

LOVE IS AN OPEN ROAD



Don't Read in the Closet 2015

HAYWIRE WITCH

Ren Stjerne

HAYWIRE WITCH

Angels was born a witch, but when he had no magic, he moved out of the witch commune to live like a regular human. Watching Mitchell when he comes in for ice cream awakens his powers in unexpected ways. A threat from the past draws them together to find unexpected allies and new friends. Angels has to learn to control his powers without scaring Mitchell away. Mitchell finds the courage to let go and embrace the chaos that Angels brought to his life.

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Love is an Open Road

An M/M Romance series

HAYWIRE WITCH

By Ren Stjerne

Introduction

The story you are about to read celebrates love, sex and romance between men. It is a product of the *Love is an Open Road* promotion sponsored by the *Goodreads M/M Romance Group* and is published as a gift to you.

What Is Love is an Open Road?

The *Goodreads M/M Romance Group* invited members to choose a photo and pen a letter asking for a short M/M romance story inspired by the image; authors from the group were encouraged to select a letter and write an original tale. The result was an outpouring of creativity that shone a spotlight on the special bond between M/M romance writers and the people who love what these authors do.

A written description of the image that inspired this story is provided along with the original request letter. If you'd like to view the photo, please feel free to join the [Goodreads M/M Romance Group](#) and visit the discussion section: *Love is an Open Road*.

No matter if you are a long-time devotee to M/M Romance, just new to the genre or fall somewhere in between, you are in for a delicious treat.

Words of Caution

This story may contain sexually explicit content and is **intended for adult readers**. It may contain content that is disagreeable or distressing to some readers. The *M/M Romance Group* strongly recommends that each reader review the General Information section before each story for story tags as well as for content warnings.

Each year, a dedicated group of Volunteers from the M/M Romance Group work hard behind the scenes to bring these stories to you. Our Editors, Formatters, Proofreaders, and those working on Quality Assurance, spend many long hours over a course of several months so that each Event is a success. As

each and every author also gives freely of their time and talent, it was decided that all edits suggested may be accepted or rejected by the author at any given time. For this reason, some stories will appear to be more tightly edited than others, depending on the choice of the author.

This story is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places and incidents are the products of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events, locales, or persons, living or dead, is entirely coincidental.

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HAYWIRE WITCH

By Ren Stjerne

Photo Description

A young man stands in a pool of water in soaking red shorts and pink fluffy earmuffs. Behind him, water splashes out of a broken fountain. His expression shows concern, possibly guilt.

Story Letter

Dear Author,

This is me, causing trouble again. I don't know what happened. One moment I was having a conversation with my roomie and the next thing I knew, the fountain exploded and I'm drenched in stink water. Ugh. Thanks to the hot summer day nobody seemed to mind that I had no idea how to get the water back under control.

The thing is, I'm a witch and I suck at magic.

I stopped using the little magic I knew since moving into the city about a year ago. Completely. It's "fun" enough being gay, I didn't want to be a witch too. I hate keeping secrets and the witchery thing was definitely supposed to be one. Not using my powers had me thinking I could be normal for a change. Tough luck. Since meeting "him" a few weeks ago, all shit went to hell. Every time he comes into the ice-cream shop I work at my magic goes crazy, doing the most embarrassing things!

Nothing was meant to happen today! But then I saw him. My pistachio guy—tall, dark, and gorgeous. Always wearing a suit, always ordering pistachio ice-cream. And always giving me those secret smiles. His being around today definitely triggered my sucky magic to go haywire, and causing the fountain to put on a show. Thanks!

My lack of witchery knowledge was starting to get me into deeper trouble than I'd ever expected was possible. But I had to find him and... then what?

Sincerely,

Riina Y.T

Story Info

Genre: urban fantasy

Tags: accidental cross-dressing, age gap, college, fantasies, first time, humorous, magic, mythical creatures, professor, witch/human, light spanking

Word Count: 27,867

In Memorium

Beulah Mae – I miss you.

HAYWIRE WITCH

By Ren Stjerne

Prologue

“And we feel the power of the God as it reaches through us to...”

Reaches through? Is it fisting us now? Those fisting videos were kinda interesting. I wonder if there are any new ones up? Not that I would want to try that.

“...The power flows through the black candle of the eastern wind as we take the mighty scepter of...”

You wish you had a mighty scepter.

The voice kept droning on. It wasn't like paying attention would do any good. I'd tried for years to do everything exactly right but never had the faintest stirring of magic. Everyone and their brother could control elements with ease. Me? I could barely light a candle, even with a match. Take away the match, and there was no chance this side of hell that anything would burn.

I had my hands full just keeping a straight face. The instructions on how to complete the rituals were just a bit absurd. If I hadn't seen folks actually do magic with the rituals, I would have thought we were being punked. Take this ritual to make a rose clipping take root and become a rose bush. Or at least that's what I think they were still on. I could be wrong.

“...Now, with the fingers of your right hand held in a circle, slowly raise and lower it from your groin to your navel. You will feel the power building and pushing up through your body.” Anywhere else and that gesture would be considered obscene.

If I was going to learn how to jerk off, it wouldn't be from you.

I stifled a snort. I couldn't help that my breath hitched abruptly and everyone turned to look at me. Shit.

“I'm sorry, just feeling the God all up in me. Um, I mean, filling me with power.” My face became the only thing I'd lit on fire, today or ever. The three other witch children that attended this lecture were at least five years younger than me. They all had more power than me and would advance. I wouldn't. With no magic, there really wasn't a way to complete the training.

“Angels Snowball Starshine, I know you haven't paid attention to a word I've said.” Uncle Seraphim abandoned his oh-so-majestic jerking-off pose in favor of both hands on his hips as he glared at me.

It's not my fault I suck at magic. Why can't they just accept that and move on? I'd love to be able to just forget about having to deal with all of this bullshit. No one from my family had ever given up using their magic. It was unheard of and unthinkable, almost impossible if you believed them.

Unthinkable for everyone else but me. I'd thought long and hard about it. I'm sure life in the regular human cities would be hard, but it wasn't like I had any magic to support myself here anyway.

Fuck it. This was my life. It was time to start taking responsibility for myself.

"I've paid attention for years, but we all know that I just don't have the magic in me. I'm going to go live with the humans. I think I'll fit in just fine, don't you?"

Before he had a chance to peel his jaw off the floor, I was off to my room to pack my clothes.

Ha! Dramatic exit indeed.

My stuff didn't take long to round up. I felt a bit overwhelmed at how much I would have to do without until I got on my feet as a normal human.

My parents came in after knocking gently on my doorframe.

"We heard about what happened in lessons today. Don't be discouraged; sometimes it takes longer for some people to reach their full powers," my father said.

"I don't have any powers. I'm twenty years old. If I was going to have magic, it would have happened by now. It hasn't, so I'm a dud. It will be easier on everyone if I go and join the human society full-time."

"Son, there's no call to do anything so extreme. Why don't you just stay here? We'll find you a nice witch to settle down with and you can raise some babies. I'm sure that your children will have the magic." My mom. Bless her heart.

I just kept folding my clothes and putting them in my duffle bag. "I don't want to just stay here and be pitied. I might not be human, but without magic, I'm not much different." I paused. "Besides, I'm not going to be making little witch babies with anyone. I'm gay."

And with that I zipped up my bag, grabbed my laptop case, brushed past my parents, and left the witch enclave.

Chapter 1

Angels

“Hey Angels, that dude you’ve been eyeballing is back. He’s heading this way,” whispered Mackenzie, my coworker/co-conspirator, as she nudged me in the ribs with her pointy little elbow. Sure enough, I could see him through the plate glass storefront heading for the door.

What started as infrequent trips had morphed into almost a reliable schedule. Every Wednesday and Friday afternoon he came in for a bowl of Pistachio Dream ice cream around 2:45 p.m.

He always smiled at me, even when I wasn’t waiting on him. Every time I saw him, he just got hotter and hotter.

Or that could be the late May weather in Alabama. So damn hot and sticky. And every time, he always wore a suit jacket; he must be sweltering.

His face glistened with sweat. His shirt collar wilted and his dark hair was damp and curly.

“What can I get for you, sir?” I said, trying to stay professional without offering myself up on a plate with whipped cream and chocolate sauce. Hell, I’d even use the whipped cream to paint all my fun places.

“May I have a medium bowl of Pistachio Dream? Hold the cherry.”

Damn, he could so have my cherry.

My hands wanted to reach for him, but I controlled myself and made the best scoops I could. Perfectly rounded light green mountains with nuts peeking out of the cream, a generous mound of whipped cream, and a tasteful drizzle of chocolate sauce.

When I passed it over to him, his hand wrapped over the top of the bowl and his thumb brushed through the ice cream as he took it from me and turned away. The way his suit jacket rode up just enough to show where his ass flared above those thick legs was treat enough for me.

I know I stared almost slack-jawed as he sat down at one of the small tables and then drew his thumb gently into his mouth to lick it clean. I just knew it would still be a bit sticky.

Oh, how I wanted to get the rest of his body sticky and then clean him off. Cleaning off that big, beautiful body would be a gift. After I'd given him a tongue bath, I'd pull him into the shower to get him fresh and clean for me.

