almost entirely visible and shouted, “the whore of Chance Harbor!” and walked towards her mom, shimmying her entire body like an epileptic dancer.

Diana took the loudness as her cue to get the hell out of there, and quickly opened the front door ever so gracefully, only to slam it as she ran for the sidewalk.

“What was that?” Dawn asked Faye.

The brunette frantically blocked her mother from walking out of the kitchen towards the front door. Without a doubt Diana wasn’t nearly half way down the street and if Dawn opened the door she’d see her scurrying along like a thief in the night.

“Probably the paper boy,” she pulled her shirt down further. “Want me to straighten him out?” She shimmied again.

Dawn moved closer to her delinquent daughter and forcefully buttoned up her jacket. “There, that’s better, now get to school... ‘Whore of Chance Harbor.’”

Faye flashed Dawn a smile and headed for the car.

CHAPTER TWO

The idea that there could be another Blackwell child within their circle terrified not only Cassie, but the rest of the group. John Blackwell brought nothing but trouble to an already unstable group of teenagers, and Diana didn't trust him as far as she could throw him. The circumstances of John's arrival were questionable to say the least, and Diana, Cassie, Adam, Nick, Faye, and Melissa continued to struggle to determine the true nature of his return to Chance Harbor.

After school Melissa waited at the abandoned house for the other five circle members to show up. She had always taken a backseat to how they would proceed when it came to magic, but when it came to mending the broken relationships that plagued the group she was always trying to fix things.

"I got your text," Faye approached the five foot two girl pacing back and forth on the creaky floorboards. "What was so urgent that I had to rush here after a hard day at school?" she huffed.

Melissa continued to walk back and fourth, "stop being so dramatic, you barely pay attention in class."

Faye couldn't argue, she wasn't much of a bookworm, nor did she enjoy attending school. But her mother was the principal, and no matter how good Faye was at sneaking around she could rarely skip classes without her mother catching her or finding out after the fact. Faye opened her mouth in hopes of delivering some witty retort, but was interrupted by

the arrival of the rest of the group.

“Did you guys all come on the magic school bus together?” Faye giggled.

“You’re a real comedian,” responded Cassie, who was holding Adam’s hand as they approached.

“Why are we here, Melissa? I’ve got things to do.” Interjected Nick.

Melissa stopped pacing and faced the group who was now waiting for an explanation for the impromptu meeting.

“Everything has been so messed up lately,” Melissa’s voice cracked, “what I mean is it’s awkward now.” She cleared her throat. “Adam and Cassie,” she looked at the two standing even closer to each other than before, “It’s cool that you two are like, an item now, but I’m sure it isn’t easy for Diana,” Diana remained silent, merely a few feet away from the group, peering at the charred walls of the abandoned house. “And Nick, you’ve been hiding out in your bedroom for three nights straight concocting God knows what. Not to mention all this Blackwell drama. We’re supposed to be having fun, not dealing with all this crap.”

“Get to the point,” Faye snapped.

“We need to bond.” Melissa responded quickly. “Come to my house tonight, we’ll eat some pizza, watch some movies, play a game. Something. Just be normal for once. Can we all handle that?”

The group didn’t look enthused, Nick was heading for the door, Faye had gotten comfortable with a spell book she found lying on the table, and Diana’s eyes remained glued to the wall.

After a few seconds, Cassie stepped forward, “If we don’t try, it’s just going to get worse.”

“I guess I’m in,” said Adam.

Nick looked around the room, “No way. I can barely stand you guys as

it is.”

“Don’t be a jerk Nick, we’re kind of stuck with each other, so we need to try and work things out,” said Adam.

Nick grunted and softly kicked a pebble that was in front of him on the floor. “You guys are real pains, you know? I guess I don’t have a choice.”

Melissa’s eyes began to light up, her plan was slowly falling into place. She glanced at Diana and then at Faye. “What do you say girls... you in?”

Diana opened her mouth to speak but Faye beat her to it, “Sorry, I’m busy tonight.”

“Doing what?” questioned Melissa.

“Taking a stroll around town on your broom...” whispered Adam.

“Hilarious. Oh you know, Josh, or Will, or that delicious guy from Spanish, what’s his name—Eduardo?”

“Don’t be ridiculous, you’re coming.” Melissa spoke sternly. “How about you Diana?”

“I-I,” she tried to avoid Faye’s burning stare but the two inadvertently made eye contact. “Fine.”

“Great, my place, 7, don’t be late!”

”So...” Cassie stated awkwardly as she distractedly watched her thumb running along the edge of the bottle she was holding “This is fun.”

Faye shot her an irritated look “Who wants to do magic?” her question was met with silence and she rolled her eyes “You guys are so dull.”

“We’re supposed to be normal; normal teens don’t do magic at parties.” Melissa pointed out.

“Besides, we’re all a little drunk and, I’m no expert, but doing magic is probably not safe while intoxicated.”

“If you were drunk Diana, you would be talking less.” Faye snapped. “And you’ve only had three bottles of that alcopop shit,” she motioned towards the bottle of Smirnoff Ice held loosely in Diana’s hand “It’s not enough to get a twelve year old drunk.”

“I agree with Diana.” Cassie spoke up.

“Of course you agree with Diana...you’re like weird besties or something now.” Faye said with a hint of jealousy, which thankfully went unnoticed “Melissa you agree with me, don’t you?”

“I guess?” Melissa shrugged unsurely. She didn’t agree with her friend but she didn’t want to stir up more animosity between the three girls. Faye was a pitbull, and you don’t put your fingers in front of a salivating dog’s mouth, especially when they’re already out for blood.

Faye sighed, unsatisfied by the lackluster answer.

“Whatever.”

“What do normal people do at a party?” asked Adam.

“Sit here bored,” responded Nick.

“Fuck you both.”

“Language Faye.” Diana warned, earning herself a ‘wtf’ look from the girl in question “What? You shouldn’t swear so much.”

Faye scoffed and downed the remainder of her drink. She coughed slightly as the high alcohol content burned her throat on the way down. After the last drop exited the clear cup she quickly got up to make another one. “Hey Diana, do you want one of these? It might loosen you up.”

Diana hesitated for a moment before shrugging. If they weren’t doing magic, what’s the worst that could happen?

“Uh, sure... but just one.”

“Blake?”

“Cassie.” The blonde girl automatically corrected her, “Blake makes

me sound like a guy.”

“Blake is a girl’s name.” Faye argued, pouring the third shot of vodka into a glass. “Blake Lively, anyone?” she grabbed the bottle of coca-cola next to her and proceeded to top the glass off with it.

“That’s not the point.”

“Whatever.” Faye rolled her eyes and handed Diana her drink “Do you want one Cassie?”

“Yes. Thank you, Faye.”

Faye smirked at the way Cassie had sarcastically delivered the line. Clearly the alcohol had already loosened her up if she was making teasing retorts like that. She quickly poured three shot glasses of vodka into a cup before adding the cola. She gave the mixture a quick stir before sliding it across the table to Cassie.

“Melissa?”

She shook her head in response. “I think I’ll stick to the softer drinks.”

“What about us...you don’t offer us a drink?” Both Adam and Nick looked to Faye hoping she would take pity on them and take their drink order.

“Get it yourself, lover boy.” Faye ignored Adam’s request and proceeded to pour herself a drink. “You too, tough guy.” She twisted the top back onto the bottle and flashed Nick an insincere smile.

Diana took a wary sip from the glass in her hand and made a face at the acrid taste that filled her mouth. She forced herself not to spit it out and quickly swallowed it “This is disgusting.”

Faye chuckled at the sight of Diana’s disgusted expression.

“You’ll get used to it.”

“I don’t want to get used to it,” Diana retorted. “It’s too strong.”

“Here.” Faye reached over and took the glass from Diana before

proceeding to drink half of it in one gulp. When she stopped, she shuddered slightly but quickly filled it back up with soda and offered it to Diana. “There.”

Diana couldn’t help but smile gratefully as she accepted the much weaker drink. “Thanks.”

The rest of the group sat in awe at the sight before them. Faye compromising her infamous mixed drink for her sworn enemy, it seemed even weirder than the idea that another Blackwell spawn besides Cassie could be sitting in the room with them at that very moment.

“So what should we do?” Faye asked, leaning back on the couch and propping her feet up on the table.

“Feet Faye!” Melissa shouted at the sign of her friends’ boots on her glass table. Faye rolled her eyes, but complied with Melissa’s demands.

Faye noticed Diana was about to protest her earlier question and quickly held up a hand to stop her, “Not a word from you.”

Diana frowned but fell silent.

“We could just talk.” Adam offered.

“About tampons and training bras?” Faye beamed pointing out that Adam was acting like a total girl.

“Why do you have to be such a bitch?” Nick stated firmly. “I’m sick of your sarcasm.”

“Then come up with an idea.” Faye said as she clenched her teeth in response to Nick’s name calling.

“Truth or dare?” Melissa proposed.

“No way.” Faye shook her head firmly “What are we in sixth grade?”

“It could be fun,” Melissa deflected the attempt to be funny and earned herself a glare from her friend. “How about Twister?”

“Seriously?” Adam laughed.

Nick sat up from the couch and inched towards the edge of his seat, “spin the bottle.”

“Isn’t that the game where you have to make out with someone?” Diana said trying her best not to look at Faye while questioning Nick’s suggestion.

He nodded in confirmation.

“The girls outnumber the guys,” Faye pointed out, gesturing around at the members of the group. “And on top of that, we all hate each other.”

“Exactly,” Nick responded with a grin on his face. “Well, the girls outnumbering us part, Adam and I hit the jackpot!”

Faye laughed at the obvious response, shook her head before turning back to the table “Spin the bottle it is then...” she sat forward and held out her hand to Diana.

Diana looked mildly confused but willingly slipped her hand into Faye’s.

Faye grinned at the response, “I want the bottle, not your hand.” Nevertheless she gave the hand within her own a light squeeze.

“Oh...my bad.” Diana felt her cheeks flame at the misunderstanding and everyone looking at her and quickly pulled her hand away from Faye’s. She grabbed the empty bottle from next to her and trying as best she could to avoid eye contact before handing it to Faye who was still smirking slightly.

“Don’t worry about it...I don’t blame you for wanting to hold my hand.”

Diana looked up only to be met with a playful wink from Faye and she allowed herself to relax slightly.

“Who wants to start?” Faye asked, placing the bottle in the center of the table.

“I will!” Adam exclaimed enthusiastically. He finished his beer and placed it on the floor before leaning forward to clumsily spin the bottle. The circle watched it spin with baited breath before it came to a stop pointing directly at Melissa.

Melissa stared at the bottle for a moment before shrugging and hauled herself to her feet. Nick didn’t look pleased, and quickly stood up.

“Sit down Romeo,” Faye quickly retorted. “Now, you two,” she motioned to Melissa and Adam, “Kiss.”

Adam took a step awkwardly towards Melissa who was looking around the room at her fellow circle members. When Adam was back in her sights, he shuffled forward and leaned in for the kiss. He was immediately met by Melissa’s damp lips, and within a matter of seconds their mouths parted and they returned to their designated seats on opposite ends of the room.

“That’s doesn’t count!” Faye said. “That was barely a peck.”

“Since you’re such an expert, show us how it’s done,” Adam beamed sarcastically.

“Fine, give me the bottle.” She extended her hand and was met by the cold glass container. The bottle was now on the table and she gave it a good spin. To her surprise it landed on Cassie, the girls looked at each other with their mouths wide open.

“YES!” Shouted Nick. “Thank you, God!”

At first Adam smiled at Nick’s response, and then shook his head at the immature statement.

Cassie’s fair skin turned a light pink, then she took a deep breath and she shimmied close to Faye who had been sitting next to her on the couch. Cassie gave Faye a smirk and whispered, “Let’s give them a show,” to Faye, who in return nodded and smiled back.

Cassie took the silence as her cue to lean forward brushing her lips lightly against Faye's. Despite the awkwardness she returned the kiss instantly, their lips moving against each other's with slow deliberate movements. Melissa sat dumbfounded at the vision before her, Nick held the enthusiastic look as usual, Adam showed no real reaction, and Diana instantaneously looked away the second Faye began to kiss back. The girls lips stood still and they broke for air.

"Now that's how it's done!" Faye winked towards Melissa and Adam, then looked to Diana, who had focused on a painting hanging on the wall to the left of her.

"It's your turn," Nick picked up the bottle and handed it to Diana, who was still looking in the opposite direction. "Earth to Diana, spin!"

Diana shrugged then reached forward to give the bottle a halfhearted spin. Once again the group watched pensively as it spun around the circle, pointing to each of them in turn before it slid to a stop pointing towards Faye.

"Yes!" Nick stated enthusiastically followed by a light giggle from Melissa.

"Come on then." Faye said in what she hoped was a bored tone of voice as she stood up from the couch "Let's get this over with."

Diana and Faye had had minimal contact since their encounter the night before, and Diana wanted nothing to do with Faye at the moment.

"No way I'm kissing you Chamberlain," she said.

"Rules are rules Diana!" Nick grinned from ear to ear.

"Come on Nick, they don't have to," added Melissa.

"I rather get locked in a stuffy, smelly closet than smooch a magic Nazi like you Diana, but Nick's right. Let's just get it over with!"

Diana frowned at the statement but got up and stepped closer to Faye.

Melissa and Nick were shocked they were actually going to go through with it, but knew neither of the parties involved were going to enjoy the situation at hand.

“Anytime now girls,” Adam said.

Faye leaned forward and lightly pressed her lips against Diana’s. Diana was about to back up from the girl in front of her, but just as she motioned to break from Faye’s grip all thoughts rapidly disappeared from her head as Faye kissed her again in a less reserved fashion than a moment ago. Uncontrollably, Diana’s hands moved to Faye’s neck and she allowed herself to be pulled forward until their bodies were pressed tightly together. She gasped out loud when Faye lightly bit down on her bottom lip. Faye chuckled breathily at the sound and not one to be outdid, Diana tugged her closer without warning, effectively deepening the kiss. She threaded a hand into Faye’s dark hair and lightly licked at her lower lip. When her tongue slipped inside she hummed in satisfaction at the bitter taste of alcohol mixed with something that was purely Faye.

“Break it up, girls!” a voice muttered in the background.

After realizing they were still in front of an audience the girls immediately stopped kissing and reverted back to their spots.

“Geesh, for a second it looked like you guys actually like each other,” giggled Melissa.

Diana and Faye shot each other a glance and Diana promptly responded, “Yeah right, like that would ever happen.”

“How about we go for a walk?” Nick interjected.

“You don’t seem like the stroll in the park kind of guy,” Faye giggled.

“Not a romantic walk, stupid.” He glared at Faye who had a smirk on her face. “Let’s test out this magic.”

“We can’t control it,” Diana firmly stated, “We shouldn’t be messing

around with something we don't fully understand.”

“Don't be such a stick in the mud.”

“Faye,” Diana prompted.

“No—let's all take a walk, it will be fun!” she responded.

Other than Diana, the group didn't show any signs of opposing and rose to their feet where they filed out of Melissa's house like a school of sardines.

Chance Harbor's already gloomy façade multiplied come nightfall. Residents retired to bed early leaving the streets abandoned, and uninviting. There really wasn't much to do on the weekend let alone during the week and getting into trouble seemed like the only logical result when boredom ensued in a town full of witches and creatures that went bump in the night.

The Circle shuffled through the streets aimlessly until Nick grabbed Melissa's arm and whispered, “think fire.” Almost instantaneously a nearby trash can went up in flames illuminating the path before them.

"Guys, cut it out!" Diana squealed.

"They're just having a little fun," added Adam.

"Not you too!"

"It's fine Diana, we'll be careful," he responded in a caring tone.

Diana gave her former lover a disheartening glare, then took a few steps away from the group.

"Everyone needs to lighten up," Cassie said as she glanced over in Diana's direction, "It's just a little fire in a garbage can, nothing serious like witch hunters." She giggled.

The entire group had turned to look at Cassie who's grinning face had turned dark. "Witch hunters," she shouted.

"Ha, ha, very funny Cassie. I get it, I need to loosen up."

"No, really, witch hunters!" she pointed motioning to the group to turn around and see for themselves.

Sure enough there were two men in dark clothing heading towards Cassie, Faye, Diana, Nick, and Adam. They clustered together.

"What do we do?" asked Adam.

"We kick their asses."

"Seriously, Faye?"

"Now is not the time for one of your cat fights," Melissa added frantically. "We have to do something, and fast."

"Melissa's right, let's try a spell." Adam's eyes were focused intently on the two men rapidly approaching them.

"Sooner rather than later," screeched Cassie.

Each of the circle members attempted to focus their energy on the witch hunters, but instead of working together they were seemingly working apart. Nick set fire to another trashcan, while Adam resorted to lunging at one of the men with fists blazing. The girls had been a few steps behind the men of their circle, except for Faye who was conjuring a brutal storm on her own. The skies roared and lightning struck a nearby tree. But the tree branch didn't fall on one of the witch hunters like an anvil in a cheesy 90's cartoon, it had landed inches from where Melissa, Diana and Cassie stood.

"Watch it, Faye!" Diana shouted.

"I don't see you doing anything," Faye retorted.

"This isn't working!" said Melissa. "None of us know what the hell we're doing."

"Speak for yourself," Nick shouted from a far, while continuing to spark a trail of fire to one of the witch hunters.

One of the dark and brooding men took a step back from the flames

and turned to run towards a shadowed figure in the very far distance.

"You better run!" Nick yelled.

The other man continued to punch Adam, as he fell to his knees. He gave him one more swift kick to the abdomen and ran towards the two men who were now disappearing in the darkness.

"Adam!" Cassie called out, as she ran to his side. "Are you okay?"

"I think so," he responded, still lying on the ground in the dirt.

By the time Adam got up the circle surrounded him, Diana spoke up, "We have to bind the circle."

"How did you come to that conclusion?"

"Were you not just watching what happened, Faye? We couldn't even control our powers against two witch hunters. Imagine when there are more!"

"She may be right," added Melissa.

Adam let out an achy grumble, "Yeah, we were all over the place. Binding the circle may be our only option."

"Ugh!"

"We all have to agree on this Faye."

"Butt out Cassie!" she responded angrily.

The group remained silent for a good three minutes, then Nick finally spoke up. "Let's do it."

"Really?" Diana's face lit up at the unexpected cooperation.

"Yeah, I mean...I like my having my own power, but if this will keep us all safe, then what could go wrong?"

"Way to jinx it!"

"Don't be dramatic Faye," Diana glared at the difficult girl before her. "It's settled...we bind the circle."

CHAPTER THREE

She could feel it draining out of her flowing into the others. Faye grit her teeth against the feeling. The weakening. It had to be done—she'd *agreed* to it dammit—she didn't want anyone to get hurt. But she didn't want this to go away either.

Binding meant redistributing their power, strengthening some and weakening others until they were all equal, then sealing their powers from individual use. Around the fire she could hear the others making soft noises of approval; hear them reveling in their newly acquired power. Faye bit her tongue and did her best not to scream.

“I think it's done.”

Faye blinked, glancing around. The beach was silent except for the lapping of the waves and cracking of the fire. Melissa and Nick stood off to her right, Cassie and Adam to her left. Diana stood across from her, her features sharp in the flickering light. Her gaze flicked from face to face, studying. “Are you guys alright?” There were nods all around; Faye remained still, not trusting herself to move. If Diana noticed her lack of assent she would without a doubt call her out on it later. “Great. I guess I'll see you guys tomorrow.”

They all muttered goodbye, splitting into pairs as they left. Nick and Melissa were the first to leave the main group, branching off maybe ten minutes into the walk. Cassie and Adam left not too far after, leaving Faye

and Diana utterly alone. Diana glanced nervously at Faye, grateful that the darkness hid her blush as memories of the sleepover and playing spin the bottle washed over her. She opened her mouth to speak, but shut it again just as quickly. If Faye wanted to talk she would talk; everything had to seem like it was her idea before she would accept them. Making her move at anyone else's pace was nearly impossible. *Should I just let her come to me?*

The silence stretched for blocks, growing steadily more uncomfortable the farther they walked. Diana beat back the urge to break the silence as best she could, but she couldn't contain herself. "Are you alright?" Faye didn't respond verbally. She chose instead to pick up her pace, speeding off down the road. Diana scowled, speeding up the match her pace. "Faye?"

"I'm not talking to you."

Rage overpowered concern. "This isn't my fault!" Diana wrenched Faye around, forcing the other girl to look at her. "I know you're not happy about binding the Circle, but it is *not* my fault that we had to. You and I both know that—"

"My door's open." Faye wasn't listening. Her gaze was fixed behind her, on the door that she could so clearly remember locking when she had headed to the beach hours ago. Brow furrowing, she crept toward the house, only to be yanked back by Diana. "What?"

"Are you nuts? We've been getting attacked by psychos for *weeks* and you're going to go charging into a house we know someone broke into? Don't be stupid!"

Faye stiffened, a snarl pulling at her lips. She pulled her arm out of Diana's grasp, glaring at the other girl as though she wished she would catch fire. "It's my house. I'm going to go there and get whoever the fuck

is in there out, and I don't care whether you help me or not." She turned and bolted across the lawn, lean frame bent double in an attempt to hide her movements. Diana cursed and chased after her after a moment's hesitation.

The house was as dark as she remembered leaving it. Faye crept quietly about the room, caution slowing her motions. It couldn't have been the Witch Hunters; they wouldn't have been stupid enough to leave the front door open if they were planning an ambush. The fact was a comfort, though an admittedly small one. Anyone could be dangerous if given a weapon, and there was no good reason to be in someone else's house this late at night.

There was a clatter to her left. Faye spun around, heart in her throat. An unhealthy looking man stood in the doorway. He had a small bag in his right hand and a gun held loosely in his left. He stared at her blankly as though he wasn't sure if she was really there. "You aren't supposed to be here." His breath was sour.

"Neither are you," Faye replied shakily. He didn't say anything, simply leveled the gun at her chest.

"You're not supposed to be here."

People always spoke about their blood freezing in their veins when afraid; Diana's whole body felt as though it had been encased in ice. She was in the kitchen, out of sight of Faye. She crept slowly around the corner, stopping as the thief came into view. Beyond him she could see Faye, looking so pale she was afraid she might collapse. Diana crept closer, forcing herself not to run the other way.

Faye kept her eyes fixed on the man's face. Looking at Diana meant letting him know that there was someone behind him, and there was no

scenario in which that could be a good thing. She let out a shaky breath, flinching when he readjusted the gun. “Stay still,” he hissed. “Just...just stay still, alright? This is all your fault, so just listen to me and nothing bad will happen, understand?” She nodded frantically.

Diana crept closer, taking advantage of his distraction. If she could just get the gun... Faye’s voice cut through her concentration. “Diana no!”

She honestly didn’t know what she was thinking, why she yelled out. Maybe she thought he would turn around, would sense Diana’s intention. She didn’t know. All Faye knew was that nowhere in her mind had the idea that he might use her as a hostage existed. “Let me go!”

“Shut up!” The thief roared. Diana hurdled backwards in fright. Faye started thrashing in his grip, trying to get loose. To get to her. Diana Meade wasn’t going to die. Not today, not tomorrow, and certainly not right now in her living room.

“Diana! Fire without—“ the man cut her off, cracking the butt of the gun into her head. Faye’s eyes rolled back in her head and she crumpled to the floor, consciousness disappearing.

Diana’s world slowed as Faye fell. Everything intensified. She could feel the house shift as it settled, hear each person exhale in turn, and see all the remaining color drain from Faye’s face as she fell. Rage burned through her body, replacing her blood and burning away any reason she had left. “No!”

If the world hadn’t still been running in slow motion she never would have known what happened. The gun shattered in his hand, fragments spraying around the room and tearing his hand into a bloody mess. The thief screeched as he was thrown through the wall, head cracking sickly against it as he landed outside. Diana didn’t spare him a second thought.

She rushed to Faye, collapsing to the ground next to her. “Faye?” Her voice was choked with terror. “Faye come on wake up. Get up, please...”

Silence was her only answer for the longest time. Diana whimpered, trying to calm down, to think. Faye was hurt. Hurt people go to the hospital. Hospital. She had to call an ambulance—there was no way she could drive. Just as she moved to grab the phone she heard a weak groan. She whipped back, relief so strong she thought she might faint right along with Faye. “Faye?”

“No, Adam. Who the fuck else would it be?” She forced herself into a sitting position, cradling her head in her hand. Diana leaned back a little, worried eyes tracing Faye’s face. A bruise was already starting to swell above Faye’s left eye. “Where is that fucker? I wanna kill him.”

“He’s gone,” Diana replied. She had wanted to reach forward, brush a kiss against the forming bruise and hold her, tell her everything would be fine. But, she stopped herself from giving into the seemingly unnatural temptation. Proceeding with caution, she settled instead for playing with the hem of Faye’s shirt. She moved her hand to Faye’s knee, her thumb stroking slowly across the denim. “Are you alright? Your head looks pretty bad...”

Faye shrugged, pushing herself off the ground. She frowned, looking confusedly at the hole in her wall. “How did that happen?” Diana met her question with a blank look. Faye’s frown grew deeper. “The gigantic hole in my wall? No? Then how about the shrapnel currently stuck in your hair? Stuff like that doesn’t just happen—“ Faye stopped mid-sentence, eyes widening with rage at the realization. She shut her mouth slowly before turning back to Diana. “You did this,” she hissed.

“No I didn’t,” said Diana. Her worry was vanishing, quickly being replaced with irritation. “We used magic and shot him out of the room.

That's how the hole got there.”

“No, we didn't,” Faye advanced on her slowly, forcing Diana to back up. “I was on the floor drooling; I couldn't work magic because I was too busy being hit over the head wondering if my brain was about to gush out of my ears. You have solo magic!” She spat the last words like they were poison, eyes filled with accusation.

Diana growled. “I don't know what happened, but I guess I'm so sorry that it happens to offend you! The next time someone has a gun to your head I'll just sit back and let them kill you! Since saving you is apparently the wrong thing to do!”

“Shut up!” Faye yelled. She shoved Diana backward towards the door. “You don't even *want* this!”

Diana grew still at Faye's words. She stepped back, curling into herself as she moved. “You're right. I don't want this.” They looked at each other for an instant before Diana turned, running from the house, from the evidence. Tears blinding her as she ran.

CHAPTER FOUR

When the sunbeam touched Diana's face that morning, she sighed and covered her face with a pillow. She had tossed and turned all night long, thoughts flooding her mind, her head throbbing from lack of sleep. Her life was so turned upside down and there was no way her mind would have allowed her to get any rest. Thanks to everything happening in the Circle, she felt like she had no control over her life anymore, and for Diana—who was the type of person that *had* to be in control all the time—that was terrifying.

Finally accepting the fact that she wasn't going to get a proper sleep, the brunette got out of bed and started her morning routine. As she wiped the fresh stream of tears from her face she smeared on double doses of foundation, desperately trying to cover the dark circles under her eyes.

She was still in denial with everything that happened over the course of the week. Her encounters with Faye were growing more frequent, and she still couldn't wrap her mind around the fact that Cassie and her were sisters. She used dark magic that night to save herself and Faye, and she couldn't deny it. That Charles Meade wasn't really her father and a man, whom no one had met besides Cassie, was her blood. Diana shared the same blood tainted with dark magic, and she couldn't stop thinking about it. She didn't want to believe that the man that had raised her for 17 years and who made her into the woman that she was—wasn't her father.

And if fathers, her newfound sister and dark magic weren't enough to

cloud Diana's thoughts, there was still something else... Faye Chamberlain. The other brunette—with her seductive talk, walk, sharp tongue and snarky comebacks—that kept her wide awake at night over the last few weeks.

They were never the best of friends, but since Cassie's arrival, what already was a complicated situation, magnified into something ten times more intense. An affair of sorts.

Diana always thought that the feelings they had for each other were far from friendly, but after last night, she wasn't so sure anymore. All she was sure of was that the time she had been spending with Faye had been some of the most exhilarating moments of her life.

After getting ready, Diana tried to continue with her morning. Her perfect chocolate locks framed her round and flawless face, but worries continued to consume her otherwise illuminated chestnut eyes. She forced herself to smile to hide the turmoil inside and she hoped pretending would do for now.

"Faye, Diana really wants to talk to you" Melissa's voice came through the phone. Since the revelation of Diana being the other Blackwell, Faye decided to separate from the group. More specifically from Cassie and—especially—Diana. How did sweet and naïve Diana end up with power that should be hers? It all felt too unfair. Diana would never take full advantage of the powers like she would have. She was too good for that.

"Well, I don't wanna talk to her." Faye rolled her eyes before continuing, "and since when are you her messenger? Is she working her 'black' magic on you already?" Faye huffed in disdain, she thought Melissa would back her up on this, that they should distance themselves from the Circle together, but the bond between the two had slowly deteriorated and Melissa's alliances had become unclear.

“Faye, she isn’t working any magic on me.” She deflected Faye’s insane accusations. “I’m just saying you should talk to her. It’s not like it’s her fault, you know,” Melissa continued.

“It’s not her fault but it’s still unfair. She said it herself she did not want it! And if she does not want it, she should just pass it around to someone who does, for example, me,” Faye said in an angered tone.

“You know that’s not how it works...” Melissa tried explaining, but Faye interrupted her.

“Yeah, yeah, whatever. I’m gonna go get ready, see you at school,” Faye blurted out. After ending the call, she threw her phone across the bed and got up, determined to take some extra time getting ready for school today. It was Valentine’s day after all...she wasn’t looking for a hookup, but wouldn’t be opposed to a few lame boys attempting to win her over.

When Diana finally got to school, she started walking to homeroom, the halls were decorated with hearts and cupids, and Diana finally realized what day it was...February 14th. A day that—besides her birthday and Christmas—used to be her favorite day of the year. Except now she had nobody to spend it with.

Adam and Diana dated for so long she couldn’t even remember what it was like to spend Valentine’s Day alone. When she spotted a guy giving his girlfriend a bouquet of red roses, she recalled how bad it was to not have someone doing these romantic gestures for her anymore. Not that Adam was exactly over enthusiastic about romance, Diana found herself the romantic half of the couple, but despite his flaws she still longed for that companionship.

Watching couples in love as she walked by was annoying enough, but the idea that Diana’s new sister was most likely sleeping with her ex-boyfriend was the icing on the cake.

She continued to walk along the hallway with her head down, when she finally lifted her head up, she spotted the blonde girl walking in her direction and before she could turn around and bolt towards an exit, Cassie quickly approached.

“Hi, Diana,” Cassie softly said. “How are you?”

“Well, as you may imagine, not so peachy.” Diana tried to ignore Cassie’s presence, and continued to take slow steps towards the cold corridor.

“Can we talk?” Cassie touched Diana’s arm, trying to stop the girl but Diana flinched and kept walking.

“Yes, but...I can’t do it right now.” Diana looked ahead and saw Faye and Melissa, not resisting the urge to walk towards them. Right now, between Cassie or Melissa and Faye, she would actually prefer the latter’s company. It seemed absurd when she thought about it, but nothing made sense today anyway.

Faye had left home before her mom could lecture her on how short and how revealing her skirt and shirt were. She walked through the school doors with her face a few inches higher and steps a little slower as if she wanted to be seen, to be wanted. She needed boys to desire her just so she could tell them they would never have her.

When she found Melissa struggling with her locker, she snuck behind her. “Think ‘lock-unlock.’” Melissa jumped and in less than a second their minds connected and the lock unlocked.

Melissa looked around to see if anyone noticed their minor display of power and luckily no one had even been paying any attention to them. When she finished scanning the room, her eyes settled on Faye, who looked extra deadly today. “Well, someone’s dressed to kill,” Melissa mocked raising an eyebrow.

“This? Please,” Faye huffed. “If there’s anyone I want to kill it’s the Twisted Sisters. They’re not around, are they?” Faye leaned sensually against the lockers, still putting herself on display to the rest of the school.

“Nope, haven’t seen them.” Melissa shut her locker with an unnecessary amount of force.

“Well, and someone woke up on the wrong side of the bed,” Faye mocked back. She could tell just by Melissa’s face something was off.

“Nick. Don’t ask,” she rolled her eyes and leaned against the lockers along with Faye. “Love sucks,” she said in disdain as a happy couple passed them gleefully walking hand in hand.

“And you took sixteen years to realize that?” Faye said with an air of superiority “I’ve known all my life that we’re always better off alone. That’s why we’re celebrating alones day together tonight.”

“You do realize that doesn’t make any sense at all?” Melissa laughed.

Every year on this day Faye would come up with something new to call it, but her bitterness this year was remarkable and she figured it had to do with the whole Diana and Cassie situation.

“It makes perfect sense. It’s a perfect night for us to watch horror movies, eat candy and snatch all the liquor we can from my mother’s cabinet.” Faye smiled wide.

“Fine, I’m in,” Melissa shrugged and hoped Faye wouldn’t ask her why she agreed so fast. She didn’t want to have to explain her fight with Nick, especially when she knew Faye didn’t approve of their relationship.

“Great, I was thinking we could...” Faye’s words trailed when she saw Cassie and Diana turning the corner, already spotting them and walking in their direction. “...get the hell outta here before I lose my breakfast.” She grabbed Melissa’s arm, but the girl pushed back, standing her ground.

“We can’t avoid them forever, Faye,” Melissa said with a steady voice

and pushed the girl back beside her before she could protest.

“Good morning.” Diana looked at the girls, forcing a weak smile when she caught Faye’s eyes.

It wasn’t about her clothes, but her presence. After being ignored by Faye, it was nice to be near her, although the other girl was clearly not comfortable being there.

They definitely had to talk about what happened. If not for their sake, she would do it for the Circle, she wouldn’t let them fall apart. At this point, she would never admit the Circle could crack. As Circle leader, she would be seen as a failure. And Diana Meade would not admit to being a failure, ever.

“Hey,” Melissa said, returning the smile, but Faye remained silent.

Faye’s eyes paused at Diana in all her morning beauty, quickly remembering of their previous night’s activities.

Luckily for her, she managed to snap out of the trance quickly. “Yeah, whatever, I gotta go,” she said as she started to walk away, but Melissa pulled her back once more. “Melissa, what the hell?!”

“Did you forget we were gonna invite Diana and Cassie to our movie night tonight?” Melissa said as she pulled on her friend’s arm a little harder, almost as if she were begging her to stop acting like a child.

Faye’s eyes grew wide as she fantasized about ripping off Melissa’s head for opening her mouth like that. The last thing she wanted was to turn her peaceful, boys-free night into a repeat of last night’s fiasco “Yes, ‘cause your gatherings have gone so well lately,” Faye forced a fake smile towards Cassie and Diana. “No, thanks,” she finally said.

“So, it’s the opportunity for us to, you know...forget about the drama for one night and just hang out.” She asked hopefully, “Please? You know why this is so important to me.” Melissa looked at both girls, then at Faye,

then down, pretending to be upset. She tried to look like this was because of Nick, when in fact she was doing this for Diana.

“I’m in. I could use the distraction,” Diana said, placing a comforting hand on Melissa’s shoulder.

Melissa smiled at how altruistic Diana could be. Even with everything going on with her, she still had time to worry about other people’s feelings. The girl was sure no other human could compare to Diana when it came to goodness, which made it all seem even more unfair. *Guess bad things happen to good people after all*, Melissa thought.

“I’ll go,” Cassie looked over to Diana, hoping that they would finally get a chance to sort things out.

“That’s just great. You know, Melissa, when I said we should watch horror movies I didn’t mean you should invite the Grady girls,” Faye said in an irritated tone, despite mentioning her all-time favorite horror movie *The Shining*. “If you come, there will be no black magic unless we’re practicing it together, no boy talk and especially no crying about how lame you all are,” Faye inflated her chest and walked away, this time for good, leaving the three witches speechless.

Diana didn’t even have time to reply to the taller brunette as she retreated to her locker. She would have gladly complied with all of Faye’s terms, especially the one about no boys. There was no way she’d spend the night talking about Adam, when all she’d been thinking about was Faye. As the other girl was distancing herself from her group of friends, Diana caught herself staring her way, taking in every little detail about Faye. The way her legs crossed one in front of the other, and how her hips swayed from side to side...and there was that tingling sensation down her belly that caught Diana by surprise the moment she found herself inches away from Faye. She had never felt that with Adam, at least not with that

intensity. Diana was jolted back to reality by the sound of Cassie's voice.

"Someone had their bitch breakfast this morning. What's gotten into her anyway? Oh I forgot, it's Faye. I should be used to it by now." Cassie rolled her eyes, watching Faye walk away.

"You know Faye...she's still upset about last night, about the fact that she's not the other Blackwell. It'll wear off in no time. Don't worry about it." Melissa replied with a shrug.

"Diana, can we talk now?" The blonde girl blurted out randomly, but again, the taller girl dodged her with another excuse.

"I-I'm late for class," she said turning on her heels and waving a shy goodbye to Melissa. "See you tonight."

Cassie stood by Melissa dumfounded as she watched her sister stroll down the hallway. "But the bell didn't ring yet," Cassie said in a tone much lower than necessary. It was useless, Diana needed time and Cassie needed to take a step back for a moment.

Diana continued down the hallway ignoring Cassie's remarks as she slowly vanished from the girls' sight.

As Faye slowly made her way through the corridors, all the boys drooled over her, whistling and howling like hungry wolves. She loved the feeling of being wanted and playing hard to get.

When the bell finally rang, all students scurried to their classes, except for Faye. She was used to being the last one to get in class, she made it her mission to turn heads as she swayed to her seat. She figured today wouldn't be any different. As she made her way to the door, her arm extended towards the doorknob. Before she turned it, the sound of hurried clip clops came from behind her. As Faye dropped the handle the sound grew louder, then came to a stop. She managed to turn halfway around before a delicate hand made contact with hers. She was then not so

gracefully yanked into the janitors closet a few feet away.

“What the hell!” Faye yelled from inside the room, quickly turning to see who was brave enough to man handle her without her consent. “Diana!” She raised an eyebrow “What are you—” but before she could finish her sentence, a pair of soft, cherry flavored lips crushed against hers, making both girls stumble two steps back.

Faye winced at the feeling of her back slamming against the door, but she didn’t shove Diana away. Instead, her hands clutched at the other girl’s hips, pulling her closer and making their bodies melt against each other. She never liked to lose control over her make out sessions, but in that moment, her mind went completely blank as she gladly let Diana take the lead. The girl’s hands ran from her cheek to her neck to deepen the kiss even more, and Faye let a throaty moan escape when their tongues met.

There was something about their kiss, that every time their lips collapsed against each other, the universe seemed to stop, their minds would go blank and their bodies felt like they were about to erupt in flames. That whole feeling was addicting. The more they kissed, the more they would crave for it later, and there was something very catchy about that, that Faye wasn’t quite willing to risk.

When air began to lack in both girl’s lungs, they parted their lips slightly, lingering at the feeling of their kiss. When Faye finally opened her eyes, she found Diana puzzled looking at her, like she was trying to find answers in their actions, but found more questions instead.

Almost with the flick of a button, Faye’s mind was functioning again and she pushed Diana three steps away from her, so they were each standing in an extremity of the janitor’s room “What the fuck, Diana?!” Instead of replying, Diana looked away embarrassed. “You were ignoring me...”

“You know what? I don’t get you! One minute you’re saying that whatever happened between us didn’t happen, and then you’re pulling me inside the janitor’s closet to make out because I’m ‘ignoring you’? What do you want from me?” snapped Faye.

“I don’t know...” she weakly replied.

“Let’s just get this straight: I’m the one that messes with people’s feelings around here. So, if you think you can mess with mine, you’re *dead* wrong.” The taller brunette said between clenched teeth in a threatening tone.

“I’m not messing with you! I-I just don’t know what *this* means.” Diana made a back and fourth hand gesture between the two, and continued, “I don’t know what this thing that I’m feeling is...”

“Well, whatever it is, I’m not your little lab rat. So, if you want to experiment, maybe you should meet some girls on the hockey team,” Faye hissed back.

“Why do you cringe when I use the word ‘feeling’ around you? Has it ever crossed your mind that it hurts, Faye?” Diana took a step towards the other witch, who now looked intimidated by Diana’s furious tone. “Has it crossed your mind that my life has been completely turned upside down and everything I’ve ever known is fading away? And still for some stupid reason that’s secondary to me ‘cause the only thing on my mind is what has been happening between us lately, and why is it messing with me so much?!” Diana slammed her fist against the wall behind Faye’s head. “And now here we are, in a stupid closet and all I wanted was for you to care, if even just a little!”

Faye’s eyes widened. “I’m sorry,” she whispered. “I’m sorry that you have infinite powers, yet you’re choosing to be a selfish brat sitting there on your high freaking horse.”

Diana was taken aback by Faye's words. She didn't expect Faye to console her, but she never imagined the brutal response that spewed from Faye's mouth. Just as Diana's tears began to stream down her face she sprinted for the door, leaving Faye behind in the closet.

The girl stood alone in the darkened room, fixed her hair, unconsciously touched her lips, and headed for the door.

Diana tried—unsuccessfully—to focus on her classes for the rest of the day, although it was almost impossible when every time she would get interrupted by couples exchanging notes and lustful looks. On a regular day she would find it adorable, but right now it made her sick.

Before lunch she realized there was no escaping from Cassie's stalking and, more importantly, from Faye's presence, so she did something she had never done in her life. She excused herself from class and headed to the nurse's office, there she told Mrs. Green that she was having severe stomach pains and would like to take a leave of absence for the remainder of the day. The nurse had a suspicious look on her face but shrugged it off as she wrote Diana a note to leave early.

Faye sat at her usual table at lunch, she looked around but there was no sign of Melissa or Diana, not even Cassie. Would she really have to eat lunch alone on this stupid holiday? She was fidgeting with her can of soda when a furious Melissa sat in front of her, her whole face red and her arms crossed against her chest.

"Well, hello sunshine." Faye raised an eyebrow. "Thought you were ditching me for Nick tod—" Faye didn't even get to finish her sentence.

"Don't mention his name, thank you," Melissa asked between clenched teeth.

"Okay..." Faye knew she was walking on thin ice here, so she dropped the teasing for a while and tried changing subject. "So, have you seen

Diana?” she tried sounding as casual as possible.

“No,” Melissa replied, distractedly looking out the window. “But if you want to hassle her some more, you should back off. Give the girl a break, Faye. Try to put yourself in her shoes for a while.”

“Whoa, back off on the jumping to conclusions, will ya?” Faye raised her tone “No hassling here...” she said, but thought about what happened a few hours ago, in fact, Diana’s words keep hammering in her head throughout the morning, “...I don’t wanna walk in her goody good shoes, thank you. But I get your point. Maybe I was, maybe still am, feeling a little jealous.” Faye saw Melissa’s mouth opening but continued anyway, “And you can’t blame me, Melissa. Don’t tell me your poor little witch heart doesn’t break when you see all that dark magic going to waste on Diana, who’ll probably never use it.”

“That’s so not the point,” Melissa rolled her eyes, she agreed with Faye, but unlike the girl, she could keep her jealousy in check.

“It so is and you know it. But never mind, I have fun plans for tonight, so could you make sure the Dark Princesses show up and let me know?” Faye didn’t want to get into details right now, but she was considering a spell she wasn’t sure would work only with her magic and Melissa’s, but definitely would with Cassie’s and Diana’s.

“Yeah, whatever.” Melissa shrugged and kept her gaze on the window.

A few minutes later, they both headed to their classes, when Melissa’s phone vibrated she quickly checked it, hoping it was Nick, but instead it was a text from Diana *‘Could you get the English assignment for me? Had to come home.’*

Melissa frowned at the text, she had never seen Diana skip classes, never. *‘Sure, u alright?’* she replied

‘I’ll be. Eventually,’ Diana texted back and Melissa felt stupid now.

Her own problems seemed so small compared to Diana's, 'c u tonight?'

'Pretty sure Faye doesn't want me there'

'I do. Plz? I can pick u up after class,' Melissa begged.

'OK, I'll be waiting' Diana replied and Melissa let out a relieved sigh, perhaps trying to help Diana would get her mind out of her own issues.

When Diana and Melissa finally arrived at the Chamberlain's house, they were both welcomed by Faye's usual bitchy mood. Even though she regretted treating Diana the way she had earlier that day, there was no way she was going to modify her behavior in the comfort of her own home.

"Really, Diana? You brought a luggage? This is a slumber party, not a mini vacation," the taller brunette commented as she stepped to the side to let Diana and Melissa come in, locking the door behind them.

"I may have over packed, it's just that I couldn't quite figure out what to pick, and I just threw everything in there to choose here." Diana had the explanation ready, knowing Faye would give her a hard time because of her carry on.

"Whatever. You can put it in my room, and change there if you like." Faye rolled her eyes.

"You know what? This is a bad idea. I shouldn't have come. Faye obviously doesn't want me here." Diana stared intensely into Faye's eyes and the girl immediately turned away.

"But I do. And this is just her way of showing that she wants you here as well, trust me." Melissa narrowed her eyes at the taller brunette, earning herself an eye roll in return. "So, how about getting this party started?" Melissa reached into her back pocket that contained a small bag with a white substance in it.

“What’s that?” Diana’s eyes widened.

“Something to loosen up. It’s call Devil’s Spirit. The name may sound bad, but it’s all herbal and mellow. It’s just something to take the edge off.” Melissa laid her shoulders back and scooped a portion of the drug into her mouth, making sure to lick her finger clean and then smiled widely once the substance immediately pumped through her body.

“So, that’s why you’re acting weird, Melissa... I promised myself that I was going to try loosen tonight, but not like that...” Diana shook her head “...You shouldn’t be using that, that can be dangerous.”

“We’re talking danger? Us? The girls who have to run from witch hunters every freaking week? C’mon Diana,” Melissa said, pouring a line of the white powder on Diana’s finger, the girl was reluctant at first, shaking slightly. “C’mon, it’s just us girls, and don’t you think it’s the perfect day to try something different?” Melissa raised her eyebrows.

“You sure it’s just herbal?” Diana asked inspecting her finger. It sure as hell didn’t look herbal.

“Yup, it’s good and trust me, today we all need a little ‘pick me up.’”

Diana shrugged and put her index finger in her mouth, mimicking Melissa’s previous actions.

“Chamberlain?” Melissa lifted the bag, offering it to Faye, but the girl kept her arms crossed against her chest.

“No, thank you. Didn’t like it the last time. I mean, most of the time Nick’s stuff is good, but that is just...wacky. Besides someone should stay sober in case you crack heads decide to go crazy.” Faye looked at Diana, who was licking her lips repeatedly, her face already beginning to change.

“Hey, I’m not a crack head!” she argued, but then started laughing hysterically. “I sound funny, why does it make me sound funny?!”

“That’s just great,” Faye huffed and looked between Melissa and

Diana laughing and clapping their hands like stupid seals “Where is Princess Peach anyway? Don’t tell me she already ran to lame Adam.”

“Screw them” Diana said and linked her arm with Melissa “Let’s have our own fun”

Faye stared as both girls, “Oh this is going to end well.”

Faye was just off the phone with her mother, and after assuring her Diana and Melissa were the only people there Faye came back to her basement to find two giggly witches.

“What’s going on in here?” Faye asked, Diana and Melissa scrolling through their phones, laughing sporadically.

“Ask Siri!” Melissa exclaimed.

“What? Never mind, I don’t even wanna know. So, here’s the idea, and I could really use your black magic on this one, Diana.” Faye winked. “How about...we try to find my family’s Book of Shadows?” Faye knew it was a long shot. For months she had tried all sorts of spells, all of them failed. Perhaps Diana’s dark magic would be the key element.

“Sure, let’s do it! I’m sure Siri can help us!” Diana grinned and touched the screen, screaming to her phone, “Siri, where is Faye’s family Book of Shadows?”

“Have you checked under the bed?” the almost robotic voice said through the speakers and Faye’s face fell.

“Seems like a good guess! Have you, Faye?” Diana looked at the not-so-amused witches and laughed again.

“Can we be serious for a moment?” Faye tried asking nicely one more time, but was interrupted by the two girls.

“Can Faye ever be serious?” Melissa asked.

‘Hardly,’ was its answer.

“Can Faye ever care about someone besides herself?” Diana released the button and shot Faye an ice cold stare.

“Perhaps,” the app answered and the room went silence for a moment. Despite the silence, Melissa hadn’t even noticed the exchange of looks between the two girls since she was still laughing hysterically from the robots previous statement.

“Aren’t you real smartasses, playing with Steve Jobs’ improved magic 8 ball?” Faye ignored Diana’s question and deadly stare. She would have to find her way around, but she was determined to look for her family Book tonight. “Aren’t you just craving for some good magic?” Faye asked, taking a sip of the red wine in front of her.

“Oh, we were.” Melissa looked at Diana, then at Faye.

“What do you mean you were? What did you do...” Faye jumped off her couch and waited for one of them to answer.

“You’ll see” Diana bit her lip and just then the doorbell rang, both girls excitedly looked at each other and rushed towards the door.

“I’ll get it!” both girls yelled, tripping over every object in their way, including Faye.

“What the hell?!” Faye followed quickly behind the two girls that were now rapidly running down the stairs.

When they reached the front door, Diana pushed Melissa aside with a nudge of her elbow, and swung the door open, immediately throwing herself onto the male figure standing at the porch, crushing her lips against his.

“Diana!” Faye gasped and she unconsciously clenched her fists hard to contain herself from punching a wall. She stared with open eyes at the scene in front of her, but not sure what to make of it. She would never admit this to anyone, but seeing Diana’s lips against someone else’s hurt

badly after she unofficially claimed them the past few nights.

Melissa's jaw dropped to the floor once she realized who Diana was kissing. "Oh my God! Nick!"

Not even Melissa's reaction was enough to break the kiss. After entertaining the action for several seconds, Nick pushed the girl in question away with help from Faye who was now manhandling Diana to push her back inside. "Hey, Kardashian! What's with the home wrecking?"

Diana cleaned her lips and replied, "The pizza guy, I promised Melissa when he got here I would kiss him and..." only when she fully opened her eyes, she saw Nick staring at her with a confused look. "Nick! You're not the pizza guy!"

"Well doesn't the fact that he's not holding a pizza box kinda give it away, genius?" Faye tightened the grip on her arm and earned a loud 'Ow' from Diana, "We'll leave you two to talk." Faye quickly disappeared with Diana, leaving Nick and Melissa by her front door.

Nick pushed his hand nervously through his hair. He came to apologize to Melissa and ended up kissing Diana. What a great way to earn back a girl's trust. He cleared his throat and tried to pretend nothing happened. "What is up with her? Is she high or something?"

"Devil's Spirit, girls' night in, the usual...What do you want?" Melissa shouted impatiently. She had given him clear instructions to not look for her tonight.

"Can we talk? I'll be quick" Nick offered his hand and sat with Melissa on the Chamberlain's front steps.

"Did you call him?" Faye climbed the stairs, not releasing Diana from her grip "The deal was no boys, remember?!" The taller brunette continued, reminding Diana the terms previously outlined during school

earlier that day.

“No, I didn’t! And that’s a bad deal by the way,” Diana shrugged and tried to brush off Faye’s grip.

Faye stared at Diana for a second, letting go of her arm and stopping in the middle of the staircase “So what? Drugs made you straight again? ‘Cause you weren’t so happily waving pompons for the boys team when you pushed me in the Janitor’s locker to make out with me this morning.”

Diana was high, but not high enough to let Faye’s jealousy go unnoticed. “Is that jealousy I hear?”

“Don’t flatter yourself. I’m just saying you’re gonna regret this in the morning. But whatever, screw up as you wish. See if I care.” Faye looked down before continuing her walk to her room, but Diana followed her closely.

“I see that you care, Faye. I know this is your way of showing you care. Why can’t you just admit it?” Diana ran a hand passed Faye’s chin when they arrived at her room.

“Oh, clever talk, junkie girl. Please enlighten me with your profound knowledge about me,” Faye rolled her eyes when Diana closed the space between them.

“As you wish,” Diana got so close, that her hot breath against Faye’s mouth made the girl in front of her shiver. “Sarcasm, Faye. It’s what you always use when you can’t tell what your real feelings are...” the girl continued “and I know that yesterday was special for you like it was for me. The difference is I’m not the one running away from it anymore,” Diana ran her tongue teasingly over Faye’s lower lip, causing the girl to slightly shudder again.

When she shifted her eyes back towards Diana’s, her face was shining with a victorious little smile.

“Have I enlightened you enough?” Diana said leaning in ever so slowly, without breaking their eye contact, letting their lips slightly touch, and added, “Cat got your tongue?” she teased once again Faye’s bottom lip with the tip of her tongue.

“Screw you,” Faye said with a growl, slamming Diana against the nearest wall in the most inelegant fashion possible. “You’re playing with fire, Meade.” Faye warned before engulfing Diana in a deep, intense kiss. Hands running crazily along each other’s hair, teeth eventually clashing in a kiss that made both girls forget what breathing even felt like.

Faye pinned Diana against the wall, their bodies pressed flushed against each other making them instantly turned on. As their tongues fought for dominance, Faye’s right hand dropped from its grip on Diana’s hair, to find its way beneath the girl’s shirt, fingers digging into the hot flesh of her waist for a moment, only to crawl up her front and cup one of Diana’s luscious breasts earning herself a moan in return.

When both girls parted their lips to breathe, Faye nibbled and spread hot kisses from Diana’s chin to her neck. She was so pissed off by this whole situation that she didn’t even think before biting down and suckling Diana’s pulse point a bit too hard. It would probably leave a mark, but she didn’t care.

The more Diana wanted her to care, the more she tried to prove herself that she didn’t.

Diana hissed as the girl devoured her neck, and she tightened her grip on Faye’s hair, pulling her face to hers to capture her lips again. They were so lost in each other’s presences, that they didn’t even hear Melissa talking from down the hall.

“Guys! Nick and I were talking,” the shorter brunette started to say as she took a few steps towards Faye’s bedroom while carrying two boxes of

pizza, “and the hottest pizza guy EVER showed up and—” Melissa stopped in the doorway after catching a glimpse of her best friends angrily making out.

“*Diana?!*” The boxes fell from her hands.

At the sound of the familiar voice, both girls froze in shock mid-kiss. They didn’t move for a couple of long seconds but Diana finally pushed Faye away by a fraction and leaned her forehead against Faye’s, “Tell me this isn’t happening.”

Faye licked her lips and opened her eyes to see Diana staring at her in terror.

“Faye...”

Diana’s gaze averted across the room but thanks to Faye’s position in front of her, she could barely make out who was standing there. It was obvious from the once bubbly voice that it was Melissa watching the two girls still huddled up against the wall.

Diana reluctantly pushed Faye out of the way to confirm it was Melissa positioned under the doorframe, gawking. The onlooker stood there for what seemed like minutes, sporting a confused face, moments later confusion turned to horror. Melissa was unaware of her friends’ relationship and fumbled to find a way to form a sentence.

“Melissa...”

“What’s going on Diana?” She asked, taking a small step forward. Her gaze flicked between Faye and Diana and she shook her head as if what she was seeing was some kind of trick

“What...Faye...You’re *kissing* Faye?!”

“It’s not what it looks like...” Diana said quickly. She felt Faye flinch at the statement and instantly regretted it, “No wait...I mean it obviously is what you think but... It’s not at the same time.”

“I don’t see how it could be anything else.” Melissa stated tersely though her voice quivered with anger.

Realizing Faye’s hands were still latched onto her waist Diana quickly scrambled to stand on her own, nudging Faye further from her reach.

“What are you doing?” Melissa asked, her gaze drawn back to Faye.

“I’m not doing anything.” Faye answered coldly. “Even if I were, it’s none of your business.”

“You two are my business!”

“Calm down, Melissa, it’s no biggie.” Faye shrugged.

Diana took another step backwards from Faye’s lingering hand.

“Besides the whole you two not being gay thing, I can’t help but think you’re taking advantage of her!” Melissa walked closer to the girls, making it a point to direct her ferocious look towards Faye.

“Taking advantage?!” Faye scoffed in disbelief “How stupid do you think Diana *is*. She knows exactly what she’s doing.”

“I’m thinking more about how *manipulative* you are!” Melissa snarled furiously. “Why else would you be doing *this* with her unless it’s just to get into her pants and take advantage of her? What do you want from her? Power? Her book of shadows? To piss Adam off?”

“For your information ‘getting into her pants’ isn’t something I have to try very hard to do,” Faye said coolly, despite the fact that her anger was rapidly growing with every word Melissa spoke. “But I’m not taking advantage of her. We happen to be in...” she faltered slightly mid-sentence, unsure as to say in a relationship seeing as the girls have been wavering on the definition of their arrangement for quite some time. “We hook up occasionally.”

Melissa laughed disbelievingly, “Do you seriously expect me to believe that? Diana would never sleep with someone like you. For starters

you're a girl, and you're a bitch who wants her dark magic."

"Wow Melissa, say what you really mean!"

"I'm your friend, but you're...Faye!" She answered as if it was totally obvious, "And she's Diana."

"Great... and that's a bed and there's a chair, what's your point?" Faye rolled her eyes.

"You two hate each other!" Melissa continued, glaring darkly at Faye and Diana's apparent closeness. "All you're going to do is hurt and manipulate her because you're *Faye*. That's what you do. You use people and then you throw them away when you're finished playing with them. It's all a sick game to you."

"That's not tr..."

"Yes, it *is*!" Melissa practically yelled, causing Faye to flinch slightly, "It's exactly what you're going to do to Diana. You're going screw her over and the circle is going to suffer!"

"No, I'm not," Faye stated meekly. She glanced at Diana; she looked rather pale before turning back to Melissa. "You don't know what you're taking about."

"Clearly Diana is overwhelmed by everything that's happened and she's not thinking straight, literally." Melissa continued, her anger clearly clouding her usually calm and collected nature. "Unless she's using you for sex. I could understand *that*."

Diana felt Faye flinch next to her and something inside of her snapped. Diana extended her hand to Faye's and with a firm squeeze of the other girls hand she glared darkly at Melissa.

"Shut up."

Melissa gaped at her, having not expected her to speak up. "Diana..."

"Faye and I have gotten close," Diana announced proudly despite her

nerves. She held up their entwined hands as if to emphasize her statement. “We have our moments, but we’re friends and you need to deal with it. What you saw is nothing to write home about.”

“B-but I don’t...Diana you can’t be serious.”

“I’m completely serious.” Diana answered assuredly. “Faye and I don’t see eye to eye on a lot of things, and God knows sometimes I just want to punch her, but I don’t mind her lately.”

Melissa stared at her with betrayal written across her face for a moment before shaking her head in disbelief and turning to storm out of the room. Diana listened to her footsteps fade away and finally disappeared before she allowed herself to relax.