He would be perfect in the shower. The sweat had exposed just how his hair would curl and turn dark before it was saturated under the spray. The water would bead up and then form little rivulets as it snaked down his skin. He was a little taller than me, so I'd be able to reach up and run my fingers through the wet strands of his hair, tugging gently at his scalp.

I could picture the expression of bliss as he turned his face into the spray, exposing his long, clean-shaven neck and jaw. I'd love to run my fingers along the line from his ears, under his jaw, over his Adam's apple, down his throat, and onto that broad chest.

While I'd never seen him without a shirt on, I just knew it would be beautiful. I didn't think he obsessed about his body, but there wasn't too much paunch on him. My money was on him having a slightly defined chest, lightly tanned with sparse hair.

I gave up trying to prevent myself from sinking into my fantasy. There were only Mackenzie and me here besides Mr. Pistachio Dream. Thankfully the counters hid my growing problem. Would he grow a lot under a steamy shower? Would the water cascade down through chest hair or over smooth skin? The hot jets splashed across his shoulders and created a stream that flowed around his body. The smell of salt from his skin pricked my nose, and I wanted to bury my face against his neck to feel the water that had rinsed his skin flow across mine as well.

Close to his body, I'd feel the droplets as they broke apart on contact and ricocheted to splash against my skin. All I'd hear would be his breathing and the rush of the water beating down on us.

My ears started ringing as all the blood abandoned any pretense of powering my brain. What I wouldn't give to see him in a shower right now and make my fantasy a reality.

I heard a cracking pop, and Mr. Pistachio Dream looked around in alarm. It surprised me enough to knock me out of my almost trance and search for the source of the sound. My eyes focused on what he saw. A gushing geyser of water showered the plate glass windows where a small sidewalk fountain now lay in ruins. The casing around the top that had funneled the water into a controlled flow had split down the middle and fallen away. The uncontrolled water gushed out unimpeded.

That fountain was old; no one maintained it, right? They all do that eventually when they rust through. Deep in my heart I knew it wasn't a natural phenomenon. I could still see a faint trickle of an aura around the structure, revealing the touch of magic.

That wasn't my doing, but there was magic.

Please don't let there be any other witches in this city.

I finally felt accepted for who I was, not for what I should be able to do. Growing up, everyone learned of the dangers of a rogue witch. And a witch who didn't live on a compound could be anything. Another witch in town could lead to a confrontation that I'd be unprepared for.

I just wanted to be left in peace and the occasional fantasy about this one customer.

Chapter 2

Mitchell

The first time I saw Angels, I'd just stepped out of my office when I heard a commotion in the hall ahead of me; a dark-haired Adonis was fending off a handful of jocks with just his confidence. He handled their cuts with flair and didn't lose his cool.

"What a little faggot. Who uses pink, fluffy earmuffs anyway?" the biggest jock said as he crowded up to his victim.

"Well, they do help block out the little annoyances in the world," he said as he slipped them back over his ears and walked off.

A few days later, I saw him again, when my baby cousin, Gabrielle, and I went to the trendy ice cream shop just off of campus. I hadn't been there before, but she swore they had the best flavor selection. She was all about having as many choices as she could, but for myself, all I needed was the right one and I'd be happy. She used her eyelashes against me and talked me into trying something besides my normal vanilla. One bite of Pistachio Dream and I was hooked.

Or it could have been the way the Adonis of my dreams blushed as he bent over to dip out my choice for me. It didn't hurt that the tub was all the way in the front of the case, and he really had to stretch to reach it, causing his work shirt to lift away from his jeans, exposing a small strip of skin.

When he straightened back up, I had a minute to see him standing next to his coworker. I realized that he really was not all that big, maybe only five nine or so, a couple inches shorter than myself. The perfect height. Hell, whatever height he was, it would be the perfect height for me. Who'd be picky over perfection? Okay, so he wasn't classically beautiful. I can admit that my rose-colored glasses might have something to do with how I see him. Some would probably call his face a bit thin, his eyebrows a bit too thick. His bottom lip plumped a bit more than his top, and sometimes his eyelashes hid his brown eyes. His work outfits weren't the most attractive either. I was honest enough to admit that, but it hadn't changed how I saw him.

I spent most of that first visit just staring at him. Gabrielle noticed and wouldn't stop giving me shit over how much I stared. She told me to just ask

him out, but really, that wasn't even an option. I had seen him on campus, so chances were good that he was a student, even if he wasn't my student. That would still be cutting ethics a little too close for me. There was no way I would do anything so questionable.

I'd worked hard to get where I was. I couldn't be distracted by dark-brown eyes framed with feathery black eyelashes and caramel tanned skin and floppy curls just long enough to grip and hold and direct his head... I stopped thinking about that. I was sitting across from my cousin in public, for decency's sake.

Why didn't I bring my suit jacket with me? I sure could have used the cover.

I was never going to go back there without my jacket.

I didn't see him on campus or in my building again. After a hard day teaching freshmen, I found that the perfect pick-me-up was a bowl of pistachio ice cream and all the beautiful boy I could surreptitiously ogle. I only allowed myself to see him, I mean, get ice cream, when I had a particularly rough day at work. I'm ashamed to admit that it took me getting ice cream when he wasn't there to finally ask his coworker what his shift actually was. Even though I didn't have his name, she knew who I was talking about and had no problem selling out his personal info. I finally had his name... Angels. I found myself making excuses and finally made a plan I could stick to: no more than two visits a week. Just keeping to those two days strained my self-control on many occasions. I'd find myself longing to just swing by for a peek, and I rationalized that as long as I didn't actually go in, I was still sticking to my limit.

Those two days a week represented a personal reward for all the self-control I spent.

As the weather grew warmer, I began to regret the suit jacket, but seeing him was not lessening my need for the coverage. In fact, most days when I knew I would get ice cream, I ended up needing the jacket during my classes, too. Just the anticipation was enough to have me nearly reaching for the wrong pointer in class.

The relief of finishing final exams as a professor cannot be overstated. I was finally free of the all the whining and attempts to bribe me. Hell, I was running late because one of the girls in my freshman class had not too subtly tried to imply that she would give me a blow job for a passing grade.

I said I was running late, but I didn't actually have an appointment or anything. Just that at 2:45 p.m. on Wednesdays and Fridays, I got my fix of hot, beautiful boy and ice cream before his shift ended.

Honestly, I'd jogged from my office to my car to make up time. It didn't help that it'd turned unseasonably hot a few days before, and I'd had to park almost on the other side of campus. Already hot and out of breath, the preheated oven of my car brought even more misery to bear.

"Please, don't let me be too late to see him," I mumbled on the drive to the Creamery.

Sometimes I wished I hadn't become so all-consumingly obsessed. One look at him, though, erased any hint of regret.

My clothes were drenched from soaking up my sweat when I finally got into the full-strength air-conditioning of the Creamery. I wanted to say that he watched me more than just a bit when he took my order and served me. Taking my bowl from him, it took all my self-control to not wrap my hand over his and not let go. Avoiding his hand meant my thumb went into the ice cream. I gave in to temptation and sucked it clean when I knew he was watching. I couldn't help myself. I didn't know if he had any interest, but I was going to give him a bit of a show.

Damn. I couldn't tell if he watched my stupid performance. Why had I thought that was a good idea? He probably just thought I was sloppy and wrote me off.

I settled at my little table by the window to watch the scenery as I ate. From where I sat, I could watch Angels in the reflection and not look like the creepy old stalker I feared I was turning into.

After the fountain on the sidewalk outside the window ruptured, it looked like Angels lost his tan. He turned so pale. His reaction was a lot more interesting than watching the fountain spray everywhere and run in rivulets down the window.

I watched the drama outside unfold as people rushed around trying to figure out what happened and how to shut off the water. I could hear a young mother scolding a child that was determined to play in the spray.

When I was a child, I would have loved playing in a broken fountain. Only as a small child though; once I learned how undignified it was, I wouldn't have dared.

Chapter 3

Angels

“I’m just saying, don’t knock it till you’ve tried it,” Mackenzie said in a pleading tone of voice. As if she could wheedle me into giving in.

Almost every week she tried to interfere with how I dressed. Not only did I not dress gay enough for her tastes, now she wanted me to cross-dress for her.

Business during the summer session had trickled off, with most of the students only taking fall and spring classes. Which meant lots of time wasted on pointless pursuits. It’d been two weeks since the fountain had ruptured and been replaced with a new one that was twice as tacky. I’d been keeping an eye out, but I hadn’t seen any hint of other witches.

“No, Mack. I’m not wearing a skirt and heels to work. I look fine.” At least I hoped I did. Not that I had much feedback about my shorts and V-neck blue shirt. While we didn’t have a work uniform, we did have a dress code, and there was no room for creative interpretation. “And before you ask, a kilt is a skirt, so it’s out too.”

“Well, check out this Tumblr and tell me that those guys aren’t the hottest.” She shoved her tablet in front of me, open to a man in just a short skirt and knee high boots. The model did look gorgeous. As I scrolled down, there were other models in skirts and dresses, but they really didn’t do much for me. I couldn’t see myself in any of the outfits. Neither should some of the models. Some just looked awkward, not that I judged them for wearing skirts, but on the choice of the actual skirt they chose to wear. Did I just complain about someone else’s lack of style? Oh, the hypocrisy.

Then there was the model that was facing away from the camera, slightly bent over in a too-short skirt. I could see red lace panties. Panties on a man. It hadn’t occurred to me that there were other options for undies besides just the men’s section. Something about the private nature of wearing lingerie under clothes, and knowing how naughty you were being while the rest of the world had no clue, attracted me. Panties could be worn for a lover, too. They could be a sexy surprise for that special someone.

I did a quick search and was inundated with men in lingerie. Some of those images were unbelievably hot. Now there was something I could get behind. Or in front of. Beautiful lace and shiny satin panties in bright jewel tones had me

mesmerized. So much so that I missed seeing Mr. Pistachio come in, and Mack took his order before I'd even had a chance to compose myself. She still made me do the work of actually dishing it up for him, though I wasn't complaining about that.

He sat down, and I looked over at him, praying my cheeks weren't on fire. I couldn't get the image of how a pair of red panties and black stockings would look on him.

The way his hips narrowed into his slightly rounded ass would be mouthwatering under the satin. I could imagine how the black lace trim would frame his legs and groin, inviting me to touch and stroke the smooth fabric over his hard cock. And he would be hard. The thought of such blatant masculinity contained in something traditionally feminine nearly had me moaning. The mental image of him like that was so compelling that I couldn't stop thinking about how he'd look if he put on his lingerie just for me to find under one of his suits. It was a lot more intimate than just naked; lingerie like that would be for lovers.

Oh, the places I would touch. Each mound of his ass barely contained in the seat of the panties. Satin stretched so smooth, without a wrinkle or a pucker. If I could get him bent over, I'd worship his panty-covered ass.

I'd never worn stockings, but I'd always been fascinated by how they enhanced the shape of a leg. Not to mention that a garter belt and the straps connecting the stockings to it were the work of a genius in framing a groin or ass. The black would contrast deeply, giving a clear zone to play in.

I could feel the world narrowing down to a clear image of him in the lingerie, all of it under his suit just waiting for me to find.

My ears were ringing again. I needed to breathe or I would pass out.

Across the room, the object of my desire sat calmly. Then suddenly, with his spoon halfway to his mouth, his eyes popped wide. Then he started staring around the room as if something had just gone wrong.

I ducked my head back down to the tablet so I wouldn't get caught staring. I still discreetly looked through my eyelashes as he slid his jacket open and pulled his waistband out. What he saw clearly surprised him, as he dropped his spoon with a clatter back into the bowl.

I wondered what in the world could surprise someone in their own pants.

Chapter 4

Mitchell

I was late, but it couldn't be helped. The last few times I'd been to get ice cream, it had been practically empty inside the Creamery. Angels stared so intensely at the tablet he held that he didn't even notice when I came in. That sounded so self-centered, but I couldn't help being a little put out that whatever he was looking at was more interesting than a customer. When his coworker brought his attention to me, he startled, letting me know he really hadn't been aware.

Angels blushed so adorably when he dished up my Pistachio Dream. I just wanted to use the ice cream to cool him down and then lick it off. I felt a bit dirty for all the pervy thoughts I had about him. Not so dirty that I would actually stop thinking those thoughts, only that I'd do it from a nice little table by the window. It didn't take long before I saw him back staring at the tablet.

I was just minding my own business, when out of nowhere, it felt like static cling all down my legs and across my ass and crotch. What the actual fuck? Like all of a sudden my clothes shrunk down and were restricting my skin.

I looked down fast. My clothes looked perfectly normal, my pants draped over my legs, no static anywhere. Nothing gave any clue about what had happened to me, but the feeling didn't go away. I couldn't wait to find out what had happened to me, and I didn't know if it was even safe to move. Whatever it was had happened under my pants. I had to know what was going on, so I quickly looked around to make sure there were no witnesses to what I was about to do. Once confirmed, I quickly pulled the waistband of my pants away from my body and looked down.

To my horror, where my plaid boxers had been were now what looked like red satin panties.

Panties.

What had happened? I didn't own any panties, had never even thought about wearing panties. Was I going crazy? Had I lost my mind? Was someone playing a prank on me? I didn't see how, but nothing made sense. One minute I was comfortably relaxed and unrestricted and the next, panties. Based on the tightness around my legs, I wouldn't be surprised if there were stockings on me, too, which was so far beyond crazy.

My heart raced as I tried to logic my way around my immediate problem.

Now what? Yes, I had panties on, but that was no reason to run screaming into the street.

What I needed to do was to gather myself together, go home, and get them off of me.

I took a deep breath and calmed myself. I made myself take a few more bites of ice cream and then discreetly look around. No one was staring at me. Hell, there was no one else in the store except Mackenzie and Angels.

When Angels' shift finished, I watched him head out. I finally got my nerve back and stood up to the feel of compressed leg hair and satin sliding across the seat of my trousers. Yes, something was definitely wrapped around my legs.

Walking to my car, I tried not to focus on the feel of the panties and the stretch of the stockings. I just knew that anyone seeing my stride would know something was off.

I'd just come around the corner to my car in the back parking lot when I heard the sound of fist on flesh. I spotted three men closing tight on a collapsing form.

"He's tainted. No mercy," one of the guys shouted at another.

I didn't know for sure, but I thought that might have been Angels falling to the ground. My heart raced as I reached into my car to grab the special Taser my mother put there. Just in case. I'd never been so thankful for her professional concerns as I was right then. Those were some seriously beefy guys.

I tried not to regret the time I'd taken to arm myself as I heard more strikes to his flesh. That precious flesh. I knew I wouldn't stand a chance without a little extra help.

The three brutes hadn't even noticed they weren't alone. I would take any advantage I could get, stuff the Marquis of Fantailier. This was no time for a fair fight, only to act in time to save him.

I took barely enough time to aim.

No second thoughts. One trigger pulled. Two probes penetrated flesh.

One man fell to the ground and thrashed out of control, bringing the other assailants' attention directly to me.

Years of teaching unruly students kicked in and gave me the courage to stand unflinchingly in the face of danger. I ejected the spent cartridge and slipped in another.

“Just leave. I don’t want—” I didn’t even finish speaking and the two remaining men charged at me. I barely had time to line up my sights before I fired again. I got one square in the chest.

When he fell, his buddy didn’t even blink, just kept coming toward me. Closer to panic, I ejected the spent for a fresh. With no time to aim, I fired again and jumped out of the way as the last guy crumpled where I had been standing, stiffening with the continuing voltage coursing through him. I ejected the cartridge and shoved my Taser in the waistband of my trousers as my adrenaline rasped my breathing into harsh pants.

A muffled groan brought my attention sharply back to the broken doll lying on the pavement.

I ran to him.

Dazed brown eyes met mine as I straightened out his limbs, checking for breaks. I tried to be as gentle as I could, but I knew I had to hurry.

I couldn’t be a hundred percent sure he had no major injuries, but we ran out of time. The first man was coming around.

“I’m going to lift you, OK? Try not to fight me,” I said as I scooped him up, cradling him as gently as I could against my chest. His breath was steady and even, which reassured me that I wasn’t causing more injury by moving him without support.

As careful as I was, a few grunts and groans slipped from his lips before I had him at my car. Each one stabbed at me; if only I’d been faster, or any number of what-ifs that would have kept him safe.

“OK, let’s get you to the hospital,” I said as I tried not to jostle him, and hooked the car door open with my foot.

He looked at the car for a second. Then, “No hospital. I won’t go.”

“Fine, just get in.”

He took my “fine” as an agreement and settled into the seat.

I ran around to the driver’s side and cranked up the engine and sped away.

Chapter 5

Angels

I should have known better. I should have known not to go somewhere alone when I knew they were lurking. But still. I'd seen them around town, always watching me. They showed up right after the fountain ruptured, and I prayed that they weren't related to that incident.

None of them had anything distinguishing besides the general air of malevolence. I knew instinctively that they were bad men. One time, I could have sworn I saw a tinge of magic clinging to one of them. I'd told myself that it wasn't any of my business, that since they hadn't hurt me, they weren't going to and I would be fine.

I should have been paying more attention. My only excuse was the massive headache that came on at the end of my shift. I could barely hold my eyes open more than a squint, so when the guys that had been following me finally jumped me, I didn't see the fist to the back of my head. I was so shocked that I failed to defend myself at all.

The blows kept coming. Luckily, they didn't use any weapons other than their fists. Even with my arms up, I couldn't block enough blows and staggered a few steps, trying to find a way out, to run, to flee, to live. They'd circled around, and one strong hit to the back of my skull meant lights out for me.

I didn't know what happened until I was against a shiny BMW, being held up by none other than Mr. Pistachio. Never get in a stranger's car flashed in my mind. He wasn't exactly a stranger, but no one would know where I went. Through the pain, I realized I was a bit too dirty and bloody for such a nice car. I wondered how old it was. I knew my mind was straying from reality, but I couldn't help myself. I told him no hospitals, but I didn't know if he'd go along with my request. I was too out of it, passing in and out of the darkness, to keep track of where he took me.

I jolted awake in his arms. He must have carried me from the car; my eyes were swollen almost shut, no way could I have walked. It must have been the door opening that had roused me. Through the dim light, I could just make out the big, heavenly bed he placed me on like I was the finest porcelain. I didn't move or alert him that I was awake as he checked me over more thoroughly than he had in the parking lot.