“Hey...” Faye whispered, effectively drawing Diana’s attention back to her “Thanks...for sticking up for me.”

“I wasn’t going to just let her talk to you like that. She might be our friend, but she’s acting ridiculous,” Diana said, her voice growing shaky as her anger and the adrenaline rush that came with it faded.

Faye smiled and gave Diana a quick kiss before pulling back. “Are we okay?”

Diana noticed the nervousness shimmering in Faye’s eyes and she instantly knew why it was there. “We’re fine...We’ll make it work.” She waited for a nod before giving Faye a lingering kiss. After a moment or two Diana redirected the triumph and expressed concern to Faye.

“Do you think we should go after her?”

“Who, Melissa?”

“Duh, with all these attacks, I’m worried. She may be insensitive to the situation right now, but we can’t let her stroll through the streets at night unprotected.”

“Ugh, Meade, are you seriously going to do this to me when all I want

to do is ravage you on my extremely comfortable bed?”

“You’re such a pervert, Chamberlain. We need to find her.”

“Fine.”

CHAPTER FIVE

Diana and Faye had been roaming the streets of Chance Harbor for a good twenty minutes when it dawned on them that if Melissa was as heated as they gathered from their recent tiff there'd be no way she would go home, or even to Nick's house. The two walked down the dirt road towards the abandoned house, they heard a faint scream from the distance, a scream that sounded an awfully lot like their friend. The two looked at each other saying "Melissa" in unison and ran deeper into the darkness.

They found Melissa in the field next to their usual meeting spot surrounded by witch hunters unable to defend herself; the three men carried daggers that they were crazily waving around in Melissa's direction.

"Stop!" Diana called out.

Faye's eyes widened and she turned to Diana who had just realized she now had the attention of the witch hunters, and no plan to back it up. "Good going, genius." She said to Diana.

"I wasn't thinking..."

"Clearly, Diana!"

"What do we do?" Diana asked Faye in a panicked tone.

"Use magic!"

By the time the girls could come up with a spell that could work in the situation, two of the witch hunters were already lunging towards them. The other witch hunter had wasted no time and grabbed Melissa holding the

dagger to her throat as leverage. With one swift movement another witch hunter connected with Faye's shoulder and jolted her firmly to the ground. Diana raced over to the girl in question then was promptly swatted away by the remaining man.

"You have to use your dark magic!" Faye squealed from the ground, the witch hunter twisting her arm behind her back.

"Help!" Melissa called from afar, still being held hostage by the cold, sharp knife and the person who wielded it.

Diana had managed to get up and move to a position away from the witch hunters, she wanted to help her friends with all of her heart, but not at the hands of dark magic. Her mind raced as she battled within to make the right decision for everyone. Too little, too late. A flash of light and smoke came from the distance and within a matter of seconds Faye was thrown across the field into a pile of jagged rocks.

"ahhh" she yelled as she crashed to the ground.

The witch hunter that once held the dagger to Melissa's throat had released her and scurried into the woods after the bright light engulfed the area.

Melissa ran towards her fallen friend, "Faye!"

"Oh my god, what have I done!" Diana covered her forehead in shame, "is she alright?" She motioned to Melissa.

"I don't know, she's not moving."

Both girls had shuffled along the rocks to get to where Faye had landed. Her skin was scraped and had already begun to bruise. There was a large gash on her forehead that blood now trickled from.

"What have I done?" she shouted as she stumbled to Faye's side.

Diana had given Faye a slight nudge to see if the girl was indeed still alive. The beaten girl flinched and let out a whispered yell.

"It's not your fault Diana," Melissa said as she crouched down on the rocks.

"Yes it is!" Faye let out a squeal as she struggled to get up.

"See, she hates me now!"

"No she doesn't, Diana."

"Don't speak for me, Melissa," she gasped vigorously, attempting to catch her breath. "Dark magic princess over there could have used her powers," she yammered on as she staggered to her feet with the help of her friend. "But, no. Selfish Diana being selfish!"

Diana made a flabbergasted face in Faye's direction and began to retort the brutally false statement made by the blood covered girl, but before she could open her mouth to get her words out Faye interrupted yet again.

"Don't even try to defend yourself Meade." she glared in her direction, "some beauty pageant bullshit answer isn't going to get you out of this one."

"Calm down, Faye."

"Shut it Melissa, you're not the one--" she touched her forehead to confirm the blood still pouring from it, "bleeding because of her!"

"Maybe I should just go!" Diana screamed.

"Ding, ding, ding, do what you do best Meade. Leave!" she snapped.

Faye had been leaning on Melissa for a good half mile, and between the arguing and limping they hadn't realized they were finally at the abandoned house. Diana huffed at Faye's lack of understanding and promptly walked in the opposite direction alone. Melissa guided Faye to the porch steps.

"Why do you have to be so rough on her? I knew you two getting 'involved' would be bad for the Circle," she crossed her arms and stared at the injured girl in front of her.

"Rough. Are you serious? I'm bleeding and bruised from her stupidity and I'm the harsh one!"

"She's struggling--"

"So am I, Melissa!"

"She didn't mean for you to get hurt. She looked really upset Faye, like she felt really badly for what happened."

The girl smirked at the thought of Diana caring about her, but that comfort rapidly disappeared as her anger resurfaced.

"Are you a freaking mind reader now?" she grumbled. "Just help me get home. I don't give a crap about Diana's feelings right now... I'm in pain, I need a warm bath. And aspirin. Lots."

Melissa shook her head at Faye's stubborn attitude, but followed suit like the girl requested.

Things had finally started to progress in his plans, though not quite as expected. The witch hunters in some way, had succeeded in exposing who his second child within this circle was, but there was much more to be done, and they had to be even careful now.

"And your sister?" was Blackwell's second question, almost not giving time for Cassie to answer his first one.

Apparently he didn't really care to know about how she was doing. If Cassie didn't know better, she'd say her daddy was already picking favorites and it wasn't her. But she decided to shake that thought away. It was stupid to think Diana was his favorite anyways. Or at least unfair, when she was the one trying her hardest to help him fulfill his plans when all her sister did was play hard to get. And just like every other aspect in her life, Diana was great at that too.

"Still no progress" Cassie knew her father was already aware of

everything that happened, especially about how another plan of theirs blew up in their faces once again, “You heard about Faye, right?”

“I did. I had hoped when it came to that she would use her magic.” Blackwell walked around the living room of Cassie’s grandma’s house, with his hands stuffed in his long black coat, his face emotionless as usual, “Perhaps I was wrong about her caring about her fellow circle members. And maybe it’s time you and me start thinking about a different approach...”

Cassie huffed, “I can try to talk to her again. It’s not our best chance, but she’ll have to stop avoiding me sometime, I hope.” Cassie paused for a second, “I mean, before this we seemed to get along well, and all of sudden I’m like her worst enemy. And one would think being sisters would have quite the opposite effect.”

“Well, you and I both know why it is more complicated than that,” Blackwell took a few steps closer to his daughter, cupping her cheek with his cold hand, “Give her time, we’ll have her on our side.”

The hand that should feel comforting was cold as ice and when her blue eyes searched for a reaffirming stare, they only encountered dark deep orbs. Her father was definitely the most impossible person to read, ever. Always with his serious tone and posture, but still Cassie felt loved. It’s not like she’d ever know any better anyways, “we will,” she finally spoke, “I’ll talk to her. I’ll *really* talk to her.” She assured him.

“You’re a good girl, Cassie. I wish your sister had more of your intelligence,” the hand left her cheek, and despite the kind words, no resemblance of a smile even crossed his lips.

“Good luck, I hope to hear from you as soon as you’re done.” He finished, making his way for the front door.

“You will,” a small smile crossed Cassie’s lips before she started

follow her dad to see him out.

There was something that kept drawing her to him and these days she wasn't even sure why she was doing what she was. All she knew was that she wanted to make her dad proud. And she would. Starting with convincing Diana this dark magic wasn't a curse or something to be ignored all her life. *That should be easy*, she thought.

"Cassie. One more thing," Blackwell called for her, his hand frozen on the door knob.

"Yes, dad."

"I've sent an undercover witch hunter to follow Diana. Just to make sure we know about her every move. He is one of my oldest students." The man added with a frightened grin.

"What's his name?"

When Diana thought her life couldn't get any worse than it already was, last night happened. Thanks to a witch drug, she had lost her senses and let her guard down as she was yet again involved in Faye's embrace. That wouldn't be much of a big deal, if they didn't happen to get caught in the act by their friend, Melissa. Not with the cleverest lies in the world they could've proven to her that it wasn't exactly what it looked like. They weren't prepared for Melissa's reaction. They couldn't be, not when both weren't even prepared to accept what had been really going on between them.

And when Diana tried to avoid the awkwardness of the three of them talking about what happened, hell broke loose with another witch hunters' attack. But that time, she was so scared of her newfound powers, that by not wanting to tap into her dark magic, Faye ended up getting injured. *How could I be so selfish?* Diana tried to reason with herself. It was the damn

dark magic's fault, of course nothing good could ever come out of that kind of power. It had given her nothing but despair.

She was feeling like she had hit rock bottom that morning. Only a strong coffee from the Boathouse could help her get her a little bit back on track, she hoped, as she left her home and took her car to the marina.

The brunette made her way to her favorite stool at the bar, and waited for her ex-boyfriend to take her order.

"Hey, Diana. How are you feeling?" Adam asked from his place behind the counter giving the girl a small smile. He — as a member of the circle — knew that everything that has been happening lately to them all, was ten times worse for the girl, and he was genuinely worried about her. Them breaking up didn't change the fact that they cared about each other.

Diana wanted to spill everything to Adam about the worries weighing over her shoulders, especially what happening with Faye, but she couldn't. She could still confide in him, yes — after all she knew that there was no one else that knew her like he did — but she didn't know how to begin to explain to Adam her newfound relationship with the brooding beauty.

The girl heavily sighed ducking her head in defeat and finally replied, "I wish I could say better, but I'd be lying."

"I'm sorry. I wish I could do something to make it better..." He flashed Diana faded smile.

The girl sank in her seat, resting her chin on her wrist above the counter, feeling like a complete failure. Adam continued, "But I'm sure you'll find a way to do things right. You've always made the right decisions for the circle," the boy reached over the counter to grab hold of her hand, giving it a reassuring squeeze, "I have faith in you."

"Thank you." Diana tried to return the smile but her lips barely moved from their lined position, "I do hope you're right, but right now... There's

no light by the end of the tunnel. And if there was, it would probably be a train, waiting to run me over.” She said with a shrug.

“There will be no train, Diana. And if there is, you can trust me to remove you from the tracks before you get hit, you know that. A lot has changed, but not this,” he put on his brave face for Diana, wishing he could comfort her more during these hard times.

“I know. Thanks, Adam,” Diana felt sincerity in his words, but she knew there were deeper issues involved in this. Issues called Cassie.

“I heard about the attack last night... Is Faye okay?” Adam tried to change the subject, but in fact touched the most delicate subject he could mention right now.

Diana winced at the mention of the girl’s name, and buried her face in her arms. “I haven’t spoken to her yet.” Her reply was muffled.

“I’m sure she’s alright.” The boy said trying to make Diana feel better, since he knew she was probably feeling guilty about it, but decided to drop the whole subject anyway. “So, what can I serve you?”

“Black coffee, the strongest you can make,” she replied, before being startled by a male voice from behind her.

“I’ll have one too, please.” said the man with a hint of a foreign accent that she couldn’t quite discern at first.

She turned in her seat to look at whom the voice belonged to. He was almost six feet tall, blonde hair, shiny blue eyes and a mysterious dimpled smile. The man looked like he had come out of a dream, or better yet, from a fairy tale. He flashed his perfect white teeth and promptly sat next to Diana.

“Be right up.” Adam replied before leaving to grab the orders.

“Hello, I’m Grant, by the way.” The handsome young stranger said, extending his hand towards hers.

“Diana,” she replied shaking the guy’s strong hand.

“*Diana... A beautiful name for a beautiful gal.*” He said displaying his perfect smile, the cheesy pick up line making Diana slightly blush suddenly uncomfortable, and Adam rolling his eyes from his place next to the coffee machine.

Diana and Grant carried on a small conversation that lead them to a stroll through the boardwalk. She was actually enjoying the talk. For once in a couple of days she was engaging in a conversation that didn’t involve magic or fatherhood. The girl soon learned that the young man was in fact Australian, just passing by Chance Harbor on business. The more he wanted to know about her and talked about himself and his country with his enchanting *Aussie* accent, the more she could see that he seemed like a perfect gentleman, one that every girl would die to stumble upon. Better yet one that didn’t even try to hide his interest in her, as she quickly noted.

He was charming like *the* Prince Charming, but Diana wasn’t looking for one of those right now. Not even a Knight in shining armor could save her from her living hell.

She felt flattered to be hit on, but her mind and heart already belonged to someone else, apparently. “I’m sorry, but I can’t.” Diana politely declined his invitation to dinner.

“*Well, I’m sorry if I was being too forward,-*” the guy tried to apologize.

“No, you weren’t.” Diana said interrupting him, not wanting to make Grant feel too bad about it. “It’s just that...” She tried finishing her sentence, but while she fought to say something, the actual words about her complicated relationship with Faye never had the time to pass through her lips.

“*You’re seeing someone*”

“Yes. Sort of...” she softly answered after a few seconds in a shrug.

“I should have known. One fine lady like yourself doesn’t go unattended. Send the lucky guy my graters,” he stated, flashing Diana another pearly white smile. The mention of the word ‘guy’ made Diana suppress a giggle. *“Guess I better be going. I’ve taken too much of your time. Thanks for the nice conversation, though. You’ve been the first person to actually talk to me since I got to town.”*

“I’m glad I could be of service.” The girl said with a smirk. She actually felt sad they had to part ways. Deep down she knew it would be only a matter of seconds before soothing normality would be replaced by the craziness her life had become.

“Service, eh?” Grant teased getting a chuckle out of Diana.

“Thanks for the coffee, by the way.” She waved her second serving in the air — this time in a to-go cup.

“It was my pleasure.” he lifted his cup up while ducking his head to the side as in a silent cheer, and began to walk away from the brunette backwards.

“Hope I’ll see you around. Have a g’day.”

“I hope so too.” Diana whispered to herself.

The girl watched the charming *Aussie* disappear and soon felt her own darkness begin to well up inside her. She continued to drink her coffee and watch the waves crashing against the rocks in front of her while on the boardwalk, she felt a tingling familiar sensation running inside her. *Great, here comes my sister...*

Finding Diana wasn’t that much of a hard task. Since their magic was linked, Cassie could feel her presence whenever she wanted to without even trying too hard.

“You know with all that’s happening around lately you shouldn’t be

alone out here like this,” Cassie spoke softly from behind her.

“I can handle myself, thank you,” Diana stated firmly, looking down at the water, her chest pressed against the boardwalk banister.

“Too bad Faye couldn’t say the same,” Cassie knew she had hit Diana’s soft spot when she saw the girl in front of her cringe at the mention of Faye’s name, another advantage of knowing her friend — now sister — so well. She knew that not being able to protect her friends, especially her Circle, drove Diana insane.

“So you heard?” Diana quietly sip her coffee and kept staring out the water.

“I did. What happened?” Cassie stood by Diana, their shoulders inches apart.

“I couldn’t,” Diana’s face fell a bit more, thinking about how she had failed Faye. “You know I can’t.”

“You know you *can*,” Cassie changed her words and made it seem like the most casual of statements, “and when it comes to this, you *should*.” She went even further.

“And then what, Cassie?” Diana looked at her sister for the first time, rage set in her stare, “Let it take over me? I’m not stupid, I know how dark magic works. It’s seductive and it consumes you. And I just got close to using it again yesterday, just close... And still I can’t get that... Rush out of me. I got this close to losing control.” Diana gestured with her thumb and index fingers almost pressed together.

“I won’t let it happen,” Diana shook her head and clenched her fist.

She filled her lungs with the cold breeze, exhaling it into a white cloud of condensed air. If anyone could understand her at this point, it would be Cassie. She was the only one who knew exactly what she was feeling. Yet Cassie’s help was not what she desired most right now.

“So you’re just gonna keep running away from it? Keep letting our friends get hurt?” Cassie continued to push Diana.

Diana’s hands clasped tightly on the old wood beneath her palms, her knuckles turning white. A flush of hot rage burned inside her, reaching her throat. Cassie didn’t know what she was talking about and Diana realized perhaps she didn’t know who this person beside her was. Or who she was becoming. It made her certain that her worst fears were true, black magic does change you. She lingered at the sadness of helplessly watching her recently found sister slowly give in into its darkness. *If only I could get away from all this...* Diana sighed as she picked upon a small boat sail in the distance, almost disappearing from their sight. How she wished she were on that boat, sailing into an unknown destination, far away from Chance Harbor and its chaos.

“Diana, I’m afraid, aren’t you?” Cassie’s weak voice snapped Diana out of her thoughts, turning her gaze back to her sister, tears forming behind her bright blue eyes, her lips quivering. Diana couldn’t stand the sight, and slightly hesitated before wrapping her in a comforting embrace.

“Of course I’m afraid. I’m nothing **but** afraid. Every day, every time, I feel all these witch hunters out there, waiting for us, waiting to attack our circle.” Diana felt a hot tear stream down her face, “and it’s terrifying,” her voice cracked, “and seeing our friends getting hurt because of this **curse**,” she spit out the word, “it’s more than I can take. We’re so out of our leagues on this one, Cassie. Black magic or not.” Diana began to sob.

Cassie ran a soothing hand over her sister’s back while smiling in contentment. She had found a solid crack in Diana’s hard shell and if it meant to please her father, she had every intent on breaking that little by little until it left an exposed Diana. One they would be able to mold to their desires. For now, she had the information she needed, willing to act on it as

quickly as possible, she whispered in their embrace, “you should be with Faye now, not here. We need to be around them in case they need us,” Cassie broke the hug, managing to keep her face as devastated as possible.

“Ok, let’s go then,” Diana quickly agreed.

“I-I’ll go later,” the blonde stuttered.

“Where are you going?” Diana questioned despite it being written all over Cassie’s face, “to see *him*? I told you we can’t trust him,” Diana’s tone was firm and commanding.

“Well he’s willing to help us and I’m doing the best I can to protect everyone,” Cassie attempted to sound convincing.

“Yes, but at what cost?” Diana continued to voice her concern.

“Right now, I just don’t want it to cost anybody’s life. Perhaps it’s time you adopt the same line of thinking before it’s too late.” Cassie turned her back dramatically, leaving Diana behind on the boardwalk. *Daddy’s gotta get me an Oscar one of these days*, she whispered to herself.

Diana finished her — now cold — coffee and gave one last look to the peaceful waters of Chance Harbor before calling Faye. She needed to know how she was doing, but was afraid the call would not be well received. She knew Faye was probably outraged at Diana for not using her powers to protect her, and part of Diana didn’t blame the girl. After all, she didn’t know what it felt like to be her, how confused and conflicted she was. Right now, the only feeling Faye was probably nurturing was of her own injuries. And for Diana, those were all that mattered.

The cell phone rang for what seemed like an eternity. Diana was about to give up when she heard the husky familiar voice on the other side of the line answering the call at last, “Didn’t you get it that I’m not in the mood to speak to you?”

“I needed to hear from you.” Diana quickly replied, her fingers

pressing the phone harder against her ear. “How are you feeling?”

“Like shit.” Faye answered back, “How else would I be feeling?”

Last time Diana saw her, only minor cuts could be seen, but by this morning she was sure more bruises would be apparent, and the girl in question would make those seem like deadly injuries only to make her feel guiltier.

“I’m sorry...” She said in an attempt to apologize.

“Yeah well, you giving me a lame ‘I’m sorry’ is not going to fix my pain now, will it?” she paused, “Bye, Diana.”

“Wait, I wanna see you. We *need* to talk. Please, let’s meet at the abandoned house later.” Diana pleaded, but Faye hung up on her anyways.

Diana held her phone tightly against her chest. What already was a delicate situation between them, had gotten worse. Faye insisted she didn’t want to see Diana, but the girl wasn’t willing to give up just yet. She was about to text her with another plea for a meeting when she received an incoming text: ‘9pm’

Diana couldn’t help but smile and hoped they would be able to sort through their issues.

Diana parked her car a few meters away from the abandoned house, in a clearing by the side of the road just on the edge of the forest. It was pitch-dark, but she didn’t need lights to find her way through the tall trees and bushes that encircled the trail to the house. She had made that same path so many times before in her life, that there was no way she could get herself lost there.

She entered the decrepit house, making her way to the spacious main room, turning the lights on and lighting some candles as well. The girl sat down in one of the timeworn sofas and fished for an old book inside her

bag. Diana had brought her Book of Shadows to do some reading while waiting for Faye. She would never get tired of reading through the old pages of her family's book. Every time she went through them, she would learn something new.

Her eyes combed through every single detail in every single old sheet of paper containing innumerable spells. She didn't spot anything new until her eyes caught a glimpse of a hidden symbol inside one sheet of paper against the dim light of a lamp. *What's this?* She had read somewhere that witches used to separate paper to write secret things inside... *Perhaps it's something important...*

Intrigued, Diana got up from her seat, resting the Book of Shadows on the worn-out table, her fingers carefully working in trying to slip the glued papers apart. After few minutes, the girl had found out a secret page about dark magic —Balcoin magic. *I knew it...* Something within Diana told her that she should look harder for something about her dark magic in her book, and her instincts were right.

As she read the secrets contained in the sheet of paper, her eyes grew wider. *Is that even possible?!* She wondered to herself, the girl so lost in her thought that didn't even hear someone sneaking up on her.

"If Faye finds out..." Diana whispered unaware that the girl in question was standing right behind her on that moment.

"If I find out what now?" Faye whispered making the girl before her jump one foot off the ground.

"Jesus, Faye! You scared me," She turned startled, holding the secret sheet of paper behind her back.

"I thought you knew I was coming," the girl casually said, her narrowed eyes scanning Diana's anxious features.

"But it's almost 10pm," The shorter brunette replied checking her

watch, nervously changing her footing “I thought you weren’t coming anymore.”

“I got distracted, but I’m here now, so... If I find out what?” Faye inquired again, one eyebrow rising in curiosity.

“Find out what?” Diana echoed the taller girl, trying to hide the page she was still holding behind her back.

“Don’t play dumb with me, Diana. You’re hiding something,” she said while getting dangerously close to the uneasy girl, pinning her against the table. Looking over the girl’s shoulder, she saw Diana’s hands sneakily hiding a paper under a book. “Is that some wicked new spell?”

“I don’t know what you’re talking about” Diana spoke as casually as possible, trying to keep a straight face.

“Oh, really?” Faye skeptically asked, leaning back to intensely gaze at Diana for a short moment, only to swiftly grab the sheet of paper from behind the girl’s back, already taking a peek at it. “Ha! I knew it!”

Diana tried to get the paper back, but Faye deflected her every attempt. “Faye! That’s not a good idea—”

“Is it *that* good?” she asked interrupting Diana, turning her gaze back at the girl, in time to see her roll her eyes finally giving up the fight over the spell.

“It’s about dark magic” Diana sighed in defeat. “So I don’t think it is *any* good.”

“Hm, I doubt it. Let me see...” Faye smirked before turning her back to Diana to read the spell.

Silence fell upon them as Faye’s eyes scanned the page from top to bottom, a mischievous smile forming in the corner of her lips right before she finished and looked up at Diana, who was watching her from near the table.

“Power Extraction Spell... that extracts dark magic from one witch, to grant it to another...?” She questioned Diana, her eyes glowing from excitement after the girl slightly nodded in reply. “Let’s do it”

“No way,” Diana shook her head, sternly saying ‘no’.

The taller brunette rolled her eyes at Diana’s answer and stepped closer to the girl. “Oh, come on, Diana! You don’t even want your dark powers! Worse that could happen is you giving me a disease transmissible by blood. And if that’s the case, I know a way that’s even more fun than spells,” she teased and smirked.

“That’s *not* funny. And I do not have any diseases, thank you very much.” She replied. “This spell is way out of our league. Whoever wrote it was practicing a different kind of magic than ours, it’s too risky. Besides, we don’t know what the Balcoin blood can do to a normal person.” She reasoned.

“But I’m *not* normal. I’m also a witch, remember? I have magic inside of me, but it’s bound by that freaking ritual you forced us to do. We need solo magic. *I* need solo magic. I hate not being able to protect myself, and I don’t want to depend on anyone. And really don’t wanna depend on *you* having to tap into your dark magic, ‘cause we both saw what happened to me... Unless you unbound the circle, you better give us some of your indy magic to protect ourselves with.” Faye snapped.

“Faye, this is wrong! Dark magic shouldn’t be spread like this, like... like an infection!” She stepped forward.

“Diana, this wasn’t in your book by mistake. This may be the only way to defeat whoever is after us, once and for all.” Faye pushed. “I’m not gonna stand here and watch them take us down one by one, but I’m gonna need some weapons to fight with, since you clearly don’t want to use your own.”

“Faye, you know that’s not fair. I can and I will protect every single one of you,” she continued, “but not like that. Besides, we don’t know if the spell will actually work.”

“Well, there’s just one way to find out. I don’t mind being your magic lab rat,” she shrugged, her body craving for her lost individual power.

“I would never test a spell on you.” Diana replied in a whisper. The tension between them was palpable. So much needed to be said, worked through, yet the desire to turn them all into actions was evident and Faye decided to use that to her advantage.

“Not even if I ask *nice*ly?” Faye asked in a seductive tone, while she stealthily hid the spell in the back pocket of her jeans.

“Faye, don’t...” Diana spoke, her voice cracking and her eyes involuntarily closing.

“Don’t what?” She softly asked, her mouth inches away from the other girls.

“We need to talk...” the shorter brunette tried to reply, but Faye’s grip on her hips made her mind draw a blank.

“I prefer to *not* talk,” the girl replied, pressing her body flush against Diana’s, their mouths crashed hungrily against one another.

The voracity of Faye’s actions on Diana made both girls stumble a couple of steps back, stopping when they found the nearest table behind the shorter brunette. Lightly sucking the other girl’s bottom lip into her mouth, Faye’s hands descent from her grip on Diana’s hips, to caress the girl’s thighs, just as Diana’s hands found their way to her neck and shoulders to tug her closer.

Faye’s hands moved suddenly from Diana’s thighs to the back of her knees, positioning herself between her legs as she propped the girl up and sat her on the table with a thrust of her hips, making Diana gasp against her

mouth. Diana quickly deepened the kiss, her hands clasped on Faye's dark locks, closing the distance between them.

"So I take I may have chosen my words incorrectly today, haven't I?" A familiar voice carrying a heavy accent came out of nowhere startling both girls. *"I suppose this would be the lucky girl."*

"Grant! How did you-?" Diana jumped off the table, pushing Faye away.

"Grant? Who is *Grant*!?" Faye turned around with a puzzled look.

"Quite an interesting hiding place you have here." He looked around the house. *"Reminds me a bit of 'Lost Boy', with a girly vibe, though. I like it."* His voice was much darker than what Diana recalled from that morning, it had a pinch of blackness in it.

"What- what are you doing here? Have you- Have you been following me?!" Diana questioned suspiciously.

"Guilty." He raised an eyebrow and took a few steps closer.

"You... you, must be a witch hunter then?" Diana spoke almost to herself. "Faye, run!" she commanded, her eyes locked with Grant's cold stare.

"You're quite the smart gal, Diana. Just not smart enough to not talk to strangers." Grant looked at both girls, Diana looking even more terrified than the taller girl behind her. *"Isn't that the sort of thing a good daddy would teach their infant?"*

"Hey, koala bear slash witch hunter, you take that back!" Faye jumped from Diana's shelter.

"Faye, I told you to get away from here!" She said, standing between Grant and Faye once more.

"Protecting your girlfriend? Lovely." He pressed his palm against the amulet around his neck, and promptly flung Faye across the room.

Diana watched as Faye's body hit the wall with a thud, the girl began to choke, gasping for air as the room slowly faded.

"Grant-" Diana muttered. "Why are you doing this?" She tried to move towards him but an invisible force kept her feet firmly planted on the ground.

This was no coincidence, Diana thought to herself, someone had to be after them for a reason. "Who sent you?" she asked.

"You mean who sent us?"

As soon as the sentence was over, Diana felt the group gather around her, witch hunters coming from every corner, two grabbing hold of Faye, binding her feet and hands together, and others rushing in her direction.

"You know, it's such a shame to do you pretty gals harm, but this is an occupational hazard." Grant shrugged as all of the witch hunters that once surrounded Diana retreated a few steps back as a ring of fire inflamed around her, leaving her powerless inside it.

Faye screamed as loud as she could, trying to free herself from the restraints that trapped her. This whole 'getting attacked by witch hunters' routine was starting to get old. She knew it was hopeless and once again she knew Diana wasn't going to save her.

Diana couldn't properly see Faye through the tall flames, and all the noises in the room were conflicting and confusing. She heard fire cracking, Latin chanting, yet something else drew her in. The noises of her friends struggle and screams. She closed her eyes, letting a single tear fall.

In the back of her mind, she searched for a spell from her Book of Shadows. One to communicate with her Circle members, she had used it a few times before with Adam and even Cassie, and just like the prior times, she heard Faye's voice clearer than ever. Their essences were now combined as well as their power.

'Diana, I feel you. Let's take them down,' she heard Faye excitedly say inside her head.

Something felt odd to Diana. If those witch hunters were so powerful, how come they hadn't blocked their powers?