“Sleep as much as you can, baby, I’ll watch out for you,” he said as he brushed my hair off of my forehead. I played possum so I wouldn’t have to confront the unexpected tenderness of his words and touch.

After his touch disappeared and I heard the creak of a floorboard a bit away from me, I cracked my eyelids just a sliver to see what was going on. Halfway to the en suite he stopped. He never took his eyes off me, watching me for any relapse or worsening of my condition. He stripped off his jacket and shirt and let them fall to the floor. When he took off his pants, he finally looked down at what he was wearing underneath: the exact lingerie I’d fantasized about earlier. I could see the red satin and lace confectionery clearly in the revealing bathroom light. As he pulled down his pants spotted with my blood, the red ribbons holding up his stockings looked exactly like I had thought they would, emphasizing the masculinity of his thighs in contrast to the delicacy of the stockings.

“What the fuck?” He looked so astonished at what he found. The view just got better when he released his pants and they glided down his legs, pooling at his ankles.

“Am I losing my mind?” he mumbled to himself. His confusion was distracting me from my pain. I knew he was checking himself out as best he could by the way he twisted around.

I couldn’t help but wonder if I had something to do with it, since that was exactly how I’d been envisioning him... oh, fuck.

Magic.

But I didn’t have that kind of magic. I had no magic at all. The only thing that barely registered to identify me as a witch was that I could see the aura of people and things with my witch’s sight. Witch’s sight doesn’t count as magic, though. The best explanation I’d ever heard was that it was like seeing a scent as a color. It made sense at the time, just like seeing in an extra color. Magic had to be worked at and trained for and inherent in the blood. When I’d passed puberty with no magic, I figured I just didn’t have it in my blood and no amount of work or training would bring it to me.

I must have made a noise because his eyes snapped to me, and he turned almost as red as his panties as he scrambled to wrap a towel around himself.

Through my cracked and bloodied lips, I forced out the only thing I could. “That’s a good look on you.”

I don't think he appreciated my wit, because he turned an even darker red then slammed the connecting door.

Dammit. My mouth always got me in trouble.

A few minutes later, I heard the shower running. After a while, it shut off and he came out cleaned up and wrapped up to his neck in a big fluffy blue bathrobe. What an old man look. All he needed were slippers and a pipe.

He approached me with a little tote in one hand and a washcloth in the other. He kept his head down and didn't speak as he wiped the blood from my face and pulled the cuts together with first aid tape and gauze. I held as still as I could to let him take care of me. It'd been a while since someone had cared enough to patch me up.

"Thank you. I don't think they would have stopped if you hadn't showed up."

"What happened? You don't have to tell me if you don't want to," he said, waiting for a response. I didn't know enough of what went on to actually be able to tell him why that had happened to me. I didn't have anything for him, so after a minute he continued as if he'd never asked. "Do you think we can get this shirt off and see what we're dealing with?"

"Yeah, just be careful with me. I think I'm already shattered," I mumbled.

He gently slipped a hand behind my shoulders and then lifted me enough to slip my shirt up my chest and up to my armpits. "Can you raise your arms?"

I tried, but my left arm refused to budge more than a weak flop. The muscles screamed their defiance in my brain. I pitifully shook my head no, unintentionally making my headache worse.

"Here, let me." He casually grabbed the hem and slid my shirt off my right side, then drew it over my arm.

His gasp of indrawn breath made me look down at the mess of my chest. It looked about like it felt, swelling over my ribs and redness where I'd been struck. The marks continued around my sides as he gently moved my torso so he could see how far around they went. His face showed his concern building for the damage he saw. He pushed my shorts down enough that could see the last bit.

"You need to go to the hospital. You could be seriously hurt."

"No hospitals. I don't have insurance. It's really not too bad." If I could just patch this off, everything could still be all right.

“You were passed out in my car! How is that ‘not too bad’?” He looked at me all indignant, like I was spiting him by not being wussy and needing a patch up by professionals.

“It’s not like they can do anything. Nothing’s broken; it’s just some cuts and bruising.” Maybe my logic would convince him. Really, it was true. Industrial grade painkillers were the only advantage of going to a hospital, and I could survive a bit of pain.

“How do you know nothing’s broken? You could be bleeding internally. You could have a blood clot go to your brain. Your kidneys could be ruptured.” The concern on his face warmed me like nothing else. I knew he was trying to alarm me enough to get checked out.

“I’ll be fine. It takes more than a few bruises to keep me down.” I’d been taught at an early age to avoid the medical profession like the plague. Actually, better than avoiding the plague because people have a really poor track record of avoiding the plague. That’s why they were called plagues.

I knew enough to know that I couldn’t go to the hospital without someone trying to take my blood. Which was the problem; my blood wasn’t a human type. Most people try to say that witches are just humans with power, but it’s not that. It’s in the blood. The blood that carries things that aren’t normal and doesn’t have the things that are.

No way could I let myself be taken to the hospital. Just because I couldn’t make much use of my heritage didn’t change anything.

“OK, then, I can’t let you leave until I know you aren’t seriously hurt. That means able to stay awake and not pissing blood,” he said in a stern voice.

I didn’t have the energy to start walking all over the city, and I had no clue just where I was. And no one else did either. Shit.

“I’ll be fine. What’s your name, anyway?”

“Oh, sorry, I’m Mitchell Anderson. I should have said.” Only slightly flustered.

“So why were you wearing the panties?” I asked to get the topic off of my injuries.

He turned red again.

“I swear I was wearing boxers this morning and somehow they just showed up.”

“Showed up? Like in the mail?” Like I didn’t already have a good idea of just how they’d gotten on him.

He ducked his head and mumbled toward his chest. “No, not the mail. They showed up on me in the Divine Creamery.”

“Like magic, huh?”

“Yeah, just like magic.”

Shit. It might have embarrassed him, but the implications were scarier for me.

No way did I, all of a sudden, have any power, but what else could it be? It was exactly like I had pictured it in my head, down to the black lace edging.

I was going to pursue that line of questioning, but I just couldn’t stay awake any longer. Mitchell woke me every hour to make sure I wasn’t more than concussed, and I barely talked him out of watching me piss. That was better left for when I was in a condition to actually enjoy it. Not that I’m into watersports, but really, I was not attractive all beat up. Or at least, I better not be attractive to him. If me beat up was attractive, that was just wrong.

Hell, I didn’t know if he was into guys, even if he had smiled at me at work. He might have just been being polite.

What else could I do but lie there and play the invalid? And worry about possibly having magic.

In the morning, I was feeling miles better. Not that I knew anyone named Miles, but the thought counted, right? I woke up in a strange but comfy bed, alone and stiff. After a few minutes, the day before came back to me, and I slowly pushed myself up enough to look around. Mitchell kept his room tidy; the shirt I’d been wearing was folded and on the nightstand.

He rapped on the wall to get my attention.

“Hey, do you want some breakfast? I made pancakes and bacon,” Mitchell said as he leaned in the doorway to the bedroom.

Now that was a sight that would make an angel blush. His lounge pants rode low on his hip bones, and his university T-shirt was so old and ragged that there were areas thin enough to see the chest hair beneath. Only the thinnest of T-shirts could cling so lovingly, like it had been painted on.

It took me a second to stop salivating over the man buffet and realize he'd offered actual food.

"Uh, yeah, that would be wonderful, but you don't have to go to the trouble," I got out before I said anything inappropriate.

"No trouble. They're already made anyway, you just have to come and eat them if you want."

There was something else I'd much rather eat, and it was so close to being on display. He had to know that he was showing off by posing like that. When he brought his arms up, I saw the muscles in his arms flex as they pulled his shirt tight and up just a bit. Not much, really, just enough to see the curve of his abs below his belly button and the strip of fur that led down to the pants that were barely hanging on by a prayer.

His waistband was so low, there was no way he could have anything on underneath, not even those little panties from yesterday. The knot in the drawstring could just slip loose, and there would be nothing to block my view. I knew the lounge pants would fall under their own weight if they weren't tied. To see him full-frontal naked... I could just see that happening as he stood in the doorway just like that, then the knot coming undone... the tie slipping through the knot as if tugged by invisible hands. Like it just did. And yep, there went his pants.

I couldn't help myself. I squeaked over the ringing in my ears as I realized what I'd done. I pulled the blanket over my head in shame and burrowed down, instinctively trying to hide my embarrassment.

I'd just pantsed my host with my magic. What was wrong with me? What kind of deviant was I? What if that'd happened where others could see? I was out of control, that's what it was. A menace to dignity and decency.

By the time I lowered my blanket, he had disappeared.

What was the polite thing to do? Certainly not stay hidden under the covers. I didn't think this was a topic that would have a Yahoo! Answers or even a Reddit post.

Chapter 6

Mitchell

I had the beautiful Angels in my bed. I was the luckiest man alive. Then I wasn't. Blame it on karma for wearing my pants loose enough to hang on my hips in an attempt to be attractive for an injured man.

I swear I thought he was gay, but when my lounge pants slipped off my hips and exposed me in my natural glory, he reacted by squealing and hiding his face. I mean, really, give a guy a complex, why don't you?