It just didn't seem right. Unless they wanted her to use her magic. Unless she was falling right inside a trap set by... *'DIANA! We gotta do it fast!'* Faye commanded.

'It could be a tr-' She was interrupted.

'Yeah, that's nice, we can discuss it later when we're NOT DEAD! Let's do something!' she impatiently stated.

Diana took a deep breath. Faye was right, even if this was a trap, it would be best if they first managed to stay alive *'Alright, think fire'*

'Really, you couldn't come up with something better than that?' Faye's snarky comeback was quick, just as quick as the ring of fire around them shot towards the witch hunters, the flames engulfing in their jackets and pants.

They scattered across the room, scrambling to find the exit. In the middle of chaos, Diana saw Grant leaving, a satisfied smile spread across his face. A smile that said 'mission accomplished.'

When the crowd cleared and the fire burnt out, Faye ran to Diana's side "Get up, let's go get them! We can use this again and..." she pulled the girl by the hand, but found immediate reluctance.

"No, Faye. I don't think we should, let them go. They obviously have something bigger planned. Let's not fall in this trap just the two of us, we need the circle." Diana's words were careful, as she looked around the mess left by their aggressors.

"Let them go?!? What, don't tell me you're afraid of them." Faye snorted, the adrenaline pumping in her veins, begging for more action.

“Do you really wanna know what I’m afraid of?” Diana got up slowly. “Seeing you getting hurt again. I can’t risk that,” her gaze was fixed on the ground, avoiding the girl’s deep stare.

Faye’s heart fell at Diana’s words, and she shifted uncomfortably on her position, “I don’t need you treating me like a baby, Diana.”

“I’m not. I just... I can’t stand seeing you getting hurt again.” Diana raised her hand when Faye tried to argue. “Look, I know you would love to be confrontational right now, and I know how good you are at it, but can you please just go with me on this one? For the first time in your life?”

Faye smirked at Diana’s words. She could let it go for now, but this subject was definitely still open for discussion. “Fine, Meade. You win this round.”

“Well, the way I see it, we both won.” Diana replied, always the team player. “You see what we can do with our Circle magic? Without having to resort to... Other sources,” her words trailed, “imagine what we can do with the whole Circle.” Diana reveled in the possibilities. “But I’m still not sure if we’re safe here anymore.”

“Yeah, me neither. Who told those guys where this place was... I’d bet my extremely expensive boots that it was your precious sister” Faye huffed.

“Faye!” Diana shot her a serious stare, “not now.”

“Ok, fine.” Faye paused for a second, knowing she overstepped their boundaries. The two gathered their belongings and headed towards the door.

“And where did you meet Prince Kangaroo anyways?”

“Are you annoying me on purpose? ‘Cause it already worked, you can stop now!” Diana blurted out, fishing for her car keys.

“Feisty answer for a simple question...” Faye hummed and rolled her

eyes and Diana's response was almost explosive.

"We met at the Boathouse, he bought me coffee, we talked, he tricked me and almost tried to kill us. The end. Can we drop this now?" She asked irritably, her breathing ragged, making her way to exit the house.

"Where do you think you're going?" Faye inquired, following shortly behind Diana.

"Home, it's not safe here. They could come back and maybe we wouldn't be so lucky next time. We have to warn the circle, let them know what we were capable of together" Diana explained, not slowing her pace.

"Oh no. No, no. You are not leaving until I have my solo magic back!" Faye grabbed Diana by her arm.

"Faye!" The girl looked angrily at the grip on her arm, pulling it back to rest on her side. "We discussed this already! And I said No!"

"Can't you see that we have to try this spell? Tonight, and all of the other nights should prove to you that if they strike again against one of us while we're alone, we won't have magic to fight back?" She argued, concern evident in her voice. "It doesn't hurt to try."

Diana took a deep breath. Faye had a point. "Fine! You better be right about this!"

"That's my girl" Faye cheered, making evident she was not only trying to protect herself, but also wanted to have fun with the magic she'd be given.

"Give me the paper," Diana rolled her eyes.

There was no chanting Latin or any other weird language, all they needed was six large candles, a bowl with an common anointed oil made from some of the roots and herbs they used to grown inside the abandoned house, a ritual dagger, two witches — of course — and the main ingredient — the Balcoin Blood — which Diana had wished on countless occasions

that she didn't have it running through her veins.

Faye watched as Diana settled the ingredients gracefully, in her usual organized manner. Cautious. Precise. Diana's face wreaked of disappointment and Faye could tell the other girl was not pleased with performing this spell.

"You don't trust me," she blurted out.

"What?" Diana looked back at her, her sudden statement breaking the silence in an unwelcomed manner.

"After all we've been through, after me getting hurt over and over, you don't trust me. You still don't wanna do this," Faye shook her head in annoyance. How much harm did Diana think she was going to do with this solo magic anyway?

"That's not true," Diana stated simply, turning her attention back to the ingredients.

"What's that? Maybe you wanna say it to my face," she demanded, taking a step closer to Diana and grabbing her by the chin.

"You're wrong," she gulped, Faye's stare burning her eyes, but she managed to not look away.

In that moment, Faye noticed something deep inside. Something she couldn't quite figure out.

"What is it then?" she asked in a lower tone.

"It's everything, Faye. The whole situation we're in. Do you even have to ask me? I mean, look around," she motioned to the chaos left by the most recent attack. "This is what they're going to keep doing to our lives. Breaking in without being invited, turning everything upside down, harming us when it's convenient for them, or when it's suitable for whatever sick plan they have in their sadistic minds."

Diana's words were heavy, the emotion in them so evident, so

palpable. “And I can’t stand who I am. What I carry. What everyone expects me to be, to do. For the first time, I don’t think I’m able to live up to everybody’s expectations.” Tears fell from the girls eyes, “and I can’t stand seeing you, or anyone else get hurt anymore. I won’t let them...” she never finished her sentence as Faye pulled her into a tight embrace.

“Diana...” Faye tried to find the right words to comfort the girl. Except comforting was far from being her specialty. “We should talk about this, I mean – if you want to?” Diana didn’t answer. “Look, if there’s anyone who can handle this, it’s you.” Faye caressed her back “I trust you, if that means anything to you. I know you can do this. And if you want me to, if you let me, I can help.” Faye let her feelings towards the girl rise to the surface, making her more nervous as to where this was headed. What was the boundary between comforting and not letting the feelings she yet hadn’t quite figured out show?

“Faye...” Diana’s lips quivered as she pulled back from the hug. This was probably the first time Faye had ever shown clear affection towards her. Not one hidden behind jokes or sarcasm. She felt honesty in her words.

Wiping away her tears and feeling her heart, less heavy, she lead Faye by hand to the center of the main room, “Let’s get this over with.”

They both sat facing each other in the middle of the room, the ingredients surrounding them. Faye helped Diana by drawing the Balcoin sigil across the wooden floorboards, while the other girl mixed the anointed oil ingredients in a small marble bowl. Grabbing hold of a candle, the taller brunette began dropping the hot liquid wax onto the cold ground at first forming a triangle, its top facing North, then crossing its inside with three straight lines, that came out on the top in a cross. On the right side of the cross, she drew a shape of a throwing star with six points, and lastly,

the girl enclosed the triangle in a circle. With the symbol drawn, Faye placed the six candles on the circle lining, three of them precisely on the edges of the triangle where they met the circle, and stood there apprehensively gazing at her work.

Since learning that dark magic Barbie could possibly have a sibling in the circle, Faye practically begged to let it be her. The possibilities of what the dark blood running inside the veins would allow her to do were dangerous, exciting. She was without a doubt disappointed to find out that the girl she'd be hooking up with was the other child with dark magic. The idea of all that wasted potential infuriated Faye because from the beginning she believe that power was meant for her.

For some reason, she buried her jealous and focused on the devastated girl in front of her. She had a different perspective now, and in a way she looked up to Diana.

Faye cleared her throat, snapping back to reality, "So now what?" She asked, turning back towards an anxious Diana.

"The Balcoin symbol should help channel my power to you," Diana mentioned to Faye, as if she was reassuring the girl about the steps of the spell.

"I know," Faye vaguely replied, watching her friends shaky hands hold the dagger and bowl as she walked in the circle.

"Are you sure you want to do this?" The girl asked one last time, her frown increasing with concern.

"Diana, just do it." Faye requested.

They fell in silence shortly after that and the only sound being heard in the abandoned house was of their rapid breathing and hearts beating loudly. It's like nothing they'd ever done before, and it felt different and Faye could already feel it.

They placed themselves in the middle of the triangle, facing the cross, Diana sitting behind Faye. “Your shirt,” Diana spoke in a firm tone, asking for her to remove the clothing.

Faye flashed her an eerie smile, and quickly complied. Diana grabbed the sharp pointed athame, its black handle carved with a crescent moon and runes. Her hands shaking violently as she took a sharp breath, and concentrated on hurting Faye as little as possible.

Faye’s body had to channel the energy. For that, they needed to open the five major energy points along her spine. The tip of the blade Diana held, slightly carved Faye’s flawless skin, puncturing minor cuts from below her neck till the small of her back, little droplets of blood pouring from the fresh wounds.

Taking the blade away from Faye’s back, Diana cut her left palm, her blood pouring inside the bowl, and mixed it with the anointed oil. She dipped her index and middle fingers in the reddish liquid, and tenderly smeared it against the cuts in Faye’s back.

When she finished applying the solution on the last of the five points along Faye’s spine, the candles around them burst into flames, a confirmation that the spell was working.

Faye could feel her body opening to receive Diana’s energy. And just like the candles, she felt her core erupted in a gush of a hot and tainted power, indicating that she was now tethered to Diana through blood.

As for the other girl, she could feel the flow of her energy slowly pouring out of her body.

When the candle flames put out by themselves, the spell was done, and both girls let go of the air neither realizing that they had been holding each other the entire time.

Almost immediately, Diana felt an unusual feeling tugging at her core.

It felt like an invisible cord linking her to Faye.

“Wow, I can feel it...” Faye stated, mesmerized. “It’s so different. It’s stronger than circle magic.”

“Yeah, just be careful and don’t let it consume you,” Diana’s warning turned into a plea.

“Your magic is the freaking bomb, Diana! Why don’t you ever use it?” Faye’s eyes beamed.

“Because last time I checked, bombs aren’t to be played with, Faye. Promise me you won’t use it unless it’s absolutely necessary?” Diana begged.

“Well, we do have very different views on what’s necess-“

“Faye!”

“Ok. I promise.”

And deep inside Faye knew Diana was right. She would be careful with this. After all, Diana trusted her with her magic.

“I hope you’re happy now.” Diana softly said, cleaning the athame on a white cloth.

“Oh, I’m more than happy.” She twirled around like a giddy ballerina. “I think I have some thanking to do.”

“Faye... What are you doing?” Diana stared wide eyed at Faye already running her hands along her back.

“Thanking you for being so generous in sharing your indy magic with me.” She replied, already leaving a trail of kisses along Diana’s neck.

“You would never shut up about it if I didn’t do it...” Diana’s mouth dropped at the sudden caresses, but she was certainly not complaining.

“What’s with the energy flowing between us now? Is it always going to be like this?” Faye pressed her plump lips harder against Diana’s pulse point, sucking gently on the skin, the tingly feeling foliating on her skin

“Tell me you’re feeling that too.”

Diana’s legs failed her at Faye’s question and they both stumbled to the floor, her back clashing against the wooden boards.

“I’ll take that as a yes.” Faye’s smile was wicked, hungry, carnal.

“Wait...” Diana’s hands stopped Faye’s kisses for a second. “What if someone comes back here?” She pondered.

“I’ll kick their sorry asses with my magic.” She joked, pleased with the frown she earned from Diana. “No one’s coming here. Please, Di. You and I know we need this.”

There was no denying there. In fact, Diana needed this even before they performed the spell. As much as she wanted to deny it, she craved Faye more and more as the days went on. And it was scary. “Faye... We should talk about this first.”

“This what?” Faye stopped for a moment to listen to Diana.

“This thing that has been going on between us. We need to figure this out,” she motioned between them.

“What is there to figure out? It’s just two sexy single girls, full of raging hormones, going hot and heavy with each other every so often.” Faye shrugged, trying once more to oversimplify something she knew was much more complicated than that.

“You know there’s more than that,” Diana shook her head. She hated not being in control of her feelings, in fact, not having control over anything when it came to her and Faye.

“I do.” Faye licked her lips. “But I really don’t think I can talk about it properly with all this... tension.”

“But we’ll talk?”

“Yes” Faye kissed her once more.

“Soon?” Diana demanded.

“Depends on your definition of soon, ‘cause I may have some plans for the next...” Faye interrupted.

“Faye, I’m serious.” Diana ran her fingers on Faye’s lips, but tried to keep her face stern despite the turmoil of feelings burning inside her.

“Yes.” She simply replied, “kiss me now.” Faye stood in her position, waiting until Diana captured her lips with her own and both girls finally surrendered to their desire for one another.

Cassie got a phone call from the mysterious man her father talked about late that night, the strong voice with an Aussie accent on the other side requested a meeting. She didn’t know who he was, or his relationship with her father, but apparently Blackwell was fond enough of him to include him in the grand scheme of things.

Arriving at the meeting place just outside town, Cassie pulled her car over on the road, and was immediately approached by the tall blonde man with looks that killed.

“Cassie Blake. John Blackwell’s protégé... We finally meet.” The charming man offered his hand.

“Are you Grant?” Cassie hesitantly asked, shaking his strong hand.

“Indeed, I am.” A smile formed in the corner of his lips.

“So, how did it go?” the girl anxiously questioned.

“Your father’s medallion tells me she has started spreading her magic throughout the circle. Starting with the witch she’s involved with, of course.”

“So she has used it?!” Cassie jumped from her seat.

“I’m afraid she has.” Grant nodded and Cassie analyzed his words.

Spreading the Balcoin blood was far from what Blackwell had in mind, and now that her sister went there, Cassie knew they had to act fast before

her father's plans came crashing down.

“Wait, the witch she's involved with? What does that mean? Adam?”
She asked with a puzzled look on her face.

“It means that I may have learned something really interesting to use against her now...” He vaguely stated as he walked closer to her to continue the conversation.

CHAPTER SIX

“Remind me again why I’m hanging out with you losers, it’s summer.” Faye requested from her position at the end of the couch next to Diana who was squished between her and Melissa.

“Because we’re *bonding*.” Adam answered sourly from the floor, clearly not all that amused with the situation either. “Outside of the circle.”

“Will spin the bottle make another appearance?” Nick said nonchalantly as he perked up in his chair.

“Uh, no.” said Melissa.

Nick slouched back into his former position and glared at Melissa who in turn winked at the brooding blonde boy.

“It’s important to form some kind of connection outside of the circle.” Diana continued seriously, “So that we can count on each other when we need to.”

“Why?” Faye asked, “We’ve got the dark magic twins on our side, who needs Circle magic anyways.”

“We’re not relying on dark magic.” Diana said promptly, shooting Faye a scathing look. Cassie was sitting precariously on the arm of the couch next to Melissa either ignoring the comment or completely missed it.

“It’s too dangerous to play around with that kind of magic.” Melissa pointed out reasonably.

“I agree with Melissa,” added Adam.

Nick sat there silent picking the bits of leaves from his latest crop out

from underneath his nails. “Diana probably couldn’t even handle her dark magic, let alone save any of us from an attack,” Nick said under his breath.

“Don’t be a dick,” Melissa pointed out.

“I’m not being a dick, I’m just saying,” Nick continued to pick the remnants of grassy particles from his half bitten nail beds. “She’s like holier than the Virgin Mary.”

Faye let out a faint laugh, and replied, “Virgin... yeah right.”

Diana jabbed Faye in the side as she clenched her teeth at the girl’s careless statement. Faye fumbled for recovery, “You know—because, we all know Diana and Adam were doing the nasty when they were together.” She cleared her throat.

Neither Adam nor Diana denied the accusation, and Melissa, Cassie and Nick didn’t say a word. The awkwardness spoke for itself. Cassie looked to Adam, who then looked back. It was clear the two had had the ‘I’ve slept with someone else’ conversation before so it wasn’t that big of a shock that two people who had been dating for several years were in fact intimate together.

The silence finally broke and Adam said swiftly, “You’re always starting trouble Faye.”

“Well, whatever.” She huffed, reaching down to snatch the remote from Adam’s hand.

“Hey!” Adam exclaimed irritably.

“My house, my remote.” Faye snapped as she flicked the TV on.

Adam shot Diana a look that said *‘I told you this would happen,’* while Faye began to flick through the channels to find something to watch “No, no, pooppy shit, no, no, crap, boring, no...”

“I told you this would happen.” Adam finally said out loud, apparently unable to control his mouth any longer.

Faye looked to Diana, then back to Adam and put out her hand to slightly fling him out of his chair and against the wall, but Diana swiped Faye's hand back down to her side and leaned in to scold her. "That's not what I gave you the power for, Faye. Control yourself!" she whispered in an angry tone.

Faye was about to snap out a retort when an image finally appeared on the screen and her finger froze in place on the channel up button.

"Go on kiddo. Take it."

The child scooted backwards; reluctant to take whatever the clown hidden under the house was offering him.

"Faye..." Melissa warned carefully.

"Ooooh you want it, don't you Georgie?" the clown asked. Still the small boy looked reluctant "Of course you do. And I've got candy and rides and all sorts of surprises down here. And balloons too. All colors."

"Do they float?" Georgie asked innocently.

"Faye, you shouldn't watch this." Diana said softly much to Cassie's confusion. "Turn it off."

Still, Faye remained frozen, her wide-eyed gaze fixed on the television screen as the movie continued to play.

"Oh yes...they float Georgie. They float."

Apparently convinced by the creepy clown's assurances, Georgie scooted close and reached down.

"And when you're down here with me, you'll float too!" the clown reached up and grabbed Georgie's arm, causing him to scream.

Diana reached out and snatched the remote from Faye's hand, quickly flicking the television off but not before the camera panned in on the clown's face, his evil grin displaying his razor sharp teeth. The room fell silent for a few seconds until Faye lurched to her feet and took off towards

the door.

“Faye!” Melissa called after her. She started to get up to follow her but Diana reached over and gripped her wrist to pull her back down to the couch.

“Give her a minute.”

“I feel like I’m missing something.” Cassie spoke up, her expression clearly saying she had no idea what was going on.

“Faye’s scared of clowns.” Adam answered carelessly “It’s not a big deal.”

“It’s not a big deal?” Diana stood up from the couch and glared at her ex, “When did you get so insensitive?” She shook her head in disgust and started for the door, calling over her shoulder, “maybe Cassie’s dark nature is wearing off on you.”

“Whoa, how did I get dragged into this?” Cassie replied innocently, to the three people still remaining in the room.

“I didn’t even know they were friends,” added Nick.

“I don’t think they are,” said Adam.

“Well clearly we’re missing something, seeing as Diana was just defending Faye, which was weird by the way.” Cassie said as her eyes bugged out of her tiny blonde head.

Nick was vaguely paying attention to the conversation at hand, which was normal behavior for Nick. And Melissa continued to roll her eyes while staring at Adam, who still had an evil grin on his face since he called Faye out on her clown phobia.

“What?” Adam asked innocently “It’s just a silly fear! Like those people who actually think the world is going to end this year. Complete nonsense!”

“Now you’re an expert on the Mayan calendar?” said Melissa.

“That’s beside the point, I’m sure Adam wouldn’t be saying that if he had something he was deathly afraid of.” Cassie added with a frown.

“Like being locked in a room with Faye? That’s a terrifying thought!” He giggled.

“You guys are giving me a headache,” said Nick, “can’t we just put something on and not talk to each other for the next two hours and call it a day?” He didn’t look up from his task.

Adam threw up his hands in defeat before turning to stare at the blank TV screen.

“Faye?” Diana called quietly as she lightly knocked on Faye’s bedroom door “Faye, are you okay?”

“I’m fine!” Faye called back, though her voice was weak and slightly shaky. “Go away.”

Diana gripped the door handle and hesitated for a split second before making up her mind and opening the door. She stepped inside of the room to see Faye curled up in a fetal position on the bed, a pillow pulled to her chest. The sight was pathetic to say the least, but Diana was trying not to laugh at how distraught the 17-year-old was over a measly clown.

“I said I’m *fine!*” Faye exclaimed, lifting her head to shoot Diana a glare, “Get out of my room.”

Diana closed the door behind her and slowly walked over to sit on the bed behind Faye. Placing a hand on Faye’s back, she noticed the other girl was shaking ever so slightly. “How do you really feel?”

She turned away from Diana into her previous position and said nothing.

Diana carefully maneuvered onto her side and pressed her front against Faye’s back, causing her to tense.

“It’s just me.” She whispered reassuringly as she curled an arm around Faye’s waist. They fell back into silence for a couple of seconds, the only sound being Faye’s rapid breathing until Diana couldn’t take it anymore and spoke up, “Faye, you have to tell me what you’re feeling.”

“Can’t breathe.” Faye answered breathlessly. “Chest hurts, my heart’s beating too fast...I feel like I can’t...like...”

“Shhh...” Diana shushed Faye gently, recognizing the fact that she was starting to hyperventilate, “it’s okay.”

Faye gripped Diana’s hand in front of her and pulled it to her chest, resting it lightly over her heart. Diana could feel the fast beating against her palm and pressed even closer in response.

“I feel like I can’t breathe o-or move.” She whispered, her voice tainted with panic “Diana...”

“I know.” She murmured when Faye trailed off. She hugged Faye tighter in an attempt to provide any kind of comfort possible.

“Diana, can you move?” Faye requested quietly, “I need to see you.”

“Oh... of course.” Diana quickly let go of Faye and carefully clambered over her to lie in front of her instead of behind her. She threw an arm over Faye’s waist and slowly shuffled close until they were merely a breath away from each other, “hey.”

“H-hey.” Faye whispered shakily.

Diana searched the fear filled eyes in front of her, her heart aching with empathy for what Faye was going through. After a moment or so of silence Faye opened her mouth to say something but promptly shut it again.

“What?” Diana asked, having noticed the movement. “What is it?”

“Nothing. Just...you feel far away even though you’re right there.” Faye admitted bashfully.

Diana instantly tried to meld herself closer to Faye’s body, even going

so far as to throw her right leg over Faye's thighs to draw her close.

"You probably think I'm being pathetic." Faye muttered self-deprecatingly, "at least you have something to use against me now, huh?"

Diana almost pulled back at the sudden accusation but mindful of Faye's fragile state, she stopped herself at the last second. "I would never use this against you. How could you even *think* tha...nevermind. I just wouldn't, okay?"

"I'm such a bitch to you, I don't even know why you put up with me," Faye muttered.

"You're not that big of a bitch, Chamberlain," Diana smirked, the girls slightly closer than before. "As much as you don't want to admit it, you have some soft spots inside you... that not many people get to see."

Faye nodded shortly and clenched her hands around Diana's shirt to tug her closer.

"If I get any closer, I'm going to end up kissing you." Diana joked in an attempt to distract Faye from whatever she was thinking about.

"Diana, why are you really up here?" Faye asked cautiously, seemingly ignoring the comment, "with me?"

"Because you're my friend and I don't like to see you upset." Diana answered automatically. She paused for a moment before continuing earnestly, "I remember seeing you like this when we were younger...only I couldn't go after you then because we weren't exactly friends."

"We're friends?" said Faye.

"Yeah, we are." Diana confirmed. "I mean it Faye, I should have gone after you all those years ago. Been supportive."

"I wouldn't have wanted you to." Faye confessed quietly.

"I still wish I had." Diana muttered sadly.

Faye closed her eyes, willing back the emotions coursing through her.

“I’m going to say something really pathetic but I need you to know.”

“Know what?” Diana asked carefully, hugging Faye even tighter. “You can tell me.”

Faye opened her eyes to reveal nervous tears.

“I’m really *really* fucking scared. I know you think it’s stupid but I can’t stop thinking about them...”

“It’s not stupid.” Diana whispered when Faye trailed off. She leaned up to press a lingering kiss to Faye’s forehead before settling back into her previous position. She offered Faye a light squeeze and a warm smile. “I can’t blame you anyway. They’re creepy little bastards.”

Faye stared at Diana in shock for a moment before her lips turned up into a smile and a soft laugh escaped her. “I can’t believe Diana Meade, little miss prefect just swore.”

“Well you better believe it.” Diana joked, lightly nudging Faye’s nose with her own.

Faye’s smile gradually faded, her feelings taking over and she hurriedly tightened her grip on Diana’s shirt again. “You’ll stay with me until it passes?”

“There’s nowhere else I’d rather be.” Diana answered solemnly.

“They’ve been up there for a while,” said Cassie. “Do you think we should check on them?”

Melissa shrugged and Nick didn’t acknowledge Cassie’s question.

“With any luck Diana will use her dark magic on her, and finally put Faye in her place.”

Nick broke his silence and lifted his head from picking his nails to mock Adam, “with any luck they’re making out right now.”

“Not nice, Adam, and ew, Nick,” said Melissa.

“Let’s just bail, they clearly forgot about us, and I need to do stuff,” said Nick.

“Like what?”

“You Melissa, you.” He winked at the girl who was turning a dark pink before his very eyes. “Want to come home with me? We can... chill.”

Melissa gave herself a second to think, she didn’t want to be rude and leave her friends behind for a guy... but they were obviously occupied at the moment and by the time they realized everyone had left they would probably not even care. She looked at Nick as if she was going to say no, then answered, “fine, let’s go.”

The two rose to their feet and latched hands before nodding to Cassie and Adam who remained on separate couches.

“So... I guess that’s our cue to leave too?” smiled Cassie.

“Want me to give you a ride...” Adam questioned.

“That would be great,” she stood up from the couch, “you can come over... I mean, if you want.”

Adam didn’t object and motioned to walk out of the house and into the car with him.

CHAPTER SEVEN

“We are not making progress here!” Blackwell slammed his fist against the table, worn out papers containing ancient spells flying with the forceful hit. “Diana keeps distancing herself from you and times running out. I don’t know about you, but I’m tired of waiting.” He turned the table over in a stint of rage.

Cassie stared wide eyed at the childish display, walking towards her father and placing a reassuring hand on his large shoulders. “I know you are, but I promise I now know how to push her over the edge.”

“I’m listening,” his face was stern.

“She’s in love.” Cassie awkwardly blurted out.

“What?” His face fell at how cliché the plan sounded. “Well perhaps I should salute her for managing to fool around with boys whilst ruining my every plans.” He shook his head.

“No, you’re missing the point here,” Cassie circled her father once more, like a puppy begging for attention. “Love is her weakness and it can be her downfall. We can use that in our favor and I can guarantee you it will work.”

“Cassie, I don’t mean to offend you, but you do realize the magnitude of the situation? It won’t be attained with silly little love games.” Blackwell showed no interest in this. After all they’ve tried, he was not foolish enough to expect matters of the heart could solve this problem.

“But you don’t understand, she’s not in love with someone random,”

Cassie continued, despite her father's disinterest.

"Well then who is it?" He questioned.

"Faye." She looked at him behind hooded eyes, waiting for his reaction to the news.

"Faye Chamberlain?!" He inquired, the name awkwardly leaving his mouth.

"What brought you to this conclusion?" He asked.

"Grant told me." The girl answered flashing her father a knowing smile.

"So I take it that you two finally met then," the man said with a cryptic smirk.

"We did. He followed Diana to the abandoned house yesterday, where she and Faye met," his daughter began to explain, "after that he told me what he caught them doing... trust me, you don't want the details. But, she definitely has strong feelings for her."

"Faye..." he paced around the room once more. "Faye, that could work." Blackwell thought about the shocking news for a few seconds before Cassie continued.

"It could and it will." Cassie spoke, determined.

"Very well, then I say we waste no time in taking action." He smirked. Cassie's revelation was definitely a game changer and this time they had a bigger player on their side: Diana's heart. "That was very clever, Cassie. I believe I taught you well." Blackwell proudly stated.

"Thanks, father." Cassie immediately replied with a large smile, helping him pick up scattered paper from the floor.

"So, where's Diana?" Cassie tried to sound as casual as possible while leading Faye upstairs. Obviously their whole plan would blow in their

faces if the girl decided not to come.

“Oh, you know how she’s around magic these days...” Faye rolled her eyes, “but me, now that I got my solo magic back? Trust me, you called the right girl for this job.” Faye hissed. Since Diana would not go anywhere near her black magic, it would be fun to see how Cassie interacted with it.

“I figured as much. But I think Diana might show up later anyway.” A smirk crossed Cassie’s face. *She wouldn’t leave her sweetie alone for too long*, she rolled her eyes at the thought as they walked into her room. The whole place was set up with candles, crystals and herbs, not to mention her Book of Shadows was lying on her bed. To Faye’s eyes, it was like Disneyland... but better. More magical. If that was even possible.

“Now that’s my kind of party,” Faye raised her eyebrows, inspecting the room and realizing Cassie’s magic gear now had a lot of items she wasn’t familiar with. *Black magic items*. A smile crossed Faye’s lips.

“So, what are we doing? Floating spells? Conjuring witches? Raising the dead?” She clapped her hands.

Cassie couldn’t help but laugh at the girl’s excitement. Things would have been so much easier if she were the other Blackwell, they would face literally zero resistance. “A protection spell.” Cassie lied.

What she really wanted to do was tell Faye the real plan, that her father needed Diana on their side and that witch hunters would soon be attacking her in order to force Diana to succumb to her dark magic, but she suppressed the urge and Faye’s smug gaze remained.