Once he finally emerged, he barely spoke a word to me as he slid into a seat at the table and ate his breakfast. I tried to be glad I'd already eaten some as I'd cooked, but the bruising and swelling I could still see made me lose my appetite. This man should never look so abused. Sometimes I got the impression that he wasn't focused on anything physically in the room with us. A few times he'd flick his eyes over to me, as if to make sure that I hadn't done anything stupid with my wayward proclivity of flashing.

He didn't offer much more conversation besides saying he was fine. Always fine, every time I asked. When he tried to convince me to let him just walk to his place after he'd found out just how far away from campus my house was, I put my foot down. I used my best professor voice and told him that he would ride with me or he wouldn't be allowed to leave. That startled him, but after a bit of staring at me he gave in. He allowed me to drop him off at his car in the parking lot of the Creamery on my way to work.

When he slid out of the seat, he again insisted he was fine. He took my number and grudgingly thanked me for taking care of him.

It was obvious he didn't want to see me again. I tried not to show how upset that made me.

I barely dragged myself to my office without turning around.

During my lunch period, I sat at my desk reliving the embarrassment of that morning and the night before. Oh sweet baby Jesus. He saw me in panties! I'd never worn or purchased panties before and then on the worst day for it, I'm wearing the damn things. How does something like that happen?

"What's got you so gloomy?" Dr. Vlad Dvorak said as he leaned into my office.

Great, just what I needed. Other people to know my problems. While we weren't exactly friends, Vlad was always pleasant to be around and never struck me as the judgmental type. He'd started teaching around when I had, but I could tell he had a couple more years on me.

I looked up from shuffling papers to grade and quizzes to return on my desk. I stared into his eyes and lost myself for a second.

"I'm an idiot," I huffed. I hadn't meant to actually say anything about my problems, but that was just the effect Vlad had on everyone.

"I doubt you're an idiot," he said. "Wanna talk about it?"

Strangely enough, after looking into his eyes, I did. I couldn't seem to stop the words from spilling out of my mouth. I told him about finding Angels in trouble and taking him home and him seeing me in panties and then accidentally flashing him.

"Wait, you were wearing panties, but you have no idea why or how? Are you sure about that?" Of course, he would focus in on the embarrassing parts. I couldn't believe I'd actually told my coworker, someone that I respected, something so embarrassing.

"Yeah, I was just sitting there and boom, I looked down and my boxers were gone." Shut up. Shut up. Shut up. Why couldn't I stop talking?

"That must have been a surprise." We could have been talking about the weather from how he didn't react. I kept expecting mockery, but it never materialized.

"Well, I think I felt when they switched. Like I was wearing the boxers and they changed into—" cough "—panties and stockings."

"What do you mean, they changed? You didn't do anything?"

"No, I swear I didn't do anything. I was just sitting there minding my own business." I know I sounded almost like I was whining, but I couldn't help it. The sheer embarrassment was overwhelming my normally calm demeanor. Or something was. I never could keep quiet around Dr. Dvorak when he asked me anything directly. His eyes were just so intent, and they dug a pit for you to fall into.

He wasn't a bad-looking man, but I didn't think he was gay. Gaydar may not have been my strongest attribute, but he just radiated straight.

Or that could just be his cologne.

“And then this morning, when your pants fell off, had you tied them or left them untied?” he asked, like it was a point of a mystery novel.

“They were tied. That pair won’t stay up for a second if they aren’t and I’d already had them on when I was working around the kitchen. I guess the knot could have worked loose, but it never has before. It’s not a slick tie.”

I was still confused about how that had happened. I always tied a firm knot. I mean it wasn’t a fancy boy-scout-badge-level knot, but still. It shouldn’t have come undone. Unless I have the absolute worst luck in the world.

“You said he squealed when they fell. Not to be rude, but are you packing an elephant trunk or obscene piercings that would scare an adult man? I’ve never seen a dick that would make me scream, and I’ve seen enough.” His face was almost stern when he said the last bit.

“I’m just normal. I wasn’t even hard or anything.” What the fuck was I saying? How was he getting me to admit to this kind of thing? I never talk like this in front of anyone, but his endless blue eyes were just drawing the truth out of me. I couldn’t resist their pull.

“Interesting. This Angels sounds like quite the person to know.”

And with that, he left my office. That was one of my weirdest conversations with Dr. Dvorak to date. He’d been a professor for a few years, but no one really knew much about him. I guess because everyone was so busy talking to him that he didn’t have to talk much about himself.

Chapter 7

Mitchell

Ring... Ring... Ring...

It was after eleven p.m., who would call me that late? I briefly debated not checking but after the trouble Angels had yesterday, I'd answer his call at any time. I picked up my cell and looked at the screen. Mom. No sense in fighting the inevitable, she'd just call back, repeatedly, until I answered.

I swiped the screen to answer.

"Hello, Mom. What are you calling this late for? You know I have class in the morning."

"It's never too late to talk to my son. You're way too serious. Sometimes I wonder where you get that." She was forever lamenting my responsible ways. Which isn't to say that my mother was irresponsible, quite the contrary. I know for a fact that my mother was responsible for quite a bit of spying and espionage, which is not for the flighty. She just always lamented my lack of a sense of adventure.

"Mom, really, why are you calling me?" Normally, I'd be polite, but at that time of night, she could deal with it.

"I just figured I'd come visit you for a few days. You don't mind, do you? I'll be flying in tomorrow evening, so that should give you plenty of time to prepare."

"Mom! That's kind of last minute, don't you think?" I nearly shouted at her. I went from pleasantly drowsy to wide awake instantly.

"Don't worry, hun. I'll tell you all about it when I get there." And then she hung up on me.

Tomorrow night. What had I done to deserve this? They say bad luck comes in threes, so maybe that was the end of it and I could have a normal existence after this. Not that I believed in any of that karmic or magical stuff, but sometimes I wanted the crutch.

All day I dreaded the inevitable. I'd lived in Auburn for seven years, and my mother had only visited twice. I much preferred going to her where I

controlled when and for how long. I loved my mom, it's just she has this way of knowing exactly what's going on in my life before I even tell her. I've tried cleaning out the surveillance devices she's planted, but I know there were ones I still hadn't found. I suspected she had those replaced anyway.

Why did she want to come visit now, of all times? Please don't let this be about my brief visitor. I hadn't thought about it at the time, but she probably saw me in panties. How was I going to face her?

I went through my classes on autopilot. I don't think anyone really cared that I didn't put much effort into leading class discussions. As much as I wanted to go to Divine Creamery just to make sure Angels was OK, I knew I didn't have time. I had to rush after my last class to get home and make sure everything was in order for her visit.

She arrived with all the aplomb of a head of state. Whatever else was said about my mother, she did have style.

"Mitchell, son, how are you?" she said as she kissed one cheek then the other.

"I'm perfectly fine, Mom. I'm sure you know that," I said, trying to keep the exasperation out of my voice.

"Well, of course you are, dear. And if you need anything special, I do have contacts in the fashion world if you would like. No need to settle for Victoria's Secret. "

Damn. She'd seen. Why had I thought she wouldn't have?

"I think I'll stay with you for a couple of days. I have a lot of vacation time accrued and what better way to spend it than with my only son?"

OK, that was complete bullshit. There were lots of wonderful places she could spend a relaxing vacation that didn't involve me. That confirmed she was up to something.

She soon had her bags deposited in my guest room closet and herself firmly ensconced in my living room recliner.

"Want a beer, Mom?" I asked as I headed into the kitchen. I might as well be polite. I did love my mom after all.

"That would be lovely, dear."

I brought two into the living room and handed one to her before slouching on my couch.

“When are you going to stop the Suzy Homemaker act?”

“I don’t know, dear. Isn’t this how everyone wants their mother to be?” she said with a serene smile. This act always grated on my nerves.

“Drop it, Mom. And tell me what you’re really doing here.” My exasperation showed in my voice.

“OK, fine,” she said as she sprawled out and downed half the beer in a manly swig. “So anyway, I’ve been getting reports of weird shit happening here. People randomly incinerated, freak accidents that don’t sound like accidents, freak events blamed on the weather, but no meteorologist sees anything? Bodies violently dismembered, people that should be dead being perfectly fine. All of a sudden, there’s a lot of odd shit going down. I don’t know if any of it’s related, but there’s no way that it’s all normal.”

What in the world was she talking about? I hadn’t heard about any of that stuff. Wouldn’t there have been something? Not that I paid much attention to local news, but surely someone in my classes would have mentioned it.

“How do you even hear about all that? I live here and I haven’t heard anything about any of that. And don’t tell me it’s confidential, you brought the shit up.” Sometimes my mom brings out bad language in me. I just can’t help it. She puts on any act she wants, but this is who she really is. I used to try to stick with whatever persona she was in, but I realized that was fruitless since she wouldn’t be frank with me unless she was being herself.

Thankfully she dropped the high-class act for the birds and the bees talk when I was younger, or that could have been more traumatizing than it already was. Yes, she knew I liked boys by then, not like it was a surprise to her. Nothing about me has ever been a surprise to her. Unless the panties were... maybe all was not lost and I gained something out of that fiasco.

“Remember I switched task forces last year? Now I look into this kind of thing and make sure that it isn’t a security threat. Internationally, there has been a serious increase in the amount of suspicious fires taking out problems. What are the odds that a bunch of random houses will burn down with high-ranking Chinese mobsters inside? No source of ignition was ever found. Stuff like that happens all over, and my job is to find out if there is anything in common and what it means.”