“Lame,” she huffed, “don’t tell me you’re joining Diana’s *‘black magic is so dangerous I’ll never use it’* fan club?” She shot Cassie a challenging look.

Oh, you’d be amazed, Cassie thought. “You know, there is truth behind Diana’s logic,” she pondered, but then continued anyways, “but I wouldn’t

hesitate to use it when it comes to protecting you guys.” She took pleasure in planting seeds of doubt inside of her sisters lover.

“It’s just all so unfair. The way I see it, if it’s **such a burden**, you should just pass it over to me and problem solved.” Faye shrugged when all the candles in the room lit by themselves. “See? This is the kind of stuff I should be doing,” she pouted in envy.

Cassie’s eyes grew wide. This was their sign. *Showtime.*

Summer had concluded, and school had started up again. Diana received Cassie’s invite to come to her place for something magic related, but Diana wasn’t sure if she was going or not. She was still trying to keep herself away from Cassie and all the dark magic, family drama talk, so perhaps going wasn’t a good idea. Faye on the other hand, was more than eager to go. Now that she had some of Diana’s dark magic to play with, the girl was dying to have the opportunity to use it and learn more about it. Even though the amount of power that Faye received probably wasn’t enough to bring her all that darkness that seems to be associated with Balcoin blood, she was still worried about Faye getting addicted considering her already dark personality.

That night she couldn’t shake a strange tingling sensation deep down in her core, one she had never felt before. It was somehow similar to what she used to feel every time Cassie’s dark magic called upon hers, but this time she could tell it wasn’t related to Cassie what-so-ever. Whatever that feeling was though, it made Diana instantly of Faye. And not in a good way... something told her there was something wrong. *Could that be a side effect of the bonding ritual we did?*, she thought to herself. It had to be. That was the only logical explanation. Without thinking any further, Diana went to check on Faye. She knew that the other girl would be at Cassie’s

tonight, so she immediately headed to the Blake's house.

"Cassie?" Diana screamed at the open door and quickly scanned the trail of destruction, leading her from the front door to upstairs.

Diana could hear the sounds of glass shattering in the distance which was followed by odd growls and yelling. When that irritating tingle in her stomach grew stronger she called to her sister, she didn't answer. She rapidly sprinted up the steps, tripping several times over her feet, following the sounds of chaos. She not only heard Cassie's voice, but a much more familiar one. The agonizing scream coming from the other girl tugged at Diana's heart strings, it was Faye.

Jumping through debris along Cassie's long hallway she finally reached Cassie's bedroom door, her head inspected the room just in time to see Faye fly across it, her back smashing against the wall with colossal force. On the other side of Cassie's bedroom, the blonde girl was being "held hostage" inside a bogus circle of crystals, who convincingly fidgeted around as if she were really trapped.

Diana's presence caught the four witch hunters' attention immediately, and she felt like a caged animal when the large, black hooded men strolled in her direction, crystals in hand, one of them already chanting something she couldn't quite decipher. Whatever it was, Diana thought, it certainly wasn't a welcome message. She needed to act fast before she was trapped like her sister.

There was no way out, no easy solution. Diana knew it was time to reach once again inside that part of herself that she loathed. The part she tried to ignore as much as possible, mostly because she wished it didn't exist at all. She apologized to herself for breaking her own promise of never again using that tainted magic, and diffidently let go of some of her restraints. She felt the gush of power coming from within, tearing through

her veins, contaminating the path it travelled until reaching the tip of her fingers. A chill broke through her spine when she felt she no longer had control over her actions. Her arms shot waves of energy towards the witch hunters and in a second they were on the ground, rendered powerless.

Not releasing her magical grip on the men, she felt her insides being torn. The real magic was coming. She felt like a distant observer as her black magic – or as she would consider, her curse - took over her, her eyes growing darker with every ounce of energy consumed.

As her magic flowed, demon worms poured from the witch hunters orifices, Diana watching the whole scene in disgust.

“Burn them!” Cassie yelled in despair from inside of her magical prison.

She looked at the crawling demons spread on Cassie’s floor with horror, still breathless from having her body somehow invaded in such a horrible manner. In a flip of her arm, Diana scattered the crystals which supposedly imprisoned her sister, the blonde jumping from it ready for action, she wasted no time burning the demons that squirmed on her floor.

When the fire finished, the air was invaded with heavy smoke. Cassie looked at the witch hunters, her gaze red with rage, “now, what do I do with you guys?”

Diana looked between Cassie and the witch hunters, afraid of what the small blonde was capable of. “Cassie, don’t do anything...”

“Maybe you want to save the speech for later and help us save our lives no-” in the brief moment Cassie turned her attention to Diana, the large men exited through Cassie’s window, cowardly falling from it along with the broken glass. Cassie raised her hand to stop them, but Diana stopped her instead. Within seconds, they all disappeared in single jumps, leaving Faye passed out, Diana speechless and Cassie angry.

“Diana, are you crazy?!? You’re just gonna let them get away with it?!” The feisty blonde raised her hands above her head.

“They’re not worth it” Diana rushed to Faye’s side, “and in case you haven’t noticed, we’ve got bigger problems to worry about.” She said, her face stern, checking for Faye’s pulse and to see if she was breathing. Everything seemed normal, but the girl still showed no signs of waking up as Diana repeatedly called her name.

“Well, in case **you** haven’t noticed, they are our bigger problem. And you can live in denial all you want, but unless we take care of them for good, this is just gonna keep happening over and over,” Cassie argued, clenching her fists in anger.

“So what? You wanted me to kill them, **sis**?” Diana said, her real suspicions rising to the surface.

“I want you to realize how serious this is. While you’re having fun playing altruist, our friends are getting hurt!” Cassie blurted out.

“Having fun? What part of any of this seems fun to you?” Diana looked at her with fury in her eyes.

“You know what? I don’t have time for this. I’ll take care of it and make sure this doesn’t happen again. Something **WE** should be doing together.” Cassie finished.

“Go do your Super Dark Witch thing, be rebellious like always.” Diana yelled in annoyance.

Diana’s yells invaded Faye’s ears and hammered her head with piercing pain, letting out a deep breath followed by a low groan. Her back was so severely injured that breathing hurt.

“Oh god! Faye, are you awake?” Diana said, placing the girl’s head over her lap and running a trembling hand over her face.

“You probably just woke up every dead body in the Chance Harbor cemetery with your yelling, Meade.” She concluded with a cough.

“Shh, don’t talk” Diana suppressed a smile. Leave it to Faye to be a smartass even in the most deadly situations. She lightly ran a hand through the girl’s limbs, checking for broking bones.

“What are you doing? Is this rape-an-invalid o’clock?” Faye asked with her brows furrowed and a smile curving the end of her lips.

“Shut up.” Diana lightly laughed “I’m checking for a concussion.” she explained, her hand now running over Faye’s abdomen, “broken ribs...”

“That’s right. I keep forgetting you got your Grey’s Anatomy degree.” Faye teased.

“The knowledge does come in handy sometimes, you know.” Diana proudly stated.

“I’ll remember to give you a call when those witch hunters decide to play rough and leave me bleeding to death.” Faye groaned once more.

“Don’t even kid about that.” Diana said in a more serious tone. It actually irritated her how Faye could deal with such disaster in such a casual manner. “What’s wrong?” She looked at the girl with concern after her face suddenly changed.

“My back... I’m pretty sure my spine can go backwards now.” Faye tried to straighten up on the floor, the pain was almost unbearable, shutting her eyes tight she let a howl escape her lips, “aaah, motherfucker!”

“That’s it, I’m taking you to the hospital.” Diana placed her arms a little below the girl’s neck and behind her thighs. She knew Faye enough to know the girl would never display any weakness, so this was obviously serious.

Watching in shock as Diana lifted her up she attempted to ignore the pain in her back. She gripped onto the girl’s shirt, “no, no hospital. My

mom, I can't..." Faye tried reasoning.

"We'll tell her you fell down the stairs or something." Diana suggested, already exiting Cassie's room, being extra careful not to trip on anything and drop Faye to the ground.

"She's not stupid, Diana, and you know it. I can't... Just..." Faye breathed heavy "drop me now... Take me home, I can walk."

Faye realized how awkward it was to be carried in Diana's arms after the events leading up to tonight. She didn't even know what kind of relationship they had now, or if there even was one, but being this close to Diana was triggering things Faye definitely did not want to feel, especially in the state she was in.

"Faye, I don't mean to be rude, but tonight's not the best night for your stubbornness." She firmly stated.

"Geez, fine. Have fun playing the White Knight carrying the damsel in distress. Take me to your kingdom, oh savior," Faye dramatically retorted, finishing the line off with a slight chuckle.

Diana rolled her eyes at the girl, she sure knew how to push her buttons. Faye continued to use humor as an escape from the pain.

"I shall, milady." Diana decided to play along. "C'mon, I'll get you to my place, we'll figure something out there." Diana concluded.

A couple of blocks away, Cassie was reunited with the group of witch hunters, already waiting impatiently for her inside of the woods.

"That was convincing" Cassie spoke as she walked inside the protected grounds where her father awaited.

"So, how did it go?" he asked, his voice deep and brooding.

"Just as planned." She simply answered, a smile creeping across her face.

CHAPTER EIGHT

The ride to the Meade's house was silent, Faye kept her eyes shut, trying to breathe as slowly as possible and prayed that Diana would drive better than normal. Diana tried to focus on the road ahead, but every two seconds her eyes would linger to the girl sitting beside her. The uncomfortable expression across Faye's face was not a good combination for someone who felt so guilty, and Diana soon realized it was growing harder to stare at her for too long.

When they hit a bump and Faye cringed, Diana apologized immediately, running a hand across Faye's thigh, trying to calm her down as the girl slowly shifted in the passenger seat, attempting to find a more comfortable position, something that wasn't exactly possible at that moment.

As Diana drove to her home, she could still feel the tingling sensation of the dark magic circulating throughout her body. She felt filthy, corrupted for slipping up again.

The spell the girls had performed to enable Faye to use solo magic without the rest of the circle worked, but apparently it wasn't enough for Faye to defend herself from four demon-filled witch hunters.

Diana pulled into her garage and quickly exited the car, greeting Faye on the passenger side, eagerly helping her to get out, but in no time, the girl firmly swatted away Diana's hand.

"Enough with the baby carrying act, Diana. I said I can walk." Faye stated, her pride clearly wounded.

“Are you sure?” Diana backed away a bit, but remained close enough to help her if she changed her mind.

“My legs are fine, my back’s the one being a bitch. But I’ll be alright after a good dose of painkillers. By the way... where’s your dad... you know, the not so dark one? I don’t see his car here.” Faye looked around.

“He, hm... I think he’ll be home late.” Diana didn’t want to get into details with Faye right now, but ever since they found out he wasn’t her biological father he had taken to drinking... and often. She had tried her best to assure him that he was the only father that mattered, but his ego was bruised and he took it out on her by default.

Faye realized there was more to what she was letting on, but didn’t want to pry. She realized how troubled Diana’s relationship with her father must have become, and it was not her place to analyze or judge. There was a line not even Faye Chamberlain would cross.

“Let’s get inside, I’m freezing,” Diana offered her hand in instinct, seeing Faye was having trouble exiting the car.

Faye rolled her eyes, but decided to let Diana lead her. The walk to Diana’s bed was extremely painful, especially climbing up the stairs, but she tried her best not to let it show. When Diana gently placed Faye on her bed, removing her shoes for her, the taller brunette couldn’t help but ask, “What’s with the chivalry today?” She inquired.

“What’s with it is that I care about you. Now roll over so I can lift your shirt to give it a look.”

“Now that’s a new excuse to get my clothes off,” Faye teased but moved slowly to lay on her stomach.

“Very funny.” Diana’s fingers lightly tugged the girl’s shirt up to her shoulders, and she couldn’t help but stare... red bruises disturbed the homogeneity of Faye’s soft skin, and five fresh scars along the girl’s spine

from the latest spell they did together taunted her.

When her fingers touched around a larger reddened mark, already forming a bump, Faye cringed, “Diana, careful!”

“Sorry! Be still.” Diana was conflicted once more. She didn’t want to use her dark magic, but she was not letting Faye suffer because of her.

She let her hands hover over the girl’s back, she immediately felt her energy connect with Faye’s, and a warm wave of heat flowed through her palms.

“Diana, what are you-?” Faye mumbled with her face against a pillow, but the other girl interrupted her before she could finish her sentence.

“Just relax...” Diana simply whispered in return, trying her best not to get distracted.

“Seriously, you didn’t use your magic to save me the other day, what’s the point of using it to erase what those assholes did? I don’t understand you, Meade.” The girl teased as she felt a tingling sensation running up and down her back.

Diana ignored Faye’s words and kept focusing on the task at hand. The energy was nothing like she ever felt before and she couldn’t help but smile. The energy was pure, colorful, cheerful even. With her eyes closed and a smile across her face, she pictured in her head Faye’s recovered skin, and when she opened them, the bruises were gone, along with the wounds from the ritual.

“Wow...” Faye whispered immediately at the now soothing feeling replacing the pain in her back, her hand instantly moving towards the formerly injured area, touching her skin and reassuring herself the damage had been reversed. “...that felt different, did you...” Faye didn’t get to finish her sentence. When she finally looked up, she realized the girl sat silently on the edge of the bed, her palms covering her face as she silently

sobbed. “Diana, what’s wrong?” Faye rushed to her side, kneeling next to her, placing a hand on her shoulder. “What did you do? Did you use dark magic?”

But the girl didn’t respond and tears continued to fall from her face as the crying intensified.

“Diana, talk to me.” Faye held her closer, her torso touching Diana’s shoulder. “It’s okay if you did... I mean, it was worth it, I feel better now.” Faye’s words seemed to have no effect on the distraught girl. “I can even do cartwheels, do I have to prove it to you?” She desperately tried to lighten the mood.

The girl let out a low chuckle, along with a sniff. “No, I didn’t.” she removed her hands from her face and tried her best to wipe her tears away. “Didn’t you feel it? Dark magic is filthy and destructive... But what I just felt...” Diana couldn’t find the words to describe it, “please say you felt it too.”

“I felt *something*. But perhaps not as strongly as you did?”

“It’s different for you. ‘Cause you don’t know any different. You don’t know what is like to live with darkness invading your insides, poisoning your veins. It’s sickening.” Diana talked about herself in disgust, “But that, what I just felt, what I still feel...” Diana paused, “was nothing but goodness.”

The taller girl smiled at the revelation, then stretched her back in response and looked at Diana’s soft features as she watched her every move. “Well, I’m glad everything worked out doctor... Am I good to go home now?” She asked, uncertain as to where they would go from there. Diana was so unpredictable these days, she never knew when she wanted to be left alone, or wanted her company.

“Perhaps you should stay. I don’t like the idea of you being alone with

those guys lurking around.” Diana couldn’t even say their names anymore.

“Well, I’m a wicked witch with indy powers now,” Faye lifted her chin up, motioning a tough pose towards Diana. “They just caught me off guard today. I’ll get ‘em next time.”

“I know you think you can handle things,” Diana smiled softly, “But I’d like you to stay, I’ll sleep better knowing you’re safe.” She gave Faye’s hand a gentle squeeze, “knowing that you’re here.”

The air around them changed as they fell back in silence holding each other’s gaze. Faye somehow knew that Diana’s request had more to it than just that, she could see it in the girl’s soft chestnut eyes. She knew that it would change things, and she should say no, after all, that wasn’t exactly part of their deal. But she couldn’t. Not when Diana was looking at her that way.

Faye bit her bottom lip before tracing Diana’s collar with her free hand, her lips softly touching the other girl’s. The kiss started slow and passionate. For Diana, it felt like a belated kiss, one she wanted to give Faye since she saw her awakening in her arms after being injured by the witch hunters. For Faye, it felt like a gratitude kiss, she was thankful for how quickly Diana made her injuries disappear, but most of all, she was thankful for whatever what going on between them.

Never in her life had she been this close to love, and although it was terrifying and the timing was certainly not the best, she finally admitted to herself that she had never felt happier in her life. Diana managed to make her feel what no one else ever had.

Everything around them could be falling apart, but right now neither girl seemed to care, too lost in each other’s presence. The slow kiss suddenly became more eager, heated, with their tongues struggling for dominance, begging for more access. In a quick movement, Faye was

straddling Diana on the bed, their lips clashing together, earning a squeal from the girl beneath her.

Faye's tongue teased Diana's lower lip, scrapping her teeth over the smooth skin, her hands running down the other brunette's sides in a slow, sensual movement, stopping as they found the hem of her blouse. Before she tugged on it to get rid of the piece of clothing, Diana slightly pushed her away, their lips only inches apart.

"Faye, stop."

"What? Something's wrong?" Faye stopped as she was told to, leaning in just enough to let her lips hover above Diana's.

"No, heavens, no. Not the kissing I mean, but..." Diana breathed out, shutting your eyes and frowning. She was struggling with her own feelings and desires, torn between doing the right thing and succumbing to her lust. And having Faye so close to her like that, willing to give her what she desired, wasn't helping her make the right decisions. "I don't want it to seem like I asked you to stay for... *this*..." she motioned between them.

"Something's wrong with this?" Faye asked, mimicking Diana's motion.

"Not even slightly." Diana kissed Faye once more, the last bit of self-restraint slipping through her fingers.

"My thoughts exactly. So how about we enjoy how good this feels right now and leave our worries outside of this room, nice and locked for a good few hours?" Faye suggested, resuming her hands on Diana's sides.

The mention of 'hours' sent a shiver through Diana's body, not doubting for a second Faye had the stamina to keep her time promise. She realized there was not much that could save her from Faye as her palm firmly pressed against her abdomen, teasing the tightened muscles. Her only response was to pull Faye by the nape of her neck, letting her long

fingers caress her soft hair while their tongues massaged one another once more.

Faye smiled into the kiss, her skilled hand already working on undoing Diana's shirt buttons, fastening the pace of their kiss.

In a short pause, Diana broke their kiss once more, her action also stopping Faye's free hand, the girl looking at her in confusion.

"Faye, I know what we've been doing..." Diana tried to explain "...and don't get me wrong, it's been good. But..." she tried to find the strength to voice her desires, "do you think that tonight it can be different?" She ran her hands through Faye's hair.

"Different...?" Faye seemed confused. Diana would probably have to be a little more specific on that one, seeing as sex could be 'different' in countless ways.

"I don't want just... release." Diana shrugged. Their recent activities surely fulfilled their purposes, taking the edge off, providing much needed familiarity in her now chaotic life. Except tonight she wanted more. She wanted to feel. And she knew Faye could give it to her, perhaps with a little push. "I need more, Faye. I want to..." she hesitated, "make love to you." Diana fixed her gaze on Faye's, and the girl's response was expected, shifting uncomfortably on the bed, but not entirely breaking their contact.

Faye gulped and pondered Diana's request. She was definitely out of her comfort zone with Diana dropping the 'L word' every two seconds. No one had ever asked her that before. She had sex a few times and that was pretty much it. *Making love?* That, Faye thought, was beyond her. She felt that Diana meant more to her, maybe even more than anybody has ever meant. But was it love? If so, how could she tell? And if she wasn't even sure herself, how was she supposed to show Diana, like she was

requesting?

“I...” Faye finally found the strength to speak, “I don’t think I would know how.” She looked down avoiding Diana’s languid eyes, embarrassed in admitting that out loud.

Diana suppressed a smile, pleased with herself for making Faye at least let her guard down, she knew that could be extremely hard. “Maybe we can figure it out together?” Diana gave a soft kiss on Faye’s cheeks before whispering in her ear. “Do you want to?”

Diana’s hot breath against her ear almost made Faye lose balance. The question so sweetly asked hammering in her head, her whole body screaming for her to accept it. Despite her fears and doubts, she decided to take a chance on Diana, who although hesitant since their first encounter had grown quite fond of their extra-curricular activities.

“Yes.” Faye exhaled, the passion and desire pumping hot in her veins and as Diana’s hands resumed caressing her back, she felt like nothing but a distant observer, surrendering to Diana’s wishes.

“Good, let’s take it slow.” Diana said while pulling Faye by the hand to lie down, and as the girl settled on top of her. It was a challenge, seeing as Faye was the opposite of slow, pretty much explosive, but Diana made a promise to herself to make it worth her while.

Faye obeyed quietly – much to Diana’s surprise – trailing kisses from the girl’s neck, to her chin, back to her lips, capturing them with her own once more, while Diana’s hands explored her back, letting them slip beneath her jeans, gently grasping the girl’s buttocks. Faye jumped at the contact. *This is taking it slow? Maybe she has a distorted vision of ‘slow’ after all.*

Diana broke the kiss, “Faye, too much clothing.” She confessed.

Faye smiled, “agreed.”

Her dark red colored finger nails undid the last four buttons on Diana's blouse, as she rolled on her side, exposing the girl's voluptuous chest, her soft brown locks falling over her purple lace bra making Faye's mouth water.

She straddled Diana's lap and pulled her up for a moment, only to unclasp the girl's bra with a single gesture, the brunette beneath her pushing the straps down gracefully and throwing the bra to the side. Her naked torso already receiving feather light kisses from Faye, while her fingers ghostly running along Diana's back, feeling her smooth skin break in chills with the softest of touch. When she was dragging her fingers closer to Diana's breasts, she heard a soft moan escape from the girl's lips, as she closed her eyes throwing her head back, savoring the feeling. She brushed her hair over her shoulders to give Faye better access, the feeling of her lips against her skin sending electric waves through her body.

Caressing Faye's scalp, Diana let out another soft moan. *Why have we never done this before?* She thought. Faye caressed slowly, sensual and incredibly arousing, her body responding immediately, her back arching to meet Faye's eager lips. With her skin begging for more contact, Diana reached for the hem of the other girl's shirt. Faye pulled back licking her lips before lifting her arms up, allowing Diana to slowly remove the piece of clothing, revealing her burgundy bra. Biting down on her bottom lip, Diana lifted herself from the bed and graciously reached for Faye's clasp, kissing the skin next to Faye's heart before removing the delicate piece of clothing away.

A chill ran up Faye's spine. *Was this what losing control felt like?* It didn't feel so bad. In fact, it didn't feel bad at all. She was at the same time seeing a different side of Diana, while showing a different one of her own. She once more attended Diana's request, unclasping her bra and letting the

straps fall down her arms before she tossed her bra across the bedroom floor.

Diana let her eyes wonder over Faye's exposed flesh without moving. She was hypnotized, her eyes fixed on the girl, her hands twitching to wander all over that soft skin. Their hearts began racing as both girls looked at their bodies so close together, noticing the slightly different features they each possessed. While Diana's skin was pale, Faye's was naturally tanned. They were polar opposites, yet together they made a perfect match, almost complementing each other.

She moaned against Faye's skin while her fingers trailed their way to Faye's chest, the girl shot her head back, breathing heavily. Air escaped Diana's lung for a second after Faye began to push her back against the mattress, the girl's hair falling loosely over her dangerous features.

Slowly, without taking her eyes off of the other girl, Diana closed the distance between them, her lips smoothly touching Faye's at first, but the other girl immediately pushed her tongue past her mouth, an action that got Diana responding by running a hand to her neck going to the back of her head. She pressed herself against Faye as they deepened their kiss, the feeling of their naked torso flush against one another, sending shivers down their spines.

They broke the kiss after a moment for air, the tip of their noses brushing against each other as they rested their foreheads together and slowly opened their eyes. All Faye could see was Diana's innocence getting darker with desire and she enjoyed being the cause of that transformation.

Her hands wandered from Diana's breasts to the edge of her jeans, caressing the soft skin on the way before unbuttoning it and sliding down the zipper. The girl looked at Diana one last time to make sure she wasn't

moving too fast for their ‘love making’. Love making. Just the sound of it echoed strange in Faye’s head. But it did feel different. It felt better. Meaningful. Intimate.

“Faye, please...” Diana softly whispered and Faye promptly proceeded. She hooked her fingers into Diana’s pants and panties as she slid both pieces of clothing down the girl’s legs, Diana helping her by arching her hips and giving a final kick until they were off her feet and discarded somewhere over the floor.

Faye paused for a moment to take in the beautiful sight in front of her. Diana’s skin felt incredibly soft beneath her hands and her heart rate sped up as Faye began to make her way up her body.

Diana cupped Faye’s face and slightly tugged her up to eye level, craving the girl’s lips. It was almost as if the lack of contact meant lack of oxygen. She needed to feel Faye, touch her, nothing else occupying her mind but the two of them. Their tongues tangled once again while Diana stealthily rolled them over, topping the taller brunette.

Mimicking Faye’s previous moves, Diana started kissing her way down the girl’s long and toned body, her lips trailing Faye’s soft flesh, as her tongue teased the most sensitive spots.

Diana got lost in Faye’s toned abs, her fingers tracing the muscles, while her lips kissed her navel, stopping when she found the helm of the girl’s denim jeans. She pushed her fingers through the waistband of Faye’s pants, her nails digging ever so slightly against the soft flesh down below her bellybutton. Faye let out a throaty moan as she looked up at Faye, slowly undoing the button and zipper of her pants, hooking her fingers in the girl’s jeans and panties as well, sliding the fabric off her legs and throwing it away to meet her own clothing on the floor.

She leaned down locking her gaze with Faye’s, and could feel the

intense heat coming from Faye's center, making the girl instantly breathless when she gave the exposed flesh below her navel a little kiss before moving up to rest on top of her once again.

The skin on skin contact made their whole bodies tremble, it stunned them both how well their bodies fit together, and how such little things as the feeling of their skin touching could cause such an incredible sensation. Never in Faye's life had she let anyone dominate her. Not even Jake, her former boyfriend whom she adored before he kicked her to the curb.

She tightly embraced Diana's hot body, leaving hot kisses in the girl's shoulders and neck, caressing her back, her palm landing on Diana's round butt cheeks, giving it a gentle squeeze before spinning them once again so she would be in her favorite position, "That was hot," she teased in Diana's ear.

"I think I'm learning from the master," Diana replied against Faye's neck, sucking her pulse point, kissing her jaw line, to finally capture the other girl's lips in her own.

"Master? I'll keep that in mind." Faye raised an eyebrow and moaned as their bodies clashed against each other as she was now the one doing the pinning.

As Faye placed herself on top of Diana, their bodies connected from head to toe, the energy flowing freely from one body to another, both girls smiling at the tingly sensation.

"Can you feel this?" Diana giggled.

Faye hummed in response, capturing her lips once more, the moment too precious to let it slip away, pulling the other girl even closer, passionately kissing her lips while both girls softly whimpered, feeling their heated cores slightly touching as their hips collided.

"You are so beautiful. There's not an inch of your body that isn't

perfect.” Faye said against Diana’s lips, pushing a chunk of Diana’s brown hair behind her ear.

The heat between them had become unbearable almost as if it burned every time their skin touched. “Diana, I have to have you now...” Faye admitted in a weak voice, her palm grasping Diana’s sides.

“You already have me. I’m all yours...” Diana replied in a whisper, pulling the other girl even closer, softly kissing her lips, while jerking her hips slightly against Faye’s encouraging the girl to start at a low pace.

That wasn’t the first time they had slept together. But those often occurred out of frustration, pure lust, and an un-doubtable need for release. All the feelings this time were so intense, enhanced and it seemed as if they were being intimate for the very first time.

No further words needed to be spoken as they had already learned how to please one another at that point. Body collapsing, hands gripping tightly against white sheets and dark hair, a high pitched yell left a pair of parted lips, followed by Faye’s name... Diana whimpered, holding the other girl’s hair as she gave her much needed release. Faye closed her eyes and moaned, savoring the accomplishment.

Fingers stroking ever so lightly over sensitive skin, Faye let out a hum of pleasure, savoring the feeling of the curves of the other girl against her own as she laid back on her side, placing a gentle kiss on her cheek, waiting for Diana to come back from her high.

Diana opened her eyes to see Faye propped up on her elbows, looking at her with the largest grin across her face. “What is that about?” Diana chuckled and leaned closer to her.

“You being incredibly gorgeous,” Faye answered. She was indeed breathtaking.

“Right, I bet I look glorious, my hair all messy and my limbs like jell-

o-” She started, but Faye interrupted her with a kiss, Diana tasting herself on the girl’s lips. “That was...” Diana couldn’t even finish her sentence.

“I know,” Faye held her closer, “I think this... This could work” Faye spoke softly, waiting for Diana’s reply.

This was always delicate ground for them, and she always felt like she was walking on eggshells whenever they talked about their so called relationship.

“Me too.” Diana couldn’t deny it anymore.

“You mean...?” Faye’s words trailed as she tried to process the confirmation.

“I mean...” Diana kissed the other girl again, silencing her. Letting actions once more take over for words. Faye deepened the kiss, desperate for contact and Diana was aware of that, letting her thigh rest between Faye’s legs.

Mouth pressed against the salty skin of Diana’s neck, Faye felt words coming out of her lips. “It was never meaningless,” she breathed. Her voice hovered above a whisper.

“What?” Diana softly asked, encircling the girl’s waist, shifting their position slightly in bed so she could see Faye’s face.

“I just wanted to let you know, that *this* was never meaningless to me”. Faye’s words hung in the air for a moment as Diana’s eyes began to water.

CHAPTER NINE

“Truth *or* dare.” Faye challenged.

“Dare.” Diana answered purposefully, eliciting a barely audible huff from Adam next to her.

“Hmmm...” Faye grinned and glanced thoughtfully to the ceiling as if she was thinking in great depth about what her dare should be. After a moment she looked back at Diana, her grin still firmly in place, “I dare you to take your shirt off for the next three questions. Loosen up a little.”

“No way.” Adam stated before taking a long drink.

“That’s not fair.” Diana agreed.

“Well the game’s not called truth or fair.” Faye pointed out expectantly. “Are you going to play or not?”

For a moment Diana looked hesitant, as if she *was* thinking about dropping out of the game but eventually she sat forward and placed her glass on the table. She knew the game Faye was playing in front of their friends and she made sure to keep her gaze on her as she pulled her shirt over her head and dropped it between herself and Adam on the couch.

Despite her dare, Faye froze at the sight of familiar skin and memories of lingering touches came rushing back to her. She turned away towards Nick, concealing her discomfort with a laugh. She turned back in time to see Adam hand Diana a blanket and even though she had been rendered uncomfortable by the flash of skin in this particular group setting, Faye was immediately irritated by the action. “*Cheating!*”

“This doesn’t seem like a good idea.” Cassie muttered sensibly as she reached for her drink.

“My turn.” Diana declared loudly before she turned back to Faye. “Faye, truth or dare?”

“Truth.”

“How many people have you slept with?” Diana asked, tilting her head inquisitively to the side.

Faye felt the familiar feeling of dread wash over her and she attempted to casually backtrack. “How about a dare instead?”

“Well those are the rules Faye. You wanna play or not?” Adam mimicked.

“Fine.” Faye responded reluctantly. She picked up the shot in front of her and downed it, trying to provide herself with the confidence boost she needed to answer the question. “Two.” She was greeted with a shocked silence, “Oh, guess I’m not the super slut you all think I am.” Her gaze drifted around the room before inevitably landing on Diana who looked to be just as, if not *more* shocked than everyone else. “Or I’m lying.” She threw up a hand in defeat and looked away from Diana’s piercing stare.

Faye rolled her eyes as a knock sounded on the door to her bedroom, effectively disrupting the silence in the room and along with it her close to dozing state, “Come in.”

The door opened and somebody stepped inside but Faye didn’t bother to glance in his or her direction. Instead she continued to stare at the ceiling, preoccupied by her own thoughts.

“Hey.”

Upon hearing Diana’s voice, Faye turned her head towards the door. “What do you want?”

Diana's brow furrowed at the less than friendly greeting but she closed the door behind her and stepped further into the room anyway. "I just wanted to talk to you."

"About what?" Faye asked blankly, shifting her gaze back to the ceiling.

"Can you not be mad at me for like a minute?" Diana requested.

Faye felt the bed dip and sighed as she looked back to Diana, "I'll do my best."

She hesitated at the sarcasm she was confronted with. "Can I ask you something?"

Faye rolled her eyes and leaned up on her elbows to glare at Diana. "You just did."

"Did you mean what you said downstairs?" Diana asked, ignoring the dark glare being sent her way, "That you've only slept with two people?" She paused for a moment but quickly continued when Faye merely stared at her. "Did you include me in that? I was... the second person?"

"Of course I *included* you." Faye scowled. "Unlike you I don't just fuck someone then forget about it."

Diana blinked in surprise at the accusation "Wha...No. Faye, it wasn't like that. I didn't just forget about what happened between us."

"Yeah, whatever." Faye muttered.

"Is this why you're mad at me?" Diana asked cluelessly. "Because you think that it meant nothing to me?"

"Don't try to psychoanalyze me." Faye ordered, averting her gaze to a random object on the opposite side of the room just so she didn't have to keep looking into those eyes, "I didn't say it meant anything other than a quick fuck to me."

"Could you stop calling it that?" Diana frowned. "If that's all it meant

to you, you wouldn't be this mad at me.”

Faye couldn't think of anything else to say to that so she merely shrugged and shook her head.

“Talk to me Faye.” Diana demanded sharply. “Did it mean something to you or not? Because I thought we agreed that what you and I have is something special, and now you're referring to it as some booty call.”

“You don't know what you're talking about!” Faye snapped angrily. “You're the one acting like we aren't an item, being all chummy with your ex boyfriend down there letting him cover you up as if he has a say in anything!”

“I didn't... Faye, Adam is still in boyfriend mode. No matter how much time he spends with Cassie—I'm always going to be his first love.” Diana reached over and placed her hand on Faye's arm to get her attention. “That doesn't mean I feel the same and I certainly didn't mean to hurt you.”

Faye huffed a fake laugh at the statement but still she refused to look directly at the other girl. “Don't flatter yourself. I didn't say that I was *hurt*.”

“Faye, *look* at me.” Diana ordered in a tone that left no room for argument. “*Faye!*”

She looked into Diana's eyes but said nothing.

“Do you want to be with me?” She asked carefully as if she thought that speaking louder would cause Faye to run from the room. “As in... *be my girlfriend?*”

Faye merely stared at Diana for a moment before ever so slightly nodding her head.

“Words Faye.” Diana said pleadingly as she squeezed the tense hand under her own, “I need to hear you say it.”

Faye closed her eyes for a brief moment and slowly exhaled to calm herself before looking back at Diana. “Yes, I want to be with you.”

“See, that wasn’t that hard.” Diana smiled warmly at the revelation but just as quickly her expression darkened with sorrow, “But...”

“Adam.” Faye stated curtly, drawing her hand away from Diana’s and dropping it into her lap. She felt her chest ache and her eyes sting with tears at the feeling of rejection but she forced herself to remain calm. “Yeah... I mean, okay.”

“Adam and I are done.” Diana said, her voice suddenly quiet and broken as if she was struggling to hold herself together. “And we’re not getting back together.”

“But you want to.” Faye finished for her. “You want to get back together with him, go back to the way things were, when we hated each other...”

“That’s not true at all.” Diana shrugged, her eyes glistening with tears. “It’s not going to happen. He’s with Cassie, and I’m with... you.”

“Yeah...” Faye was aware that she wasn’t being very helpful but every word coming from Diana’s mouth was like a jab to her heart. “I mean... If you say so.”

“I’m sorry you feel so threatened by him.” Diana looked up at Faye through watery eyes and blinked rapidly causing said tears to spill down her cheeks. “There’s really no reason to be... that chapter of my life is closed and I’m never going--”

Faye leaned up and kissed Diana softly, effectively interrupting her rambling. Diana responded instinctively but the kiss only lasted a moment before Faye pulled back, “Sorry... You’re really very pretty when you cry.”

Diana raised an eyebrow because... really, nobody cries attractively, but she quickly forgot her issue with Faye’s statement when the girl in

question leaned in to kiss a tear from her left cheek. “Faye, what are you doing?”

“I want you.” Faye said earnestly as she began to trail small kisses down Diana’s jaw to her neck.

“Faye...” Diana shuffled back from the other brunette and stared at her regretfully. “We really shouldn’t...”

“Why not?” Faye asked as she reached out for Diana only to have her hand gently swatted away. She pulled it back to her chest with a slightly hurt expression. “You said we are together now...”

“Everyone is sleeping downstairs.” Diana reasoned, looking torn between kissing the pout on Faye’s lips away and sticking to her guns. “What if Melissa comes in or something.”

“I don’t care about Melissa!” Faye exclaimed irritably. “Stop worrying about what other people think, and just do what you feel.”

“We shouldn’t with a house full of guests.”

“Fine, whatever.” Faye huffed as she swung her legs off the bed and stood up. “I’m not going to beg you to let me fu...” she was promptly silenced when Diana cupped her hand over Faye’s mouth to stop the word from escaping.

“I told you not to call it that.” Diana muttered when she finally took her hand away.

“Are you *trying* to mess with my head?” Faye frowned, irritated by the mixed signals she was receiving. “You tell me that we can’t do it then you *kiss* me? That’s screwed up Diana.”

“I know... I’m sorry.” She sighed and dropped her head into her hands. “I don’t mean to tease you. I’m just trying to be the responsible one.”

Faye rolled her eyes at the statement but placed a comforting hand on Diana’s shoulder. She looked up at Faye with a tearful smile but her

expression quickly grew serious. Diana bit her lip for a moment before moving so that she was kneeling on the bed in front of an apprehensive looking Faye, who unconsciously shifted to accommodate Diana's position.

"I guess we can make an exception," Diana whispered. "If we're quiet."

Faye nodded, words failing her for the second time.

"Okay." Diana breathed before she leaned forward and carefully kissed the other brunette, her hesitance obvious. Unsatisfied by the lingering that came with the caress. Faye moved her hand to the back of Diana's head and tugged her forward.

"Just relax." Faye murmured against Diana's lips when she noticed how tense she was under her hands. She lightly pushed her back onto the bed. "I'll make you forget about everyone else downstairs... trust me."

Diana swallowed heavily as Faye straddled her and her hands immediately shifted to the rebellious girls' thighs.

"Trust me." Faye muttered before she leaned down and kissed Diana again, slipping her tongue past more than willing lips.

Diana was about to point out that the door wasn't even locked and that they should possibly lock it before they continued in case anyone walked in on them but she was quickly distracted by Faye's hand slipping under her shirt. She gasped as said hand skimmed up her ribs until it was lightly palming her breast. She arched into the touch and pulled away from the kiss to take a much-needed gasp of air.

Faye smirked as she watched the play of emotions cross Diana's face and she leaned down to press a small kiss to the side of her mouth. She could tell that Diana was fighting what she was feeling and that was something Faye didn't want at all. "Relax, okay, no one is going to come

in.”

Diana nodded in response, unsure as to why she was so nervous in the first place. She had after all had sex with Faye before.

Faye sat back slightly, pulling Diana with her so they were sitting face to face. After a quick kiss to Diana’s lips Faye pulled the other girls shirt up and over her head. She was about to reach for the zipper on Diana’s jeans when a hand grabbed her wrist, stilling her movement. She looked back at Diana with a confused expression on her face. “What’s wrong?”

“It’s not fair that I’m the only one of us getting naked.”

Faye licked her lips upon hearing the husky tone Diana’s voice had taken and she nodded hurriedly before moving to take her own shirt off.

“Let me.” Diana stated as she replaced Faye’s hands with her own and pulled the shirt over her head. She bit her lip to suppress a smile when the shirt came off and she allowed her eyes to travel over Faye’s exposed torso “Better.”

Without further ado Faye surged forward and kissed Diana firmly, causing her to fall onto her back on the bed. Slightly encouraged by the fact that Diana seemed to be thinking about her instead of Adam, Faye slid her hand around Diana’s back and unclipped her bra with a quick flick of her fingers.

Had she been a bit more coherent and any less aroused Diana would have approvingly commented on Faye’s obvious skill in that department. Even Adam had problems removing her bra and he had been having sex with her for far longer than Faye. Instead Diana eagerly pulled the bra away from her body and threw it somewhere to her right.

Faye moved her hand to the button of Diana’s jeans though she hesitated to flick it open.

“Tell me you want me.” She demandingly whispered into Diana’s ear.

“I want you.” Diana gasped almost immediately.

“Good.” Faye whispered before she flicked the button open and slipped her hand into Diana’s jeans, underneath her underwear.

CHAPTER TEN

“Faye!” Diana greeted warmly as she opened the front door to see Faye standing there with her hands shoved in her pockets. “What are you doing here?”

“What? I can’t visit my girlfriend just because I feel like it?” Faye asked coyly.

Diana smiled at the word ‘*girlfriend*’, a term they had just recently started using. “Of course you can.”

“So are you going to invite me in or are you going to let me freeze out here?” Faye smirked despite the shiver that coursed through her.

“Oh... sorry.” Diana backed away from the door to allow Faye to walk passed before closing it behind her. When she turned around Faye was standing right in front of her, a teasing smile playing on her lips. Diana couldn’t resist the urge to lean forward and place a lingering kiss on the lips in question. When she pulled away Faye was staring at her with a questioning expression.

“My Dad isn’t home.” Diana explained, gripping Faye’s hips to pull her closer. She moved in, fully intending to kiss her girlfriend senseless but she was taken by surprise when Faye leaned back to counter the movement “...What’s wrong?”

“Nothing.” Faye answered shiftily.

“There obviously is.” Diana frowned and dropped her hands back down by her sides. “Did I do something?”

“No!” Faye exclaimed quickly as she gripped Diana’s hands and led her over to the couch. She sat her down before taking a seat next to her “There’s nothing *wrong* exactly...”

Diana bit her lip in anticipation, clearly worried about where the conversation was going. That is until Faye continued with her sentence.

“I do have a proposition for you though.”

“A proposition?” Diana asked nervously, “What kind of proposition?”

“Since it’s winter break I was thinking that we could go camping...” Diana opened her mouth to interrupt but Faye held up a hand to stop whatever she was going to say. “Wait, hear me out. I was thinking that we could go camping in the woods to get some *alone* time.”

“No.” Diana answered as soon as Faye stopped talking. “What about the Circle? Plus it’s too cold. We’ll freeze.”

“Screw the circle, they can survive under the other Blackwell daughter’s reigns for a little while... and come on, it’s not *that* cold.”

“Aren’t you the same person who just complained of being freezing when you were standing on my doorstep?” Diana asked purposefully. “There’s no way I’m going camping in the middle of winter.”

“Come on Diana... think about it. We can use a fire and body heat to stay warm.” Faye pleaded. “It’ll be romantic and shit.”

“It’ll be ‘romantic and *shit*’?” Diana echoed, raising a skeptical eyebrow at her girlfriend “You’re not making a very good case.”

“I love it when you swear.” Faye grinned flirtatiously “It’s *hot*.”

“That’s not going to work either.” Diana said, trying to keep her expression neutral despite the smile she could feel tugging at her lips.

Faye sighed at the answer before putting on her best sad look. “Please? If we go we wont have to keep sneaking around. It *will* be romantic. We can make s’mores and...” she made a face at what she was about to say but

pressed on anyway "... snuggle for warmth. Plus we'll be by the lake!"

"Faye." Diana sighed, irritated with herself for rejecting the sweet invitation. "You know that I want to but what if the rest of the circle notices that we're both gone? Don't you think they'll be suspicious because we didn't invite them?"

"I don't care." Faye frowned "Let them think what they want. They can't prove anything."

"But what if..."

"What *if*..." Faye interrupted, leaning closer to Diana and lowering her voice to a husky, lust filled whisper, "I promise to do that thing with my tongue...at least five times a day while we're away?"

"Are you bribing me with sexual favors?" Diana whispered, though she made no move to back away.

"Guilty." Faye murmured, pressing a light kiss to Diana's lips. She pulled away for a split second before leaning forward to kiss Diana in a more meaningful fashion. Her hand shifted to the back of the other girl's neck to pull her further into the kiss and soon enough their tongues were engaged in a familiar battle for dominance. When Faye finally pulled back she grinned smugly when Diana's eyes remained shut and her lips remained slightly parted. "So what do you say?"

Diana licked her lips before opening her eyes to stare at Faye "*At least* six times a day starting from right now and you have yourself a deal."

"Bargain shopper, eh? I'm sure that can be arranged." Faye answered already leaning forward, fully intent on holding up her end of the bargain.

"Why did I agree to this?" Diana shivered as she loaded their stuff into the trunk of the car.

"Sexual favors, remember? Sugar coated with some romantic B.S."

Faye grinned as she took an especially heavy bag from Diana and threw it into the car herself.

“Empty promises, upon empty promises! And I’m going to freeze to death while you fail to deliver your end of the arrangement.” Diana grumbled, rubbing her gloved hands up and down her thick jacket covered arms to simulate warmth.

“If I was more insecure I would think that you didn’t *want* to spend time with me.” Faye attempted to joke as she picked up the last bag and put it into the trunk.

“Are you serious?” Diana asked unsurely, recognizing the lilt in Faye’s voice that indicated she *was* feeling insecure about something.

“No.” Faye rolled her eyes and turned to look at Diana “I’m just saying that you could at least *pretend* to be enthusiastic about going.”

“I *am* enthusiastic!” Diana exclaimed, only to be met with a skeptical glare. “I’m serious. I might not be keen on going somewhere I’m likely to be constantly cold but I *do* want to spend time with you so... I don’t care where we go.”

“Oh... okay.” Faye smiled warmly and stepped closer to Diana as if to kiss her but stopped mid-step, remembering where they were. “Shit, I forgot.”

Diana offered Faye a sad smile and gripped her hand between them. “In a few hours, you won’t have to stop yourself.”

Faye brightened instantly at the realization that she would be able to kiss Diana without having to worry about who might be watching. That feeling quickly deflated however when she noticed a car pulling up in front of the house. “You have got to be fucking kidding me...”

“Hey!” Adam greeted as he stepped out of the passenger side and walked towards them. “We thought we might have missed you for a

minute.”

Diana pulled Faye’s hand behind her back to hide the fact that they were holding hands. “Adam.” She greeted, a sinking feeling of dread forming in her stomach when she noticed Cassie, Melissa and Nick stepping out of the car. “What...What are you guys doing here?”

“We heard you were going camping so we thought we would go with you!” Adam answered happily “Get our minds of these witch hunter attacks... It’ll be fun.”

Diana gave Faye’s hand a light squeeze in an attempt to tell her without words that she hadn’t said anything about the trip. “Um...Where did you hear that?”

“We heard you and Faye talking about it a couple of days ago during the circle meeting.”

“And you didn’t think there was a reason we didn’t tell you ourselves?” Faye snapped, annoyed beyond belief. “I’ll give you a clue... it’s because you’re not in--”

Diana squeezed Faye’s hand harder, “Faye, can I talk to you over here for a minute?” She didn’t wait for an answer and instead nudged Faye away from the car leaving a confused Adam behind.

“There is no way in *hell* they are coming with us.” Faye stated, clearly infuriated that her plans were about to be ruined. “Not a fucking chance.”

“Faye, calm down.” Diana murmured quietly as she soothingly rubbed her thumb over the back of Faye’s hand. “If we tell them they can’t come with us, they’re going to know that something’s up.”

“But...” Faye protested feebly. “This weekend was supposed to be...”

“I know.” Diana responded understandingly. “I’m just as annoyed about them showing up as you but there’s nothing we can...”

Faye tore her hand away from Diana’s and turned away to glare at

nothing in particular.

“Faye, are you okay?” Diana asked carefully as she watched Faye thread her fingers through her hair in a clear sign that she was trying to maintain her composure. Faye turned towards Adam, clenched her fist to channel dark magic, then faced Diana knowing if she decided to use solo magic, the Circle would become more suspicious than they already were. Diana glanced cautiously over to the group to see that Adam, Cassie and Nick were talking amongst themselves while Melissa was watching her with an intrigued expression. Diana offered Melissa a small wave before turning back to Faye. She was surprised to find that the brunette was trembling slightly “Are you... crying?”

“Don’t be stupid.” Faye answered defensively, though her voice was thick with emotion. “I’m *pissed* off!”

Diana stepped forward and placed a hand on the small of Faye’s back “I know this isn’t how you wanted this weekend to be...”

“Understatement of the fucking century.”

“*But...*” Diana continued, “we’ll find a way to make it work, okay? I promise they’re not going to ruin this for us by tagging along.”

Faye inhaled slowly to calm herself down before looking back at Diana. “Our sexual favors deal is still on? Because I was kind of looking forward to that part.”

“Oh, it better be.” Diana grinned at the fact that although Faye didn’t look particularly happy, she didn’t look like she wanted to murder anyone anymore.

Faye opened her mouth to reply but she was cut off by Adam.

“What are you guys doing?”

Faye ground her teeth together in irritation.

“We’re coming!” Diana called. She gripped Faye’s hand and gave it a

light squeeze before turning to walk back to the group. Faye huffed but followed anyway.

“I call shotgun.” Adam declared.

Faye had to bite her lip to keep herself from childishly imitating him.

“Faye you’re driving, right?” Diana asked, giving Faye a pointed look.

“I am?” Faye asked before catching sight of Diana’s ‘play along’ face.

“Oh yeah... I am.”

“You’re trusting Faye to drive your car?” Nick smirked.

“Yes, I am.” Diana answered stoically.

“I’ll ride with you guys if that’s okay.” Melissa said to Faye and Diana.

“Sure.” Faye answered with a shrug.

“Diana, you can catch a ride with me if you want.” Adam offered hopefully.

“Um...thanks Adam.” Diana answered. She felt Faye tense next to her as soon as the words passed her lips so she hurried to finish her sentence. “But it’s kind of my car she’s driving... so...” she trailed off and awkwardly looked away from Adam’s wounded expression. Faye on the other hand smirked smugly.

“I’ll just go with Cassie and Nick.” Adam said despondently.

“Great.” Faye smirked, already steering Diana around to the passenger side. “We’ll see you guys when we get there then. Hopefully you won’t get *lost* on the way.”

Melissa suppressed a laugh at Faye’s sarcastic statement and quickly got into the back of the car as Adam turned and walked towards his own with Cassie and Nick.

Diana sat in the passenger seat as Faye hurriedly got in on the other side and closed the door before starting the engine. She shivered at the chill

in the air and reached out to crank the heat up.

“Seatbelt.” Diana ordered.

Faye rolled her eyes at the command but willingly pulled the belt over her chest and clipped it into place. Melissa followed suit before speaking up apologetically. “I tried to talk them out of it.”

Faye remained silent as she drove off but Diana turned and offered a small smile. “The Circle has to stick together right?”

“*Right.*” Faye muttered, tightening her grip on the steering wheel.

“Faye.”

“*Diana, you can drive with me if you want.*” Faye mockingly imitated Adam, her irritation with him evident in her voice. “Diana, *if you want* we can stop halfway and frolic like horny fucking teenagers.”

“You know that would never happen.” Diana sighed. “Adam and I are over *and...*” she paused for a moment before glancing at Melissa, “him and Cassie are the ones ‘frolicking like horny teenagers...’”

Melissa rolled her eyes at the conversation at hand, and pretended not to notice it had taken an awkward turn. She knew the girls had been involved the last few months, but it was still new territory for her. Melissa let out a faint grunt.

“What’s your deal?” Faye turned to her friend sitting in the back seat.

“Nothing.” Melissa lied. “You two are just awfully chummy these days. It’s weirding the rest of the circle out.”

“We’re trying to be civil,” Faye informed her with a roll of her eyes, “would they rather us be dicks to each other? Because that can be arranged.”

“Faye, be nice.” Diana stated.

“I *am* nice.”

“You could be nicer.” Melissa contributed.

“Excuse *me* for not being in an ecstatic mood.” Faye muttered, rolling her eyes.

“It could be worse.” Diana said, unknowingly placing her hand on Faye’s knee. “Adam and Cassie could be making out in the back seat of the car right now.”

All three girls stuck out their tongues at the thought, and Faye went back to concentrating on the road.

“Finally!” Diana exclaimed as she got out of the car and stretched to soothe her cramped muscles. “It feels like we were driving for hours.”

“That’s because we *were* driving for hours.” Faye said as she walked around the car to stand next to her girlfriend. She waited until Melissa got out of the vehicle before pressing the button on the key ring to engage the locks.

“Wow...” Diana murmured as she looked out at the picturesque view laid out in front of them. It may not have been a perfectly snowy landscape but the frozen lake coupled with the glistening trees was stunning enough. “It’s beautiful.”

“I told you it would be.” Faye grinned, lightly bumping Diana with her shoulder despite her irritation that she couldn’t slide an arm around Diana’s waist or hold her hand like she wanted to. As if to prove her wrong Diana slipped her hand into Faye’s between them and carefully entwined their fingers.

“I wish we were alone.” Faye sighed, giving the hand in her own a gentle squeeze.

“Me too.” Diana murmured as they stared out at the sun setting on the horizon.

“Hey guys!”

“I swear I’m going to strangle him... with your magic.” Faye muttered irritably before she glanced over to the other car. Apparently Melissa had moved over to the other group before the whole hand holding situation. Faye felt a rush of uncertainty and couldn’t remember if she gave Melissa the impression that her and Diana were more than friends. “*WHAT?*”

“Be nice Faye, and no Blackwell magic!” Diana warned letting go of Faye’s hand as Adam, Cassie, Melissa and Nick walked over to them.

“We should probably pitch the tents before it gets dark.” Adam stated, noticing that the skies were already darkening quite rapidly. “There are three tents assuming you guys have one so who are we...?”

“I’m with Diana.” Faye stated before he could even get the question out.

Adam glared at her in irritation. “Are you sure you don’t want to sleep with Cassie?”

“No but I’m pretty sure *you* do.” Faye shot right back at him.

“How about everybody leaves Cassie out of it?” She asked rather sick of being used as some kind of insult.

“Guys, leave Cassie alone.” Diana ordered, earning herself a grateful look from the girl in question.

“Diana...” Adam started.

“*Diana.*” Faye mocked him.

“*Faye!*” Diana hissed.

Faye smirked and rolled her eyes though she made no verbal reply.

“So Faye and I are sleeping in the same tent because that’s what we *planned* to do.” Diana said firmly. “You guys can sort your own sleeping arrangements out.”

“I guess I could bunk with Melissa.” Cassie offered, glancing at the girl in question. “If that’s okay?”

“Yeah, it’s fine.” Melissa answered with a warm smile.

There was a moment of silence before realization hit Adam and Nick and they instantly began to protest while Faye burst out laughing at their predicament.

“No way.” Adam hissed.

“Hell. No.” Nick shouted.

“There’s no way I’m staying in a tent with Nick.”

“The feeling’s mutual, I’d rather sleep outside.”

Diana tried not to laugh at the boys but she couldn’t stop the giggle that escaped her, especially with Faye hanging onto her arm, practically doubled over with laughter. Even Cassie and Melissa were chuckling to themselves more at Faye’s reaction than at the actual problem.

“I’m sleeping in the car!” Nick finally resolved.

Adam glared at Faye who was still giggling uncontrollably. “It’s really not that funny.”

“I was thinking about Brokeback Mountain... The scary movie version.” Faye explained, trying in vain to stop laughing, “but with you and Nick as the...”

“Yeah, I got it.” Adam snapped.

Diana covered her mouth to suppress a laugh at the imagery.

“So are we pitching these tents or what?” Adam huffed. He didn’t wait for an answer, instead glowering at Faye one last time before walking off. Melissa and Cassie walked off too, talking between themselves while Nick went back to the car to get warm.

“I think I upset him.” Faye grinned as she unlocked the doors and walked around to pop open the trunk. “Oops.”

“Be *nice* Faye.”

“I’ll be a hell of a lot more than *nice* to you when we get this damn tent

up.” Faye said, dragging the bag, which contained the tent equipment out with Diana’s help.

“Promises, promises...” Diana muttered.

“Do I *ever* break my promises though?” Faye winked, closing the trunk.

Diana shook her head in response to Faye’s question before straightening up to look around. “Where are we pitching this thing?”

“Well...” Faye answered breathily, causing Diana to startle slightly at her suddenly close proximity. “We need somewhere flat and far away from the other tents.”

“Why is that?” Diana asked curiously.

“Because I plan to make you scream my name as soon as we have this tent up.” Faye whispered, lightly running her finger down Diana’s neck to the collar of her coat, “and on numerous other occasions before we leave so if you don’t want our stalkers to hear...”

Faye trailed off and Diana swallowed heavily in anticipation before moving to pick up the bag. “We should get this up as fast as possible.”

“I like the way you think.” Faye smirked, hurrying to help her girlfriend. They walked a short distance to the Lake before dropping the bag on the ground.

“So... do you know how to set this thing up?”

“Sure... kind of.” Faye answered unsurely, “I mean you just stick the poles in the holes and then stake it to the ground, right?”

“Maybe we should ask...”

“I’d rather sleep outside than ask Adam for help.” Faye interrupted.

“I was going to say Nick.”

“No.”

“...Cassie?”

“What would Cassie know about pitching a tent?” Faye asked skeptically. “She’s probably never been camping in her life.”

Diana pointed over Faye’s shoulder and the brunette turned to look at what she was pointing at. She was stunned to see that in the five or so minutes that had passed, Cassie and Melissa already had their tent half constructed.

“We can do it ourselves.” Faye stated determinedly, turning back to unzip the bag. She frowned as she pulled out a set of poles and placed them on the ground. “Um... let’s use our magic.”

“No, Faye. Do you have instructions?” Diana asked, laying the tent out in front of them with the top facing up. “We can manage without pulling a Sabrina The Teenage Witch.”

“At least she gets to use her fricken powers.” Faye answered with a sigh. She stared down at the equipment for a moment before she tried again, “Come on... just one little spell...”

“No.” Diana instantly interrupted.

“Please Diana.” Faye pouted, “We’re just wasting more time.”

Diana rolled her eyes and shook her head “You’re like a whiny toddler... we can’t use our magic for personal gai...”

“Diana, this isn’t *Charmed*.” Faye interrupted “It’s not going to hurt anyone. Come on. Please?”

“No.”

“What if we use magic just to put the tent poles together?” Faye bargained hopefully. “You know you want to...”

“Fine.” Diana sighed before offering up her hand to Faye who gladly accepted it. They stared at the poles in front of them intently for a minute or so and soon enough they began to move, snapping into place.

“That was kind of cool.” Faye grinned without releasing Diana’s hand

“... now what do we do?”

“I guess we ‘put the poles in the holes’.” Diana quoted before moving to kneel next to the tent, intending to do just that.

“Can’t we just...”

“No.”

“But...”

“Faye, shut up and get down here and help me.” Diana commanded, pushing a plastic pole into the bottom of the tent. “I need you to pull it through the top.”

Faye sighed but stepped over to the tent to help the girl construct it. Just as the rod was reaching the top she caught sight of Adam watching them intently and she glared back in response.