“What do you think is causing all of that? Do you ever find any answers?” My curiosity had me by the balls. I was equal parts fascinated and repelled by my mother’s work. I knew that that lifestyle was not for me, and I worried for

her even though I had no clue what she was actually doing. Hell, I bet sometimes when I was the most paranoid about her job, she was safe at home drinking tea.

“We never found any conclusive answers for those incidents. Some of the other things I’ve been sent out to have turned out to be just human error in dealing with explosives, but there is something going on out there that I need to find out about.”

“You can have the guest room.”

Chapter 8

Angels

I had magic coming to me. Why did I daydream in magic class? Why hadn't I at least taken notes or something? If I believed in karma, this would be an example of it taking a big, juicy bite out of my ass. Bad mental image. My ass is not juicy. Or moist or any other mentally scarring image.

So karma can... you know what, karma can just suck my dick.

That so doesn't sound much better.

I hadn't had any other flare-ups, but I wasn't taking any chances. I called my dad as soon as I got home after picking up my car.

Please don't let Dad be a dick.

After a few rings, he picked up. I could hear the rest of the family in the background, yammering away about mystical shit.

"Hey, Dad, can we talk a minute? I need some advice," I said calmly. I hadn't spoken to anyone from back home since I'd left so long ago.

"Sure, son, I always have time for you. What do you need?"

"I think my magic is coming to me," I said in a rush.

There were a couple beats of silence on the line.

"That's wonderful, Angels! It will be great to have you back home."

"No, Dad, I'm not coming back home." I interrupted him before he could get going. I was never going back to live there after a taste of true freedom. Even if it was the freedom to get my ass kicked for being only slightly flaming.

"Why not? What more do you need than our commune? The world is not ready for magic users. You know that you would be vilified if anyone found out. Just look at what happened in Salem."

Really? He was going to bring out that old chestnut of why witches could never function in the outside world?

"I'm fine, Dad, I haven't been burned at the stake. I just need to know what rituals I need to do to control it and keep it from affecting the natural world."

There was a hiss of breath. "What do you mean, stop it from affecting the natural world? Magic doesn't happen without a ritual."

Oh shit. Why hadn't I paid attention? Maybe he could still give me some advice, but I'd have to be more forthcoming about what was happening.

"Well, I haven't been casting anything and stuff just keeps happening. Like really specific stuff that matches what I was thinking about."

"Oh my, you're precognitive! That's wonderful. We haven't had a precog in the family in generations." Even I could tell from his voice that he was excited about this development.

"No, Dad. I'm not precog. Things are happening because I think them, not the other way around."

"That's not possible. If you'd paid more attention, you'd know that. Magic is about using the great God Hctibami's power through the rituals and ceremonies. If you don't do the rituals, then there is no power to fuel the magic. I know you know this." Now he was being almost condescending. Like I'd disappointed him.

I'd just thought that it was all to keep the kids in line from doing something too irresponsible and unwise. It's hard to be spontaneous with a two-hour long ritual.

But I knew what'd happened; no way that was a coincidence. It also didn't sound like my dad would be any real help. I doubted any of the rest of the family would be either since everyone believed the same things about magic.

"Now why don't you come on back home and you can practice your precognition in a safe and loving environment? Then we can find you a nice witch girl to settle down with, and you can pass your gift on to a few children so that it will be shared in future generations. "

I'd forgotten about the pressure to keep any interesting abilities in the family. No way did I want to do any of that. Even if I weren't gay, I knew I wasn't a precog. I knew what I had done, I just didn't know how yet. Or how to control it.

"No thanks, Dad. Tell Mom I said hi, will you? I've got to go to class, then I've got a full shift tonight," I said as I hung up the phone.

Well, that had been pretty much useless. I didn't learn anything new besides that I really shouldn't go to the family for help. If I couldn't go to my family then who could I turn to?

I puzzled over it and lost sleep over it, but I couldn't figure out how magic reacted to me. I tried to make things happen with my mind, but there was nothing. I tried to concentrate really hard on simple things, but no luck. I finally started to wonder if I'd really seen what I thought I had. Maybe it was just my mind playing tricks on me, since that was what I wanted to see.

When I wasn't thinking about my magic, I was thinking about the magic that I wanted to have with Mitchell and that I'd fucked up so badly.

I had mixed feelings about seeing him again. I knew he had to think I was an immature idiot. I mean, who squealed over a dick like that? Besides those guys in that porn that I watched a few nights ago. The plot was birthday party and there was a surprise.

Maybe at some point I would be able to keep my composure around him. I still needed to thank him for taking care of me after that incident.

"What happened to you? You look like you got beat to shit," Mackenzie asked. I couldn't hide how bad I looked. I just hoped that I didn't scare off too many customers with the brilliant bruises all over my face and neck. I'd mostly covered up my arms with a long-sleeved tee.

What else could I do? Makeup really wasn't an option and even then the swelling would show through.

"I got jumped after I left here. The dumb-asses thought I was someone else, I think. They kept raving about me being tainted and hell, I'd never met them before." I tried not to focus too hard on what had happened, on the rain of blows on my unprotected skin.

"Anyway, I thought I was pretty much toast when Mitchell rescued me. He took me to his place and patched me up."

"Mitchell? Who's Mitchell?"

"Mitchell is umm... the hottie that comes in here." I could feel the flames taking over my cheeks when I admitted it. What else was I going to say? I knew that she'd know who I was talking about. Of course, the light dawned in her eyes almost immediately, and she tried to suppress a smirk.

"That's one way to get his attention. I would have recommended just saying 'Hi,' but your way works too."

"No, I can't talk to him again. I don't think I could survive the embarrassment."

“Why? What did you do?” she asked suspiciously.

“Well, he took me home like I said and put me in his bed. When I woke up in the morning, his pants fell down, and I uh... might have made some unmanly sounds and pulled the covers over my head.” No way was I going to tell her about him stripping down to the panties and stockings. That was for my own enjoyment, not hers.

“Wait, was he wearing anything under his pants?” she asked incredulously.

“Nope.”

“I can see how that would be surprising. Any particular reason to act like a Victorian virgin? Was he packin’ something crazy?”

“No, he was perfectly fine. I don’t know why I did it. I guess it was just a reflex.” Which brought the image back to the forefront of my mind. I’d only just managed to think about something else for a few minutes straight, and there it was again.

“Reflex? In what kind of world is that a reasonable reflex?”

“I don’t know, OK. I grew up kind of secluded, but I’m not a prude.” I wasn’t going to admit that I was still a virgin. That was just too much for our friendship to handle. At least that’s what I thought.

“Then I guess you probably want to take a break or hide behind the counter, ’cause he’s heading this way,” she said as she looked over my shoulder and out the window.

I barely contained a squeak of surprise as I ducked back into the employees-only area of the office. I peered through the little square window as he came in with a beautiful, but extremely proper woman. She must have been related to him since she had the same rich brown hair and brown eyes and the same patrician nose. I hoped she was related and not a date or something. No way would he think the Creamery was a good place to take a date that looked like that. She might have been older than him, but it was hard to tell. I’d never had any exposure to high-class women. The females in my family liked to pretend that they were cultured, but they could never achieve the amount of class that was just dripping off this woman.

I saw them both order the Pistachio Dream.

Please let that be a sign that they were related. No way could I compete with a woman that put together if that was his type. Not that I’d have a chance after my behavior last time anyway.

I just wished I hadn't messed up and had my magic mess with him like it had. Even though I tried to find ways to doubt it, I knew that all the mishaps were from me. Maybe it had to do with the fantasies themselves?

Should I try now?

But what could I fantasize about that wouldn't get me in trouble? He couldn't know that I was the cause. I definitely couldn't do it, not with someone else watching. If I'd had any luck making my magic work in any other way, I wouldn't have been thinking about this. I really shouldn't have been thinking about it then either, really. This could cause so much more trouble than the fountain incident had. If my theory was right though, my magic was trying to make what I wanted come true.

I just kept remembering the way he'd looked when his pants started to slip off his hips, and how I wished that had been desire in his eyes instead of dismay.

If only I'd had control of my magic, and he had been turned on with the way I could manipulate the world around me. I pictured the way he would have looked if we were in his room like that now.

I didn't realize that I was fantasizing about something that would definitely get me into trouble.

As my fantasy got more and more detailed, picturing his room and his jacket sliding down his arms, I felt that weird tingling again.

Shit. It was too late. My fantasy had taken hold and the consequences were readily apparent... We were back in his room, I was on his bed and... Mitchell was half-naked in the doorway, but he wasn't looking pleased to be there. In fact, he looked about ready to freak the fuck out. Well, now I had proof. Proof I was an idiot. What kind of witch loses control like that? What kind of witch was I anyway? I'd never even heard of anyone actually being able to teleport, but then I hadn't exactly paid any attention in my magic classes either. I'd been trying to distract myself from having to face reality.

"What the fuck just happened?!" he shouted, almost as high pitched as I had been the last time I'd been in this room. Not exactly the exclamations I'd hoped for.

"Ummm. Hi? I didn't mean to, honest I didn't. It's not even supposed to work like that. I'm not supposed to even have magic like that." Babble mode engaged.