“Faye, you’re supposed to pull it through.” Diana reminded her. She looked up from what she was doing to see Faye staring at something over her shoulder “What are you looking at?”

“Hmm?” Faye asked, dragging her gaze away from Adam “Oh... Nothing. Nothing at all.” She pulled the end of the rod through the top of the tent and waited until Diana had looked away again before glancing up to see that Adam had turned back to his own tent.

“... So then when he refused to get out of the bar, I was like what are you even d...”

“Well this is boring.” Faye announced with a roll of her eyes, effectively cutting Adam off and earning herself a glare from the boy in question.

Diana offered an inaudible hum of agreement as she shuffled closer to Faye on the small log they were sitting on. It was only the second day of their ‘trip’ and they were already bored out of their minds. Diana could feel

herself growing irritated every time she thought about what she could have been doing with Faye, had Adam not heard about their plans to spend time alone together. She tried to reason with herself that Adam wasn't entirely to blame since he didn't even know that the relationship between herself and Faye was of a nature that would require time alone. Her irritation was irrational however and the more she dwelled on the subject the more annoyed she became.

"You're not exactly offering up ideas." Adam stated accusingly. He was already annoyed by the fact that he couldn't get Diana alone to talk to her about something important and Faye's apparent need to make the situation awkward was making everything worse.

Faye shrugged as if she couldn't care less before leaning close to Diana and lowering her voice. "If they weren't here we wouldn't be bored out of our minds."

"I know." Diana sighed, her breath making small white clouds as it hit the air. She shivered at the chill and pressed herself tightly against Faye's side. Faye wrapped an arm subtly around Diana's waist in response, causing a small smile to tug at her lips. "I wish we were alone."

"We could go back to our tent." Faye offered hopefully.

"We've been in our tent all day."

"So?"

"They'll start to think something's going on." Diana responded with a soft sigh. A gust of wind blew and she shivered again at the frosty chill. Without thinking of the implications of what she was doing, she slipped her arm under Faye's jacket and curled it around her waist, tugging her even closer.

"So let them think that...You're clearly freezing." Faye stated despite the elation she felt with Diana so close to her. "If we go back to the tent..."

“No.” Diana shook her head, despite the fact that she was freezing. Not even the fire they had built in the center of the circle was helping much.

“But you...”

“Diana?”

“What?” Diana startled slightly and glanced across the circle they had formed to see Adam staring at her expectantly.

“I asked what you two are doing.” Adam said, the exasperation on his face making it clear that he had asked the question a number of times. “Why are you sitting so close?”

“Why is it any of your business,” snapped Cassie. She had stayed quiet about Adam’s clear jealousy towards the attention Faye was getting from Diana, but she was irritated that the guy she had been sleeping with was so preoccupied with another girl, who didn’t seem all that interested in him.

“I just want to know why they’re all buddy buddy all of a sudden,” he replied.

Faye felt a sense of dread settle heavily in her stomach but she quickly relaxed when Diana merely tightened her grip on her instead of pulling away. “I’m freezing.”

Faye suppressed a grin at Diana’s short tone, “Do you have a problem with that?”

Adam ignored her and instead addressed Diana. “If you want I could...”

“Seriously Adam? I’m sitting right here,” protested Cassie.

“No.” Faye and Diana interrupted in unison.

“Cassie’s right, you’re being rude.” Added Faye.

Adam fell silent, a wounded expression written across his face.

“This is awkward.” Nick smirked. His statement was followed by a miserable sound of agreement from Melissa and Cassie who had situated

on another log near the fire.

Diana sighed at the true statement and casually laid her head on Faye's shoulder. She was so cold that she honestly didn't care what the three members of the group who didn't know about her relationship with Faye made of the action.

"We could play 20 questions?" Cassie offered carefully.

"Or not." Faye objected with a roll of her eyes "This isn't summer camp."

"It was just a suggestion."

"Hey, do you want to go for a walk Diana?" Adam attempted hopefully. "Moving around might help you warm up and I was kind of hoping to talk to you about something."

"Still here," Cassie said as she rolled her eyes and Nick let out a loud laugh.

"No thanks Adam." Diana responded, unconsciously shifting closer to Faye "I'm kind of comfortable here."

"Oh. But what about...?"

"Stop bothering her and take no for an answer." Faye scowled at Adam's persistence "She doesn't want to go anywhere with you, okay? Concentrate on Cassie—she actually WANTS you, imagine that."

"Diana can speak for herself, and leave Cassie out of this." Adam glared at her angrily.

"She is speaking... yet you're still not listening to what she's saying." Faye accused. "She said no and Cassie is clearly uncomfortably with your random passes towards Diana."

"Faye, calm down." Diana whispered, lightly rubbing her thumb along Faye's ribs. She was relieved to feel her relax significantly at the touch. She looked back to Adam without removing her head from Faye's shoulder

and spoke in a calm, collected voice. “We can talk later, okay Adam?”

Adam nodded, somewhat appeased by the statement. Faye on the other hand continued to glare at him as if she knew for a fact that he was planning to convince Diana to get back together with him.

“What about ghost stories?” Melissa suggested in an attempt to dispel the awkward silence.

“I have one.” Faye announced. Diana sighed when she recognized the tone she knew only meant trouble “There was a guy and a girl who were dating for a really really long time. A ridiculously long time really. They were called... Aiden and Daphne. They broke up because the guy was a real douche and he wanted to screw someone else but he didn’t have the balls to admit it...” at that she glared venomously at Adam who looked mildly irritated by where the ‘story’ was going, “But Aiden was too stupid to realize that it was over so he continued to bother the girl.”

“Faye!” Diana hissed, effectively interrupting Faye’s story telling. “Stop it.”

“But I wasn’t done.” Faye frowned.

“I think you are.” Adam huffed and crossed his arms in front of his chest.

Faye was about to open her mouth to make a quick retort when she heard Diana sniffle next to her. From the sound it was clear that she was starting to catch a cold. She glanced down at the girl as best she could taking into account the positioning of Diana’s head on her shoulder, “Diana, you’re getting sick.”

“I’m fine.”

“No, you’re not. You sound congested and shit.” Faye kept her voice low to keep the rest of the circle, especially Adam, Cassie and Nick from hearing her. She was slightly worried that they would hear the concerned

and gentle tone to her voice and they would call her out on it. “Go back to the tent...please? I’ll even stay here if you want me to.”

Diana shook her head against Faye’s shoulder, “I’m fine.”

“Diana...”

“Faye.”

“At least let me give you my coat.” Faye said, already starting to unzip the waterproof jacket she was wearing with her free hand. She had the zip halfway down when Diana’s free hand caught hers.

“I don’t want you to get cold.”

Faye rolled her eyes, “Diana, I’m wearing like ten layers. I’m not going to get cold.”

Even with the reassurance Diana shook her head emphatically and pulled the zip back up. “I’ll be fine as long as you don’t let go of me.”

Faye sighed at the refusal but willingly tightened her arm around Diana’s waist and squeezed her gloved hand. When she looked away from Diana she found Adam, Cassie, Nick and Melissa staring at them, “What?”

“You two are crawling all over each other like a box of puppies.” Nick smirked. “What’s up with that? Did that kiss at Melissa’s house party trigger something?” His smirk grew wider.

“Yeah... What *is* up with that?” Adam asked suspiciously.

“She’s cold.” Faye answered defiantly. “Stop acting like a jealous boyfriend... because you’re not her boyfriend.”

Diana rolled her eyes at the fight for dominance unraveling between Faye and Adam. She felt a shiver run down her spine, leaning into Faye’s side. “It’s cold.”

“Go back to the tent.” Faye responded almost immediately “It’s only going to get colder out here.”

Diana hesitated for a moment or two before eventually giving in. She

removed her arm from its warm residence inside Faye's jacket and hauled herself to her feet. "Faye and I are going to our tent."

"You've been in your tent all day." Adam said in a annoyed tone of voice.

"It's cold." Diana said again.

Faye stood up next to her and stared Adam down.

"Can I at least talk to you now?" Adam asked hopefully as he stood up from the ground. "Please?"

"Adam, I'm really tired." Diana sighed at her ex's persistence. "Can't we talk some other time?"

"Not if you keep avoiding me."

"Still sitting right here," Cassie frowned defensively. "Diana said she's cold so leave her alone and stop trying to hook up with her in front of me."

"It's not even like that..." Adam began. "This is none of anyone's business," Adam glared at the blonde, then the brunette, annoyed by their need to question Adam's every little action, "It's between me and Diana."

Faye retorted angrily, "She doesn't want you. Take a hint and back the fuck off."

"Why do you care anyway? It's not like you care about anyone else but yourself!"

"ADAM!" Diana exclaimed.

"That's rich, coming from you." Faye scoffed in disbelief. "You don't give a flying fuck about how Diana feels. The only thing that matters to you is that you get what you want whether it be Diana, Cassie or both of them."

Cassie frowned at the sound of her name but made no move to interrupt the argument.

"I don't want Diana!"

“Bullshit,” Cassie interjected as she stood up from her uncomfortable spot on the log.

“I don’t!” Adam insisted loudly. “You’re the *only* person I want, Cassie.”

“Save it for The Jerry Springer Show, Adam.” Said Nick.

“You invited yourself on my camping trip and ruin everything about it with your awkwardness and you’re fucking whining because Diana won’t talk to you for two seconds. Cassie clearly wants to spend time with you. Go do that!”

By that point both Adam and Faye were flat out shouting at each other. The sound of thunder rumbled in the distance and Diana grabbed Faye’s arm realizing she was tapping into the dark magic that because of Diana’s help now coursed through her veins. Hoping to soothe her anger, she squeezed her arm harder to make her aware of her disapproval.

“Why is she spending so much time with you anyway?” Adam asked viciously, clearly choosing to ignore Faye’s statement. “What did you do? Put a spell on her? God knows she wouldn’t willingly sleep in the same tent as you. You’re not even friends!”

With an infuriated growl Faye yanked herself free of Diana’s grip and marched forward until the only thing separating herself and Adam was the small fire in the center of the circle. “You have no idea what you’re talking about.”

“I know that Diana would never be friends with someone like you.” Adam retorted angrily. “You’re the last person she would want to spend time with, nevermind share a tent with.”

Thunder lit up the sky and Faye clenched her hands into fists at her sides, silently willing herself not to lose control. “Shut up.”

Adam was too focused on his anger and bruised ego to pay much

attention to Faye's warning. "Think about it... She only started hanging around with you when she broke up with me. She's just using you as some kind of replacement until we get back together..." he trailed off suddenly, his eyes widening in surprise and a split second later he was thrown a couple of feet backwards over the log he had previously been sitting on.

"Faye, stop it!" Diana yelled over the sound of howling wind as rain began to pour around them.

Adam leapt back to his feet, his eyes blazing with fury, "You two are ganging up on me now!?"

"No!" Diana yelled, her voice tainted with panic.

The anger bubbling up inside her was so intense that she didn't even notice Diana frantically trying to hold her back from doing any more damage, nor did she notice Cassie and Melissa desperately trying to get her attention. With an angered yell Faye automatically lifted her fist into the air, vaguely recalling something from Diana's book of shadows. She didn't make any move towards Adam or physically touch him but as soon as her fist was in the air, his head swung to the right as if he'd been punched in the face. He stumbled slightly from the blow but turned back to Faye after a matter of seconds.

"STOP IT!" Diana screamed over the sound of the roaring wind and the frequent claps of thunder. She was already dreading Faye's next move and what it could mean for the Circle discovering that Faye had some not so wholesome magic of her own thanks to Diana. The sheer intensity of Faye's power and fury was making her unwilling to step down from the fight. Her knees were weak with apprehension and had Melissa not stepped forward to clasp her arm she was sure that she would have dropped to her knees. She noticed Faye stumble back a few steps before slipping in the mud. Melissa's grip remained tight however, making moving anywhere an

impossibility. “FAYE!”

Faye gritted her teeth and pushed herself up from the muddy ground. The rain had softened the dirt considerably however and even standing seemed to be a difficult feat in itself. When she was finally on her feet she squinted against the lashing rain and summoned every ounce of power and fury she had inside of her to send Adam flying backwards onto the wet ground. She noticed movement out of the corner of her eye and risked a glance in that direction only to see Diana storming off towards the woods.

“Diana!” Faye yelled, hurriedly turning on her heel to follow her. She slipped in the dirt under her feet but threw her arms out to steady herself and somehow managed to remain standing. A nervous glance over her shoulder informed her that Adam was struggling to stand up and she took the chance to quickly follow the girl. The brunette had a considerable head start on her however and even though Faye sprinted to catch up, she lost sight of her girlfriend, “Diana?!” She paused in her tracks and glanced nervously around the dark woods. “Diana, where are you?” She swiped her hand across her rain dampened face before starting a cautious jog forward. Finally just when she was starting to panic about Diana’s whereabouts, she burst out into a small clearing and noticed the girl in question standing there, her shoulders slumped. “Diana? Why did you run off?”

“Why do you think I ran off?” Diana snapped without turning to look at Faye.

“Okay. Stupid question.” She agreed as she walked around Diana to stand in front of her. “I’m sorry.”

“You shouldn’t have used my magic like that.” Diana said quietly as the rain shifted to a slight drizzle and the wind quieted down. “It was draining your energy, it’s dangerous!”

“I know.” Faye answered, slightly concerned by the fact that Diana

refused to meet her eyes. “But the things he was saying just...”

“Just what?” Diana interrupted, finally looking up at Faye. “Why do you care what he says? Don’t you trust me?”

“What? Of course I do but...”

“But nothing!” Diana exclaimed in a wounded tone of voice. “So you really think that I’m using you as a replacement for him even though I’ve told I want to be with you like a hundred times?”

“I don’t think that.” Faye answered quickly. “I just get jealous, okay? I hate that he can hit on you and try to get you back without being in the wrong because he doesn’t know that we’re together.” She bit her lip bashfully and looked down at the ground as if she was embarrassed by what she was about to say. “I know you want to be with me... I guess I’m just scared that you’ll come to your senses and you’ll stop.”

“Faye.” Diana murmured, her tone significantly gentler than a moment ago. “Faye look at me.” She waited until Faye looked up at her before continuing. “Adam can try to get me back all he wants, hell he can try for the rest of our *lives* but I’m never going to leave you. Do you know why?” She was met with an apprehensive shrug. “Because you have something he doesn’t have.” She reached down and gripped Faye’s cold, slightly mud covered hand and lifted it to her chest where she pressed it firmly over her heart, making it clear what she was referring to. The drizzle faded and the clouds dissipated, painting the sky a pristine shade of purple. “As for seeing sense, I won’t do that either... because the only thing about our relationship that doesn’t make sense to me is the idea that I could ever stop caring for you.” She offered the hand under her own a slight squeeze. “Do you get it?”

Faye nodded in response, her eyes slightly misty, “I get it.”

They stared at each other intently for a couple of moments as snow

began to fall unnoticed around them.

“And don’t doubt that when I get back to the camp, I’m going to yell at Adam for the way he’s been acting. He’s not only being a rude to you, but to Cassie as well.” Diana said, a hint of anger returning to her voice. “I may not be too keen on being Cassie’s sister, but, if she wants Adam, she can have him.”

“Diana.” Faye interrupted. “Can you shut up so I can kiss you?”

Diana willingly shut up and silently nodded in response.

“Good.” Faye murmured, sliding her free arm around Diana’s waist and stepping closer. She left her other hand pressed against Diana’s chest, effectively trapping it between them. She paused for a moment but finally deciding that no words needed to be said she closed the last couple of inches between them and kissed Diana sweetly.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

“Hey, did anyone else hear that?” Diana asked glancing up from her book of shadows.

“Hear what?” Cassie asked obliviously while the rest of the group looked slightly confused by the question.

“Never mind... It must have been the wind or something.” Diana said before trying to refocus on the paragraph she was reading a moment ago. A couple of seconds passed in silence before another bang sounded, this time louder than the previous. Diana glanced up to see that the rest of the circle had been alerted by the noise. “You heard that?”

Adam was about to open his mouth to reply when he was distracted by movement at the door. His eyes widened in horror and he stumbled back when a group of five or so hooded figures stormed into the abandoned house.

“Oh crap.” Faye instinctively stepped forward and grabbed Diana’s arm to pull her off the couch. She barely had time to drag her back to where Adam, Melissa and Cassie had assembled before the witch hunters stormed forward as if they knew exactly what they were supposed to be doing.

It isn’t some kind of random attack, Faye realized before she was shoved backwards by the oncoming figures. She lost her grip on Diana and watched in horror as the girl was given a solid shove to the right, sending her spinning towards the far wall. She crashed into it with a solid slam

before slumping to the floor, seemingly unconscious.

“Diana!” Adam exclaimed making a move to rush forward, only to be shoved back by the witch hunter closest to him. He subtly grabbed for Cassie and Melissa’s hands, planning to come up with a spell on the spot. He wavered however when he noticed one of the witch hunters lean close to whisper to the one who had shoved him back. Adam couldn’t see the witch hunters’ face thanks to the balaclava they were wearing but it was clear from the person’s stance that something had gone wrong.

The witch hunter made a quick hand signal towards the door and in a matter of seconds, the group was moving quickly towards the exit.

Faye’s eyes instantly shifted to Diana’s position on the floor as soon as the last witch hunter rushed out. She was about to make a move towards her when someone else beat her to it.

“Diana!” Adam exclaimed loudly, panic evident in his voice. He hurriedly rushed to Diana’s side and knelt down next to her. “Are you okay?”

“I-I’m fine.” Diana mumbled fuzzily. Adam held out his hands to her and she gripped them without hesitation, allowing herself to be gently tugged into a sitting position. She caught a quick glimpse of Faye watching them before Adam moved his hand to her cheek, effectively drawing her attention back to him.

“You’re hurt.” He observed, his brow furrowed with worry.

Diana lifted a hand briefly to her forehead only for her fingers to come away stained red with blood. “I think it’s just a scratch.”

“Come on.” Adam took Diana’s hands again and slowly stood up, pulling her with him. He noticed her wobble a bit and quickly wrapped an arm around her waist to steady her. “Whoa.”

“I’m fine.” Diana said again, even as she gripped the back of Adam’s

shirt to steady herself.

Reassured by the statement Cassie moved inconspicuously to the door. She checked that nobody was watching her before leaving quickly.

Adam chose not to respond to Diana's obvious lie and instead led her over to the couch where he gently sat her down.

"Lie back. It'll help you feel better." He ordered quietly as he helped her lie back on the old couch. He was so focused on Diana that he didn't catch the jealous glare being burnt into his back.

"You should just go over there." Melissa stated, noticing Faye's longing expression.

"No." Faye said adamantly.

Melissa shook her head disapprovingly "Faye, she's hurt. You should go over."

"It's not like I don't want to."

"Well then why *don't* you?"

"Because I *can't*." Faye responded in a whisper yell. "I'm not going over there, okay?"

"Well in that case, I'm not just going to let you hover." Melissa said sharply. Grasping Faye's wrist she glanced back at Diana and Adam before tugging her best friend out of the room.

"You *idiot!*" John yelled, grabbing the man in front of him by the throat and shoving him into a wall. The witch hunter grunted as his back hit the wall with a loud slam and he scrambled to grip John's wrists as his windpipe was pressed upon, cutting off his oxygen supply.

"One simple instruction," John growled furiously at the witch hunter, "and still, you couldn't follow it." He gave a sharp squeeze before releasing his hold entirely.

“I-I don’t understand.” The witch hunter gasped out, his hands moving to his read throat.

“I’M TALKING ABOUT THE FACT THAT YOU ALMOST KILLED MY DAUGHTER!”

“She’s fine.” John glanced over his shoulder to see Cassie stalk through the open doorway. “She’s a bit shaken but she’s going to be fine.” Cassie continued reassuringly, her gaze flicking between the nervous witch hunter and her father.

“That’s no justification for his incompetency.” John snarled, turning back to the witch hunter who shrunk back in response.

“No, it’s not.” Cassie agreed before turning herself in the same direction as he father. She narrowed her eyes, focusing all of her attention on the suddenly terrified witch hunter. After only seconds, the man’s eyes widened in alarm before he literally burst into flames. He released an ear piercing scream at the pain, slapping his own body in an attempt to put the fire out. Eventually he succumbed to it however and his burnt body slumped to the floor, the flames extinguished.

“Very good.” John smirked as he looked over his daughters’ handiwork. “You’re really getting the hang of this.”

Cassie nodded in response to the praise, a matching smirk playing on her lips as she watched the smoking body on the floor.

“Ow!” Diana flinched back as Adam dabbed especially hard at the cut over her eyebrow.

“Sorry.” Adam murmured guiltily. “I’m almost done.” He moved his left hand to the back of Diana’s head to hold her in place as he carefully dabbed at the small cut. The area around it was already rapidly reddening and he could tell that it soon would blossom into a small bruise. Finally

finished with the cleaning, he lowered the cotton ball to the ground next to the first aid kit before retrieving a small bandage.

“How do you feel?” He whispered, mindful of the headache Diana might have as he removed the plastic packaging of the small, sticky bandage.

“Sore.” Diana answered honestly with a small smile. “I’ll be fine though.”

Adam had to bite his tongue to fight the urge to remind her that she almost wasn’t *fine*. He occupied himself by gently applying the bandage to the small cut on Diana’s forehead, carefully smoothing down the sides to avoid putting any pressure on the cut itself.

“Really.” Diana added, noticing the unsure look on her ex’s face. “It’s just a scratch.”

He wasn’t sure if it was the fumes from being attacked by the witch hunters or the realization of what *could* have happened instead of a scratch but Adam voiced the first thought that jumped out at him. “I still love you, you know, even though I have feelings for Cassie now.”

“Adam...”

“No, I just... I want you to know that I never stopped.” Adam continued. “That I never *could* stop.”

Impulsively he leaned down to kiss Diana, effectively interrupting her response. Diana was so startled by the action that she didn’t even think to push him away right away.

“What the fuck is this?!”

Startled by the angry voice, Adam pulled away and looked over his shoulder. He was met by the sight of Faye standing in the doorway with a wounded expression on her face.

“Faye...” Diana started feebly. It was too late however as Faye merely

scoffed and turned to storm out of the room.

Adam turned to Diana with a puzzled look that she would have usually found adorable. “What was that about?”

Diana sighed and eased herself back onto the couch, her headache only getting worse by the second. “Adam, you shouldn’t have kissed me.”

“But...”

“No, just listen.” Diana forced herself to hold Adam’s confused gaze. “I can’t be with you anymore. I will always love you but that chapter of my life is over, do you understand what I’m trying to say?”

“I think it’s obvious.” Adam murmured sadly, his gaze dropping to his hands.

“I’m sorry.” Diana whispered. “I just don’t think that we’re going to find what we need with each other. Maybe you should wait to see where whatever you have with Cassie goes.”

“Yeah.” After a moment Adam looked up and flashed Diana a small smile. “Maybe you’re right.”

“Friends?” Diana asked hopefully.

“Don’t ever doubt it.” Adam responded sincerely, lightly grasping her hand.

CHAPTER TWELVE

“Cassie, I *need* you to do this.” John Blackwell was being extremely stern with his daughter. His face inched closer to hers and his breath turned into mist in the night’s cool breeze in the bay air. Cassie was facing away from him, but she could feel the warmth of his scolding vibrating near her cheek. She was tired of being told just how important everything was to Blackwell—her dad—she was tired of being bossed around so much. The pressure to prove that she could be a worthy asset to her father’s vision and the insecurities that perhaps she couldn’t fulfill her duties began to slowly build up inside of her to the point where she thought she might even explode. “It’s important. We *need* Diana on our side, Cassie!”

“I get it!” Cassie yelled out. “Goodness.”

“I don’t think you do,” he replied. Cassie rolled her eyes. “Show Diana dark magic. Make her see what we see. Do it.”

“If it’s so important to you then maybe *you* should do it. You are her father after all,” She retorted. Cassie was panting heavily in rhythm with the welling of her eyes. At the beginning of all this, she was sure that she could carry out these plans and that these people would mean nothing to her; now, she wasn’t so sure.

“Excuse me?” He came in closer. “Cassie, you better get in line. We don’t have time for mistakes, for emotion. Do you understand? The others will be here soon—“

“You’re right,” Cassie conceded. She was overreacting; she knew that. It was time to get her act together. Their plans were coming down to the

wire and it could all be muddled up if she made the tiniest screw up. “Did you get the Crystal Skull?”

“Yeah.” His voice came back down to its normal volume. “It was actually on the abandoned ship.”

“From sixteen years ago?” Cassie was a bit incredulous.

“It came over me to look there for it. I can’t believe I hadn’t checked there before, actually.” He shifted his gear and his gaze grew more intently.

“Cassie, I can’t stress this enough.”

“I understand,” she replied without even letting him finish. “I know. Diana needs to be onboard. I’ll make it happen.”

Diana, meanwhile, was on the other side of Chance Harbor, just walking into Faye’s room.

“Before you say anything, your mother let me in,” Diana said as she closed the door behind her.

“Ugh. I don’t believe it; she knows I don’t like you.” Faye walked over to her bed and sat down with a loud thump.

“Well... we both know that’s not true.” Diana flashed Faye a coy smile before walking over cautiously. Faye reciprocated, but tried to hide it as best she could. When Diana sat next to her and took her hand in hers, the attempt at hiding her emotions were futile. She loved the warmth she felt from having her hand nestle perfectly in Diana’s. She loved how secure she felt these days with Diana, even if she didn’t exactly feel that without her. Or even if she never was truly great with showcasing any of it.

“You obviously didn’t come here to tell me how wrong I am,” she tried to wit.

“No,” Diana whispered while shaking her head slightly. Her gaze didn’t leave the sight of her hands with Faye’s until she was ready to speak again. “I didn’t. I came here to apologize.” Faye furrowed her eyebrows

just a bit, somewhat quizzical. “I’m sorry, Faye. Adam kissed *me*. I know that’s just an excuse. But I told him I don’t want to be with him anymore.”

“Why’s that?” Faye asked. The question was hollow—she knew the answer—but her delivery contained undying substance.

“Because,” Diana said as began to inch closer. “I want to be with someone else.” Her smile grew a tad bigger. Diana leaned in, and just as it seemed Faye would give in and kiss her back, she retreated a bit. “Fine.” Diana chuckled. “How’s about this Saturday, you come over to my house.”

“Why?”

“It’s New Year’s Eve!” Diana replied a bit enthusiastically.

“You’re having the party.” Faye’s response wasn’t quite a question or a statement.

“Yeah! And we both have someone we want to kiss at midnight.” At this news, Faye was practically giddy. “Good. So you’ll come,” she said as she walked up to leave. “It starts around ten. I’d tell you to come earlier to help out, but Cassie’s got that covered.”

“Cassie?” Faye asked.

“Yeah, Cassie...” she responded.

Diana thought back to when she was visited Cassie’s house. She didn’t even really know why she had showed up; something about Cassie’s urgency seemed so earnest, but truthfully she didn’t want anything to do with the type of magic that coursed through her veins. The way Diana felt whenever the power of dark magic ignited within her—it burned within her core to the point that she was even frightened of her own being. Even the way Cassie’s eyes glassed over whenever dark magic took her over was enough to send Diana into a frenzy about it.

“Cassie, I’ve told you a dozen times by now!” Diana stood up from Cassie’s couch, ready to head out of the door. But Cassie got up quicker, blocking her way into the foyer.

“Diana, I don’t know what you’re so scared of.”

“I don’t like it.”

“What?”

“The feeling. It—it overpowers me. It makes me feel like I can...”

“...do anything?” Cassie finished her sentence. Diana stared at her for a few seconds in subtle disbelief. What Cassie had commented was not incorrect in any which way, but therein lied the problem.

“Yeah.” Diana couldn’t lie. “Yes, but—“

“Then what’s the problem?” At this, Diana could do nothing but contort her face, searching for a reasonable answer that could perhaps satisfy Cassie and convey exactly how she felt all in one. It was a daunting task.

“It scares me,” she finally said. “It *terrifies* me.”

“Diana,” Cassie began to stress breathily. “This is who you are. This is who *we* are. We have this...*amazing*...power within us. It’s part of us. Rejecting it is like rejecting a piece of yourself—rejecting me.” Diana didn’t know, but Cassie was mostly trying to convince Diana to use her dark magic in hopes that she would be tempted by the Balcoin blood that boiled within her. The other Balcoin siblings were on their way, and Cassie needed Diana—they all needed Diana. She would complete their circle full of only Balcoin bloodline. It’s all John Blackwell ever wanted, and these days it’s all Cassie ever thought about.

“I’m your sister,” Cassie concluded.

“I have to go,” Diana said, moving to the side and getting passed Cassie.

“Wait!” Cassie beckoned, causing Diana to turn around. “Let me at least help you with the New Year’s Eve party.”

“Cassie,” Diana sighed. “I don’t know.”

“Come on,” Cassie said moving closer to her. “Don’t reject me entirely.” She shot her a coy smile.

“Okay,” Diana said with a chuckle.

All of a sudden she was back in Faye’s room.

“Well, she *is* my sister,” Diana said.

“Lucky you,” Faye retorted.

“Yeah.” Diana moved towards the door and held it half open before continuing. “So I’ll see you Saturday then.”

“See you.”

That was their final communication until the evening of the party for the week. Cassie had arrived early to Diana’s house to help her setup the place for the guests. She was growing even more frustrated with Diana as the days went by, trying to make her see the greatness if she allowed dark magic to consume her. And somehow, at every turn, Diana had yet to budge on the issue. Coupled with the pressure from Blackwell, Cassie was almost fatigued. But the goal was to appear to be the sister Diana always wanted, and she promised herself she would do anything to get Diana on her side.

That she did. By the time the party was set to start, the house had been transformed into the perfect New Year’s location. Purple and white streams hung from moldings, signs draped entire walls, black balloons accentuated every feature. And the display of food all became part of the scene. If Diana was determined to have a party, Cassie was determined to make it one—and to make herself seem irreplaceable. It was almost too dire, the importance to get in on Diana’s good graces.

And Diana herself had set out to accomplish the same. After kissing Adam in front of Faye, Diana felt she owed it to her girlfriend to make the night special. *Girlfriend?* she thought. Would they ever be able to call each other that in front of the rest of the world?

That transformation she saw from Faye's once hardened exterior is what made someone like Faye all the more special. She could hardly believe she'd ever thought anything less of her. But she never knew if she would be comfortable with everyone knowing that. Even if she felt at ease with Faye, even if she appreciated the journey of them, the fact that one day the circle could find out devastated her. Any time she let herself think about it—

“Geez. What’s on your mind?” Cassie interrupted. Diana jerked a bit, being shaken from deep concentration.

“Uh,” Diana struggled. “This. The house. It looks great; thank you for helping me.” Diana flashed a smile. People had already arrived and scattered around. Faye had arrived as well, and Diana had already told her that before the clock hit midnight, they’d find a private place to seal their kiss. It did not sound nearly as romantic as Diana was hoping it would.

“You seem a bit nervous,” Cassie continued as she passed her a dark purple plastic cup. “Drink up.”

“Oh, I don’t know. Drinking tends to get me into trouble.” Diana shook her head slightly.

“Me too. But it’s a special occasion.” At this, Diana didn’t really react. “Plus, your dad’s away.”

“That *is* true, but still.” Diana laughed a bit. And just when she had decided to a sober night for herself—after all, she would enjoy the night, and remember it, more that way—the door flung open, and in entered Jake.

Jake was tall, blonde, and had extremely chiseled features. He wore a leather jacket with a white V-neck undershirt, blending perfectly with his dark wash jeans. He strutted into Diana's home with a smile plastered on his face—a smug smile, one that made it seem as though he had better plans.

He obviously doesn't, Diana thought. Especially if he's visiting a party with high school kids. It wasn't just Jake's presence that set Diana off a bit, but his presence mixed with Faye's is what worried her. He watched as Jake made his way over to the living room where Faye was standing with Melissa. She watched as they both smiled and laughed and ogled.

“What kind of drinks do we have?” Diana asked. Cassie laughed breezily, but she was fully aware that Diana had been in deep concentration upon Jake's arrival. She walked over to the kitchen, where Adam was helping put out some food.

“Hey...”

“Hey.” Adam looked up from his current task. “What's up?”

“Who's the guy that just walked in?” Cassie didn't waste any time.

“Who?” Adam asked. She grabbed him by the hand and took him to the foyer, where he could easily spot Jake. “Oh...why?”

“I don't know—Diana just seemed really shook up by him is all.”

“Yeah, well. We all probably are. That's Jake, Nick's brother.”

“Nick has a brother?”

“He moved away after high school and left Nick all alone; no one really knows why. But we were all glad he did.”

“Why?” Cassie asked with a nervous chuckle.

“Jake and I never really... got along... very well.” Adam sighed before continuing, “He's just... not a nice guy.” They stood there, watching, as

Jake and Faye talked. Melissa had slipped away into the dining room where she walked midway into Diana and Nick's conversation.

"You invited your brother?"

"Yeah, you said invite anyone you want." Nick's eyebrows furrowed.

"I did." Diana shook her head. "Yes, I did. But I didn't think you'd invite your brother."

"Why not?"

"What is he even doing here? Doesn't he have, like, other places to be? Plus he and Adam don't really work together in close corners, okay? And what about Faye?"

"What *about* Faye?" Nick looked over into the living room where it seemed Faye and Jake were hitting it off fine. "What is the problem?"

"Yeah, Diana," Melissa cut her off before she could speak. "What's the problem with Jake being here?" Diana could do nothing but exhale quite audibly.

"Nothing," she finally said. "Nothing at all." She walked away.

"Well that was weird," Nick commented. "You think maybe she's trying to make things up with Adam or something?"

"Yeah... *that's* what's happening," Melissa said sarcastically. But the tone completely flew over Nick's head who had circled around the table behind her. He tugged at her waste a little bit.

"So...who are you kissing at midnight?" he asked. Melissa let out a pissed chuckle and turned around, still surrounded by his embrace.

"It's like one minute you're hot and then the next you're cold," she said.

"What are you talking about?"

"Why are you always like this? It's like I never know what you're thinking, or what you're going to do next."

“You’re not supposed to,” he said with a smile and leaned in to sneak a kiss from her. She backed up and pushed his arms down, freeing herself.

“I’m done playing games with you, Nick. You want me?” She began to walk out of the room, but not before looking back for one final word. “Find me at midnight.” And with that, she left. Nick stood there in the middle of the dining room, questioning what had just happened.

“Oh, Jakey,” Faye said as she rubbed Jake’s shoulder up and down. “What are you doing?”

“Talking to you,” he responded matter-of-factly. “Why, are you afraid of what might happen?” At this, Faye could do nothing but laugh.

“What do you think is going to happen?” she asked. He decided to lean in a bit so that she could feel his warmth. Faye played with the idea. He had broken her heart a couple of years ago. She was devastated, and watching him pine for her made her feel empowered. She made the decisions; she controlled what happened tonight. And, of course, her night was *not* going to conclude in Jake’s arms. It would end with Diana. She pushed his chest backward with just one finger.

“Nuh uh,” she hummed. “That’s not happening.”

“Why not?” he retorted.

“Faye?” Diana now stood behind Jake.

“Diana,” Faye responded.

“Diana?” Jake turned around. “Diana! Hi.”

“Hi, Jake. Thanks for coming. I need to see Faye *for a second*,” she stressed, switching her gaze from Jake to Faye.

“Okay, fine. You don’t need to be so pushy,” Faye played it up in front of Jake and walked outside of the living room and upstairs with Diana.

“Where’s Faye?” Melissa popped up, as well.

“She just went upstairs with Diana,” he responded.

“Okay,” Melissa said as she turned around, ready to leave.

“Wait,” he beckoned. She turned towards him. “What is Faye’s deal?”

“Her *deal*?”

“Yeah, you know. Is she seeing anyone? Her deal.”

“Her deal is that you broke her heart,” she scoffed.

“Why do I get the feeling that not very many people want me at this party?” he asked while looking into the foyer, where Adam was standing, watching him intently.

“Gee, why do you think?” she sassed, finally walking away. Melissa didn’t take matters to Faye’s heart very lightly. The truth was that Jake had fled with little explanation and had left Faye almost broken. It took time to heal those pains. And as much as Faye liked to pretend she sometimes has it all figured out, Melissa knew exactly who Faye was and why she wore that tough exterior. As she climbed up the stairs to talk to Faye about her recent developments with Nick, she almost laughed at the fact that they both had issues with the Armstrong brothers. If she didn’t get why Faye was so hung up on Jake before, perhaps she *did* understand the allure now.

“Faye?” she called out in a whisper as soon as she reached the top of the staircase. “Nick’s being a total—“

“What the hell, Faye?” Diana sounded aggravated. Melissa had arrived to the outside of Diana’s room. The door was open just a crack, enough for Melissa to hear the entire conversation. “What was that?”

“What was what?” Faye sounded incredulous.

Melissa stopped herself from entering, placing a hand on the wall beside the door and tilting her head slightly to hear well.

“You know well what I’m talking about.”

“No, I don’t. Maybe you should enlightened me,” Faye snapped. Diana felt a bit hoodwinked.

“You—flirting with Jake. Do you think I want to see that?”

“What is the big deal? I’m just messing around with him!” Faye’s tone was all too playful for Diana’s liking.

“Like I messed around with Adam?”

“Wait a minute.” And just like that, her tone shifted. “You *kissed* Adam. That’s completely different. *I’m* just messing around with Jake because he’s a total tool. I would never actually do something with him.”

“I...have been trying to make tonight perfect.”

“Oh, ... *fuck* that, Diana!” Faye was almost livid. She lifted her arm in order to gesture and emphasize much more appropriately. “What is *your* definition of ‘perfect’? Please, tell me—I want to know!”

“This. Tonight.”

“This? *This*? Tonight is nothing but another cover up. You’re so scared about what other people will think, we’ll never actually have a so-called ‘perfect’ night.” Faye’s eyes welled up a bit. She inhaled, trying as much as she could to hold it back. “God, I am *so* tired of *this*.”

Melissa still stood outside, her eyes widened at the news that her friends so called hook ups had now progressed to dating. She had chalked it all up to experimenting and flings and crazy narcotics but now it seemed to be cemented in truth: Diana and Faye were dating secretly—and they were quite serious, to boot. She mouthed the words “Oh, my god,” trying to stay incognito.

“Well if that’s how you feel, Faye, maybe we shouldn’t even have my version of ‘this’ tonight,” Diana whispered. She began to walk out of the room.

Melissa heard footsteps approaching, so she found the first door she could and entered, trying to close the door as silently as she possibly could. She was in the bathroom, hoping they wouldn’t notice she had been there

the entire time. She just stood there, in the silence, in the dark, contemplating what she had just heard and trying to process it as best she could. When she finally heard what sounded like two pairs of footsteps walking down the stairs, she opened the door.

“Well, hello.” Faye was standing in front of the door. “How much did you hear?” she asked.

“All of it.” Melissa exhaled. “What the hell, Faye?” Her attitude wasn’t aggressive, it wasn’t even patronizing; it was almost friendly.

“I have to find Diana.” Faye paid no attention to Melissa’s reaction in the least.

“Not before you tell me what’s going on.”

“Melissa,” Faye began. “There are more important matters to tend to. Okay?” she strutted away, looking for Diana downstairs.

The party on the first level seemed to just be getting even more out of control. She bobbed in a sea of hormonal teenagers screeching, boozing, and making out. The air hit her like a wall; it was stagnant in its mugginess.

“Ugh,” she let out. She got a peak of the television screen and saw the countdown was getting close. It flirted within a couple of minutes to midnight. She navigated her way into the kitchen, where Diana was pretending to be busy with some beverages. “Diana, come with me please.”

“Uh, I don’t think so—not right now.”

“*Diana.*” But Diana just continued her task at hand. Faye came up to her and as slightly as she could, she whispered, “Melissa knows. Like, *knows* knows.” At this, Diana stopped dead in her tracks. She pulled Faye into a corner of the dining room that wasn’t occupied.

“What? How?”

“She was listening to our conversation.”

“Oh, my goodness. I can’t do this.” The news began to cave in on Diana to the point where her breath grew drastically shorter.

“What? You can’t do what?”

“Thirty seconds, everybody!” Jake yelled out from the living room. Faye could see Adam and Cassie smiling, with everyone else, waiting for the new year to finally come. Melissa walked down the stairs and searched for Nick until she finally found him. It seemed they had made up as well. Everyone was so close to their perfect evening, and Faye felt excruciatingly distant from hers.

“I need to go.”

“Go? Diana, it’s literally fifteen seconds until midnight. Melissa isn’t going to say anything!”

But Diana didn’t care. She shook her head as she left the dining room. And Faye just watched her walk away—“10, 9, 8...—her chestnut hair flowed behind her as she bounced up and down and out. She watched as Diana closed the door behind her—“7, 6...”—and just like that she was gone. And Faye stood there, defeated.

She walked into the foyer and looked at Jake who was whimsically counting down the numbers just like everyone else—“5, 4...”. She thought of going up to him and kissing him. She thought about the way that would make Diana feel. And she liked it. She *wanted* to hurt her now, to make her feel jealous, to make her feel the way she felt now. Diana just didn’t understand it at all and at times it seemed she cared more about her image than her relationship with Faye.

And she could do it, too. There would be nothing stopping her. And Jake would reciprocate. And she wouldn’t have to hide it, either. They could kiss in front of the entire circle and everyone surrounding them at this party—a group of supposed friends and stragglers. It would mean

nothing but at the same time would be infinitely easier and closer to her idea of perfection.

But what's the point of sharing something if it doesn't mean anything?

So she stood there, in the foyer, surrounded by others counting down and yelping and smiling and swooning. She stood there and looked at the door, hoping Diana would run inside and be apologetic and just say "to hell with it" and kiss her at the stroke of midnight. She stood there hoping that with the opening of the door her evening and her relationship could be salvaged in the last few seconds of the year.

But the door remained closed.

"3, 2, 1."

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

“I always wanted to be a teacher,” Diana croaked. “Ever since we first walked into the school that was all I wanted to do.” She shook her head, wincing at how the cut on her cheek pulled with the movement. She would cry if she wasn’t so tired. They all would, but that’s not an option anymore. Now all they can do is wait.

It takes a while, but Adam eventually replies. “I wanted to be an accountant.” Faye and Nick’s laughter ricochets through the room, cutting him off. He glares at them lividly through his good eye. “Shut up. I like working with numbers, is that so bad?”

“No, just really lame.” There’s a grin in Melissa’s voice as she speaks. “I wanted to be a therapist,” she adds. “We really could have used one; I wanted to try and help other kids like us.”

“There are no kids like us,” Nick interjects. “We’re all that’s left.” His voice is thick through his broken nose and split lip- it was nearly impossible to understand. No one speaks for a while; simply listening to the steady banging on the door above them. If anyone got through it they were done for.

Eventually Nick continued. “And fine, if we live I would have wanted to be a pilot. That would have been awesome.” No one comments; they’re all bleeding too heavily now to mock anymore. “Faye? Wanna weigh in on the one stupid thing you’re not going to live to do?” He grins a little, revealing blood smeared broken teeth, a sight that makes the other’s

stomachs turn. “Faye?” A note of panic rose in his voice.

“I’m still alive, calm your tits. And I wanted to get married, alright?” She got several incredulous noises in response, coupled with a heartbroken look from Diana. Faye scowled, turning away. “It’s your own damn fault that you asked.” The banging above grew louder as the witch hunter’s patience wore out. They’d been hiding in the musty basement for hours now, just waiting for the witch hunters to kill them. They were too tired to fight them off anymore- eventually giving up becomes your only option. A colossal bang sounded from above and the door crashed down the stairs. Faye scrambled up, lunging for Diana. She wasn’t going to let her die; not unless they got through her first.

“Are you kids alright?” Everyone stared slack jawed as Blackwell raced down the stairs, black coat flapping behind him. Cassie was hot in his heels and equally panicked. He screeched to a halt in front of Diana, shunting Faye out of his way. “How long have you been down here?”

“A couple of hours,” Adam snapped. He was leaning heavily on Melissa for support. “They beat the shit out of us before we got down here, but I don’t think you care too much about that. Where the fuck were you?”

Blackwell moved away from Diana, doing a cursory check on the others; they flinched back from his touch. Faye slithered in front of Diana again, gritting her teeth to keep from shouting. He sighed before turning to Adam. “Outside. Cassie and I got held up by the Warding spell you have set up. That’s an impressive piece of work, Melissa. You should be proud.”

Melissa didn’t smile. “That’s not what he asked,” she spat. “He wanted to know why you weren’t here when we needed you, when we had knives to our throats and you were off gallivanting somewhere else!” She slapped him, ignoring how Adam crumpled to the ground without her support. Blackwell swore, clutching his face in shock. “We *needed* you and you just

left us!”

Cassie stepped between them, her face an uneasy mix of stricken and livid. “It’s not our fault; we tried to get here,” she pleaded. “We were researching a spell that would stop the witch hunters for good; them and the demons. We wanted to have all the information before we came to find you guys.” Faye and Nick lunged for her, injuries forgotten in their rage. Cassie leaped back, and only Adam and Diana’s restraints managed to keep them from pouncing on her. “I’m sorry! We *had* to get the information, all of it! If we do this one spell there’ll be no one hunting us anymore. We’ll be *safe*.”

Safe. It was a word they hadn’t used in a long time, at least not to describe anything beyond the next ten minutes. They backed off, shifting guiltily from foot to foot, chastised by her desperation. Diana set her hand on Faye’s back, rubbing slowly to calm her. She spoke after a moment, voice strong despite her exhaustion. “What’s the spell?”

Cassie and Diana woke up on the rock filled dirt just outside of the abandoned house to Blackwell chanting an incomprehensible spell over the Crystal Skull and Faye, Nick, Adam and Melissa clawing at the ground, unable to withstand the heat by the roaring fire pit. Cassie and Diana were surrounded by a circle of blood, which looked as if it had been smeared with zero precision on the muddy terrain. The blonde girl rose to her feet shooting her father a supportive glance then focused back to Diana who finally managed to stand up and look around the field.

“What are you doing to them!” she questioned as she tried to cross the circle. A jolt of electricity pulsed through her body and Diana was rejected back by the force field. “What the hell,” she looked to Cassie for answers, who nonchalantly shrugged at the girls request.

“This is for the best,” John finally looked up from the skull that sat on a wooden pedestal by the fire.

“What’s for the best?” she questioned.

Cassie stood in front of her confused sister, “Killing the circle.”

Diana couldn’t believe what she was hearing... “What would that accomplish?” She raised her voice at the blonde.

“Everything,” John chimed in.

“If you’re working with him,” she glared at Cassie in utter disappointment, “why are you in this magical cage with me?”

John moved closer to the girls so that he stood before them on the other side of the force field. “It’s to protect you,”

“From what?” Diana immediately responded. “You’re the only one we need protecting from.”

“Not quite my dear, more so from the spell that I just performed. A spell that will kill your circle, everyone without Balcoin blood.”

“You’re insane!” she shouted.

“Maybe,” he responded, “but imagine a world of witches with only the purest of dark magic. We’d be unstoppable.”

“The last time I checked you needed six to complete a circle. There’s only two of us.” Diana glared.

Cassie grabbed Diana’s arm, turning her so she would now be facing her instead of her father, “There’s more of us,” she said her eyes lighting up at the thought of more Balcoin children. “There’s four more, and they’re on their way to Chance Harbor right now.”

“You’re both insane!” Diana said as she broke free from Cassie’s grasp. “I won’t do it, I won’t be bound to a circle of monsters.”

“Now don’t be foolish,” John inched closer to the circle surrounding his daughters, “when they’re gone,” he pointed to Adam, Melissa, Nick

and Faye still hunched over and shouting by the fire, “you’ll be able to embrace your destiny... your endless power.”

“I don’t want this power, I don’t want to be a Blackwell!” she shouted, “I’m a Meade! Diana Meade!”

“If you wont use your powers willingly,” Cassie said, “I’ll just have to make you embrace your darkness.”

“What’s that supposed...” Mid sentence Diana began to cough, her lungs felt heavy and she could barely breathe. “What” she gasped, “are you doing?” She looked to Cassie who was now clenching her fists close to her side.

“Killing you!”

John stood there as if he knew exactly what his resourceful daughter was doing, if she put the girl in a life or death situation, a situation that she could only get out of by tapping into her dark magic, Diana wouldn’t be able to resist the darkness. Blackwell watched as Cassie continued to suffocate Diana. She gripped her throat, struggling to absorb any tiny shred of oxygen, her pupils began to dilate followed by a loud screech and a shock that emulated within the force field. Almost immediately Diana’s body sent out a giant burst of energy that flung both girls through the force field and onto the ground outside of the magical cage. John jumped back at the unforeseen event, but remained calm. His misguided daughter had gotten a taste of the good stuff... there was no way she would go against them now.

Diana sprung to her feet, still disoriented from the blast but determined to remain on guard. She lunged towards John knocking him into the podium, where he hit his head and fell swiftly to the dirt. Cassie had managed to get up and witnessed the entire attack on her father, she immediately retaliated by flinging Diana across the field and into the trunk

of a nearby tree. Diana let out a scream but rose to her feet again, this time with her sights set on her backstabbing sister. She used her magic to catapult the blonde girl into the steps of the abandoned house, and promptly ran towards the podium for the Crystal Skull.

“Oh no you don’t!” Cassie screeched as she fumbled to regain her footing.

John was almost at his feet, when Diana sprinted towards the device and quickly snatched it from its sitting place. She glanced back at the circle, who were still screaming from the effects of John’s spell. Cassie ran to Blackwell’s side, standing opposite of Diana and the skull that now sat firmly in her hands.

“Give me the skull,” John reached towards Diana.

“Get away from me!” she reciprocated taking a step back from the two.

“Don’t make me take it from you,” Cassie threatened, attempting to choke the girl like before... but this time for real.

“I dare you to try,” Diana said as she stood firm with the skull out in front of her.

Blackwell grinned, “So now is the time you decide to be brave?”

Without a response she focused her magic on the skull, and in turn sent a burning sensation through John and Cassie’s bodies.

“Stop it!” John shouted, “I don’t want to have to hurt you.” He held out his hand towards Diana, who now felt a tightening in her chest. “But I will.”

She wheezed for a moment then focused the skull back in her father and sister’s direction. Slowly John and Cassie’s skin began to blister, causing them to wince before redirecting their magic back to Diana.

The blonde girl promptly flicked her hand towards the brunette causing a shallow cut to appear on the girls left cheek. She flinched but held her

ground concentrating even harder on the skull and the magic it was now radiating in their direction. The small blisters now covered almost every inch of Cassie and John's body. Desperate to reclaim control Cassie motioned again, this time executing a deeper cut on Diana's shoulder, but this time she didn't flinch, instead she squinted her eyes as if her concentration couldn't be broken.

Blood trickled from Diana's nose as she clenched the crystal skull and continued to point it towards John and Cassie. She wasn't sure her untrained magic could withstand the counter-attempts made by her estranged family members but she had to try. The Circle was dying all around her, Faye was dying, because of evil blood that had been strategically passed down to her to fulfill Blackwell's delusional dream of a world full of witches that only carried Balcoin blood. The unholy alliance between Cassie and her father was strong, but at that moment Diana had to believe she was stronger than them.

Diana's humanity hung by a thread as she willed Blackwell and Cassie to their knees. She glanced back at the Circle, Adam... Melissa... Nick and more importantly Faye all hunched over in agony simultaneously burning from within. She looked back at the two, fury in their eyes.

"This war has to end," she shouted, as she continued to clench the skull.

"We're blood!" gasped Blackwell, "We're family."

After some struggle, Cassie had fully collapsed to the ground... But there was John his arm extended trying with all his might to stop the magic from being amplified by the skull. The blood that once trickled from Diana's nose began to gush profusely; she knew she couldn't hold on much longer. The only way to save her friends, to save Faye, who laid writhing in agony, was to completely surrender herself to the Crystal Skull and let it

tap into the purest of Balcoin magic.

Diana took a shallow breath, her lungs barely able to contract from the thick black smoke around her. She braced herself, gripped the skull with both hands, closed her eyes and let go of any inhibitions she had had before about her powers. Blackwell plummeted to the ground; his skin tattered and scorched from the Battle.

Diana drew a breath in sharply, as she dropped the Crystal Skull from her shaky, worn out hands. Falling to her knees she could vaguely make out Faye struggling to get to her feet and rush to her side, and moments later Diana collapsed and there she lay sprawled out across the damp dirt.

The bruised and beaten girl staggered to her fallen lovers side, "Diana!" she shouted as she let out a cough from the cloud of ash engulfing the area. "Don't you dare die on me!" she shook her.

"I-" Diana gasped as she reached out for Faye. "I-"

"I know," she responded, clenching Diana's hand as she brushed away the tears that began to run down her cheekbone. Faye moved in closer, leaning in and pressing her forehead against Diana's, "I love you too." she whispered.

There was a rattling noise at the back of Diana's throat that made Faye jump, followed by a final attempt to draw air into her lungs. Diana's now glassy fixed stare terrified her but Faye continued to lean in and softly press her lips against Diana's, lingering for a moment before pulling away from the fallen witches bluish grey, ice cold lips.

By the time Faye sat up and focused her eyes on Diana's lifeless body Adam, Nick and Melissa gathered around the two.

"Is she okay?" Adam screeched as he tried to wake Diana up.

"Faye!" Melissa nudged the girl who was still on her knees with a face covered in charcoal stained tears.

"Why won't she wake up?" Adam pulled Diana close to him.

Faye couldn't take her eyes off of the girl lying in Adam arms, she sobbed uncontrollably at the sight of a slightly blue-lipped girl before her.

"Why won't she wake up?" Adam repeated.

"Faye!" Melissa was now shaking her trying to get her to stop crying and explain what had happened.

"Guys, why isn't she moving?" Adam looked to the circle then back at Diana. "I don't think she's breathing."

Faye wiped the tears from her face, but they seemed to continue to pour from her eyes no matter how hard she tried to hold them back. "She's dead!" Faye exclaimed as she struggled to stand up. "She used her dark magic to save us from your psychotic blonde bimbo and now she's dead!"

Melissa dropped to the ground and let out a flabbergasted squeal. As far as the circle was concerned Nick was never one to be emotional but he immediately inched closer to the group with his head hung low. Adam sat there crying with the dead girl still in his heavily burnt and blistered arms.

Faye had turned her back to the group, sobbing whole-heartedly at the thought of never sharing another moment with her girlfriend again. An overwhelming stint of anger consumed Faye and she picked the Crystal Skull up off the ground where it lay next to Diana. "This piece of shit trinket killed her!" she shook it towards Nick, Melissa and Adam.

"Watch it Faye," Melissa stood up from her position in the dirt, "that thing is dangerous."

Adam glanced over to Nick who was still focused on the ground, then to Melissa and back to Faye. "We have to destroy it," he reached out to Faye who held the skull tightly in her hand. "Give it to me."

"No way!" she snapped her arms close to her body. "This killed Diana, I'm throwing it in the ocean and I never want to see it again!"

"Faye--"

"Just shut up Melissa, SHUT... UP." she turn her body away from the circle, "I'll do what needs to be done." she said as she ran deep into the woods away from the despair and devastation the night had brought.

It was only fitting that the weather for the day the Circle buried Diana in the ground was extra bright, it had been dark and rainy for the last two weeks and the weather report hadn't called for sun. But here it was anyways, shining on Chance Harbor's unknown hero. A good majority of the town had shown up for Diana's funeral, Charles Meade was beside himself and had attempted to make the services as tight knit as possible but it seemed that everyone in the town knew what an exceptional young lady Diana was and wanted to pay their respects.

Faye and Melissa sobbed in the corner as the funeral director began to lower the casket into the freshly dug plot. Adam stood opposite of Faye and Melissa with damp eyes next to Nick who buried his head in his black leather jacket.

The priest said a few words and everyone attending began to drop a red rose into the plot. Charles remained steadfast hovering above his precious baby girl. He let a sob escape from his mouth then promptly headed for the car. The crowd disbursed gradually until the only people left were the remaining Circle members. They had lost two of their six the night before, one who had been corrupted by her deranged father, and one who defeated them both with her selfless actions.

One by one Nick, Adam and Melissa bowed their head in silence for Diana. By the time Faye got a moment alone above the grave, she dreamt that this whole fiasco had only been an extremely detailed nightmare and Diana was alive and well and about to nag Faye for snapping at the Circle.

She opened her eyes hoping to see Diana standing before her. Nothing. Just a hole in the ground with a casket containing the 17-year-old girl.

"Are you coming, Faye?" Melissa called to from under the tree.

"I'll meet you guys back at the boat house," she said as she turned her head to the group, "I need another minute or two."

"Are you sure you want to be alone," questioned Adam.

"Yes!" she snapped.

The group complied with her demands, and walked to the truck to drive to the boathouse. Faye stood in the desolated cemetery fiddling with the messenger bag that draped over her shoulder. She glanced to the left, then to the right, then back down at Diana's casket. She reached down, lifting up the bag flap and forced her arm into it. She then yanked out something roundly shaped... she extended her arms and clutched it in her faltering hands.

"E orbis Terrarum" she whispered, " cado revento quis absentis." She repeated, this time in a much louder tone, "E orbis Terrarum cado revento quis absentis."

The wind picked up and leaves surrounded her, "E orbis Terrarum cado revento quis absentis." She yelled.

The gush of wind and leaves swirling around her came to a complete halt, the once clear blue sky had now transformed into a dark gray. Faye continued to chant the spell, this time in a muttered whisper, still holding onto the device for dear life. The heavens opened up and the now blackened clouds spewed warm droplets of water. She wasn't sure this is how the spell was supposed to go, but she couldn't give up, not now. Not when Diana was still dead. She hoped that the very thing that helped kill her would be the key to bringing her back. She got lost in the moment, remembering memories that were long forgotten, until a shard of lightning

connected with a nearby tree, and she was forced out of her thoughts and back to reality by the sound.

Faye felt a warm liquid drip onto her top lip, with one hand still holding the skull she swiftly wiped the area under her nose. To her surprise it was blood. She inhaled deeply at the sight, but continued to recite the spell, over and over again. The light droplets of water had now turned to a steady downpour and there didn't seem to be an end in sight. After saying the spell seven times, Faye felt a jolt in her stomach that radiated throughout her entire body. She expected results sooner than this, Cassie's Book of Shadows wasn't tied to the purest of magic, but it should have still worked. Despite the terrifying feeling Faye felt, she said the spell one last time.

"E orbis Terrarum cado revertio quis absentis."

Instantaneously she collapsed, dropping the Crystal Skull into the uncovered grave, rendering her unconscious and unaware of the trembling ground below her.

END.