“What do you mean, magic?”

“Ummm, I’m actually a witch. But I don’t have any powers, so it’s OK.”

“That didn’t look like no power. That was like... I don’t know what the fuck that was like.” He paused. “Oh shit. My mom!” he shouted.

That made no sense. Why would he wonder about his mom?

“Your mom?”

“She’s still at the Creamery, isn’t she?”

So that woman was his mom? And I’d just zapped her son out from in front of her. There was a reason we didn’t do magic in front of normal humans, and this was probably it. I tried to remember who might have seen this debacle. Mackenzie had already been distracted by something on her phone, and we hadn’t had any other customers.

“Don’t think you’re getting out of explaining what the fuck just happened, but we need to get back there and get my mom.” He looked at me. “Can you do that again and get us back there?”

“No, I don’t know how I did it in the first place.”

“Well come on, go get in the car, we’ve got to get back... And what happened to my clothes?” I think he just realized that some of his clothes were crumpled on the floor. That he hadn’t taken off. He looked suspiciously at me.

“You have a LOT of explaining to do.”

Chapter 9

Mitchell

This was so far out of the realm of normal that I thought I must be dreaming. One minute I was sitting down to a nice bowl of ice cream with my mother, and the next I was back in my apartment with half my clothes off and Angels staring at me. I tried not to notice the way his pants bulged a bit more than normal and then deflated when he realized where he was.

Magic.

Who would have thought that would be real? I hadn't, but this was sure hard to ignore.

I just hoped my mother hadn't started taking the shop apart or injured anyone before we got back. Mom is easy to underestimate, but she is very fierce and skilled. I wasn't sure if I wanted her to have checked her surveillance of my place or not. Would having a heads-up on what was going on make my life any easier? Call me selfish, but I'm all for easier.

Angels looked almost like a kicked puppy when he'd slunk into the passenger seat of my car. God, he was so cute with his dark hair and perfect tanned skin. The bruises on his face and the way he wore a long-sleeved shirt under his work shirt to hide the bruises on his arms made it impossible to really be upset at him. It's not like he had hurt me, just transported me back to my place. I was glad my mother had insisted that we take her rental SUV earlier, otherwise we would have been stranded until she came back.

I called my mom's cell, and when she picked up, I jumped in before she could get a word in. "I'm OK, I'm on my way back to the Creamery."

I heard her indrawn breath.

"That's good to know. I will be waiting for you at our table."

Then she hung up on me. We were halfway there when I realized I should have told her to come back to my apartment. Even in my flustered state, I knew that this would work out okay too. Angels could get his car, and he was damn sure going to be coming back to my place with us.

"I'm really sorry, I didn't mean to do it," he said as he looked over at me.

"I'm not mad, really, just surprised."

I hoped I didn't have on my stern expression. People always told me I was way too serious and conservative. It doesn't help that I'm Dr. Anderson, the history professor. I wouldn't even be considered the life of a party of the undead. Why had I thought that the only way for me to be happy was to be responsible?

He just kept watching me as I drove. I couldn't help having thoughts of what had happened and his short explanation.

Magic.

I hoped that having a few minutes to collect ourselves would make things easier when we added my mother to the mix. I wanted to say that I didn't need my mother to handle this kind of thing for me, which is usually true, but when it comes to weird, that was her bailiwick now.

"I promise I'll follow you back and explain everything. I really need to clock out. It shouldn't be a problem, since you always come in just before the end of my shift." From the look on his face, he just realized how much he had admitted to me.

"So you've been noticing when I come in?" I couldn't help myself, I had to ask. Maybe he'd noticed me for another reason? Hope springs eternal and all that.

"Uh, yeah," he said as he tipped his head back down.

When I got inside, my mother didn't make a fuss, just stood up and came over to me. There were no other customers, just Angels' coworker staring at me. I wondered if she'd even noticed I'd been gone.

"Good to see you again, Mitchell," she said in an almost amused voice.

"Come on, Mother, let's just go back to my apartment." I glanced at the table where we'd been seated. Two empty and abandoned bowls sat by themselves. "I see you already ate my ice cream as well."

"You shouldn't abandon your food if you want it to be there later." That was definitely a smirk on her lips.

Angels spoke briefly to his coworker then came back over to me.

I took it as my cue to lead our small procession back outside and to our respective cars. I met his eyes again before he slipped behind the wheel of his car and gave him a stern glare so he would know not to try to slip away.

Not that I thought he would.

My thoughts ran rampant on the drive back.

How did I feel about magic? Was it anything like what I imagined? Did I need to be afraid? I hadn't thought about it, but could his magic hurt me? It probably could. Who was to stop that besides my mother? I had to trust that he was a decent human or witch or whatever. He had certainly seemed like a nice guy. But wasn't that always what the neighbors said about serial killers?

This was more than I'd expected when I woke up this morning.

Finally when everyone was in my apartment and the doors closed, I waited on the fireworks.

I tried not to feel too guilty as I glanced past Angels. He still looked like a kicked puppy. And I had just invited a viper back for dinner.

I cleared my throat. "Mom, this is Angels Starshine."

"Pleased to meet you," she said as she delicately extended her hand like she was royalty blessing him by allowing him in her company.

"Charmed," he said back.

I know she was wondering why he was here.

"So, um, Angels here had a little mishap, and I got teleported." I tried to just get it started with the uncomfortable truth. "I'm not sure exactly how, though."

This was his turn to speak up and explain, and he didn't disappoint. "I'm a witch. I didn't think I had any power though, I swear."

"Moving someone in that way doesn't sound like something someone without any power could do. In fact, that sounds like someone with a lot of power." Her disapproval dripped from her voice. Like she knew all about magic, and it was his fault for not knowing as much.

"Mom, can you lay off? There's no one else watching." She gave me the stinkeye and visibly destarched.

"Mrs. Anderson, I'm really sorry that it happened. I didn't mean for it to happen." Angels tried to placate my mother.

"It's OK, Angels, I'm not mad."

We were all standing just inside my doorway, and the tension still brewed. Speaking of brew. "Mom, do you want a beer? Angels?" I said as I broke away and headed for the kitchen.

“That would be lovely, dear,” Mom said as she kicked off her shoes and headed back to her favored recliner. She flopped down with a sigh, slouching and comfortable.

Angels just stood there looking nonplussed

My mom had that effect on people when she let down the pretenses. Now she was acting like a frat boy the way she was making herself at home. What almost-middle-aged man wants his secret crush to think he’s still living with his mother? She had pretty much moved in while investigating what was going on, but so far she hadn’t found anything, and then this happened right in front of her. I didn’t know whether that was luck or disaster.

I handed her a bottle and had a water for myself. Angels declined everything, still looking like a squirrel facing down a Mack truck.

“So tell me about this magic that you do,” Mom said after a big chug and belch.

Angels looked a bit embarrassed. “Well, I don’t really do magic. I don’t know how it’s happening; I’ve never had magic before. It’s not like I never tried before, but it never worked.”

“What do you mean it never worked? Why would you have thought you could do magic before?” My mom was more perceptive than I. “And where did you say you were from? How many witches are there?”

“Um, I shouldn’t be talking about it,” Angels said as he rubbed the back of his neck. “I wouldn’t have told anyone, but somehow my magic has been going haywire and well, you saw. Please don’t tell anyone.”

“Oh, we wouldn’t tell anyone. We just want to know what’s going on with you, hun. Is this the first time your magic has done something odd?” And now she layered the charm on top of the casualness.

He sighed. “No, it’s been doing it off and on for about a month now, but it’s been unpredictable. I don’t know what’s wrong. I’ve looked everywhere for info, I’ve asked my parents and nothing. It shouldn’t be acting like this.” He ran his fingers through his hair in frustration.

“Then what should it be acting like?” Such cozy casualness was irresistible to mortal man.

“It’s only supposed to work when the rituals are completed in honor of the God Hctibami.”

I'd never even heard of that god in all my years studying history.

"So when you've done the rituals, the effects haven't been predictable?" my mother asked, sweet and understanding.

"No, I haven't done a ritual in years, and even then, I was never able to actually do any magic. This is happening without any ritual at all." He stalked around to the other end of the sofa I'd claimed and sat, hunched forward, his elbows on his knees.

"So you didn't mean to cause the wind shear or the firestorm?"

"What are you talking about?" Confusion was all over his face and colored his voice.

"You said it's been misbehaving, or were those intentional?" she said as she leaned forward in her chair to stare at Angels' reaction.

"No, my magic hasn't done anything like that."

"Are you sure? You just said it's been misbehaving. Could it have gotten out of hand or done something you weren't aware of?" The comforting tones had grown into the steel of the inquisitor's blade.

"No, it's not like a pet poodle that slips out of the house and buggers the neighbor's Chihuahua. I can feel after it's happened that something has happened. I just don't have control over what happens."

This was going south, fast. It was time for me to speak up. "Mom, can you lay off? He just said he had nothing to do with that stuff."

She took a deep breath. "Maybe if I put all my cards on the table, you can help me understand."

She pulled her smartphone out of her purse as she got out of her chair and headed to where Angels was sitting. She plonked herself down right between us.

"Now, I've just seen my son vanish with my own eyes and you admit to being a witch and that you did that to him. I think you're the best source I'm going to have to try to find out about a series of odd events. My people have known for some time that there's more than just what we can see in this world. We're not sure just how deep the rabbit hole goes, but we're trying to do what we can to keep wide scale tragedies to a minimum." She held up her phone flipping through pictures and showing them to Angels.

“We’ve had reports of a huge winged beast in the area where people were slashed to ribbons. The witness artist renderings are remarkably similar. Then we have these stills from security cameras where localized high-intensity wind hurled objects into people. Here is an alley that was burned so hot that there was no evidence left, but the bricks and mortar had heated so hotly that they were nearly glass. We’ve found some bodies with their brains fried to a crisp but no damage to any other part of their body.” She stopped flipping. “This is a video feed from a security camera near campus.”

It started with a car flipped against a building. A group of people flipped the car over and exposed a crushed body. From the damage I’d seen, I knew that poor guy had to be dead. They clustered around him until another figure entered the shot. Then everyone straightened the body’s limbs. Then they let go and stepped away... And the body stood up.

“Can you help me with any of this?” my mom asked.

Angels had turned whiter than I’d ever seen him.

Chapter 10

Angels

I knew that there were more things in the world than just witches. I remember some of the lessons on what else there was in the outside world that could make a meal of or easily destroy a witch. As far as paranormals went, witches were barely above human. The things that his mom showed me scared the ever-loving shit out of me. To think when my magic had started to manifest, I'd thought there might be another witch in town. After seeing those pictures and hearing what she said, I wished it was something so benign.

How could I tell her though? If what I suspected was real, she would have no chance of stopping any of the beings involved and just bringing attention to them could get everyone killed.

"I know you know more than you're saying. Want to take a stab at telling me what's going on?" Mitchell's mom had picked up on my reaction to the pictures.

"I had nothing to do with any of that, and I don't know anyone who could do any of that. The problem is that I have an idea of what did some of it, and there is no way you'd stand a chance against them."

"Them? So then what are they? Can they be reasoned with? Are they rational? Some of this damage doesn't look sane." I could tell that she was taking me seriously but was still skeptical. Hell, I would be too if someone had only told me, but I'd seen the pictures. The problem was that if I was right, it wasn't just one type of creature.

I looked to Mitchell, he had crowded in on the other side of his mother and had seen the pictures and video, too. He was starting to look a little green.

I was concerned that his mother even had those.

"I'm not sure about all of the pictures, but I know what I've been taught about the other beings out there. The wind and fire ones: the only thing I know of like that are the souls. Basically, they are their element and they have total control over it. There's not a lot of information, but they have been around forever. If I remember right they are almost always incorporeal except when manipulating their element." I paused to flip to the witness sketches. "This beast could be a couple of different things, maybe a demon, but he sounds more

like the Executioner.” I’d always been intrigued by the other beings; it was one of the few times I’d actually paid attention.

“Who or what is that?” she asked.

“Legend has it that at one time there were vampires everywhere. Somebody called in this monster, and he massacred all of the vampires he could find. There are lots of stories about him, flying into an area and ridding it of all of the vampires. He never attacked anyone else, even some witches that thought he was after them and tried to push a confrontation. He just ignored them and went right after the vamps that nobody had noticed.”

“So is he a myth? Would anyone try to pretend to be him? And are we talking a species or how many of them are there?” She paused in her note-taking to focus on Angels.

“As far as I know there is only the one. Which concerns me, because that man with the unexplained healing sounds suspiciously like a vampire. And if he is that would explain why the Executioner is around.”

I don’t know why, but I didn’t mention that I had seen the prospective vampire around town and in one of my classes last semester. He’d always seemed like a nice guy, but then it’s hard to tell with some people and I couldn’t be sure. I would have to find him and warn him at least, but if the Executioner was around, he had much bigger things to worry about than just Mitchell’s mom.

“All I’ve been able to do was break a fountain, untie a knot, transpose some things and teleport. Don’t know what all I can do, but I think it all has to do with moving things around. I don’t mean to do it either, and it’s not as if I have any control over it anyway,” I said.

Mitchell was looking at me a bit harder when I listed my sins. “So the fountain the other day was you?”

“I think so.”

“Do you remember what you were doing that caused that?”

I could feel myself blushing. “I was thinking about a shower.”

“So it just happened?” he asked.

“Yeah.”

It took me a few days since I didn't even know what his name was, but I roamed campus where I remembered seeing him this semester until I finally caught up to him. He was just leaving Dr. Dvorak's office, so I followed him at what I thought was a discreet distance to his car.

"I know you're back there," he said as he turned to face me.

"Sorry, I wasn't trying to sneak up on you. I just need to speak to you without an audience."

He looked pointedly around the nearly empty parking lot. There were only a few cars left and no people within earshot. "Here sounds good to me. What do you want?"

I would have to watch myself, if what I thought was true. "This may sound weird, but how do you feel about Bloody Marys?" I mean really, how do you allude to if a person is a vampire or not without sounding like a complete prat?

There was a bit of surprise in his eyes. "Not a favorite. Why do you ask?"

"Umm, how about rare steak?"

No real reaction. "I like steak... what are you getting at?"

Damn it. "Are you a vampire?"

This time he did startle.

"How... what gave you that idea?"

Confirmation.

"Look, folks know about your miraculous healing and are looking into it. We had that Great Books class together, and you just seemed like a decent guy. I want to know what's going on because you might be in danger."

"What do you mean people know about that?" He sounded accusing. Shit, I should have thought this through a bit more. This guy was massive. I wouldn't stand a chance against him. He had to be at least six three and broad as a tank. His tan skin with shortish dark-brown hair and hazel eyes weren't Hollywood vampire, especially not the scarring down the side of his face. Somehow I got the impression of military, a warrior about to kick my ass.

"I'm a witch, and not powerful at all. I had someone ask me questions about the stuff going on around here and if I was involved, which I'm not. They have the security footage and there you were, so someone might be coming for you."

He started to look angry again.

“Of course they’ll be coming after me if you told them what I was. Dammit, why didn’t you keep your mouth shut? Now, what am I going to do?” He ran his hand through his hair, ruffling it slightly.

“Dude, you got bigger problems than that. They already had your picture, but I think the Executioner is in town as well. They had sightings and witness statements and it sounds like he’s killed people already,” I babbled away, unable to control my mouth.

“What are you talking about? Why would anyone be coming after me? I haven’t hurt anyone.”

“I don’t know much about him, but this thing has wiped entire clans of vampires out of existence. I don’t know why I’m telling you anyway, but I just thought you should have a heads-up. I don’t know if there are any other vamps around, but well...”

Why was I even telling him? I mean all the tales said that the vampires were all bad guys that got what was coming to them, but I’d always had the witch’s sight. No, it’s not a power, it’s just like seeing auras, and I knew that this man was not evil. Belatedly, I wondered if being turned into a vampire would corrupt him into something bad.

“Stay here. Let me call someone.” He stepped back from me and pulled out his phone, quickly connecting with someone. I tried to listen in without being too obvious about it, but his voice was muffled, and I couldn’t hear what was said on the other end.

When he returned to me, he looked very serious.

“You’re going to have to come with me.”

Shit, this just got a lot more dangerous for me. Going to an unknown location with someone who was a known vamp to meet other unknown people and possibly other vamps... definitely not the smartest move, but then he was a vamp. If I resisted, it could go bad for me just as easy. And I had been the one to seek him out.

“Can you tell me where we’re going, and can I let someone know?”

“We’re going to see some friends, and I think you’ve told enough people already,” he said brusquely.

“I didn’t tell anyone what they didn’t already know. They had video!” I sounded like a whiny bitch, but I couldn’t help it.

He still looked a bit pissed, but not murderous. At least I didn't think so. What a time to trust my witch's sight.

After driving a ways off campus, he pulled up in front of a small brick house and I was escorted inside. The door behind me closed with an audible click and snick of a lock sliding home. Once my eyes adjusted from the light, I was surprised. There was Dr. Dvorak, lounging against the modern cream couch with a curvy blonde woman snuggled up to his side. An extremely tall, red-haired, androgynous man stood side by side with an even taller man mountain.

A cute little blond twink rushed forward and grabbed my escort into a hug and pulled him away from me.

Dr. Dvorak said, "Ben here tells me that you know what he is. Mind telling us how you know that?" I didn't know any of the others, but none of them screamed evil, but then they were being pretty quiet so far. I told them about getting outed as a witch and about the pictures.

When I told them about my fears of the Executioner being in town, the man hanging on to Ben snorted.

"It's not funny. I've seen the records of whole clans being decimated by him. I've read the eyewitness accounts. Once there were thousands of vampires and then this beast shows up out of nowhere and they're all gone." I glanced over at Ben. "Well, maybe not all. But if the Executioner is in town already, I don't know how to protect you, and you're not even taking me seriously."

"Oh, he's real, but Ben isn't in any danger from him," Dr. Dvorak said confidently.

"Dr. Dvorak, how can you be so sure?" I started to have suspicions.

Dr. Dvorak snorted. "Call me Vlad. I appreciate you trying to warn us about the Executioner, but that's not a worry, seriously." He winked. "Sam, you want to tell him why?"

In the confusion, I looked at the little twink that was hanging on Ben.

"Hi, yeah, Ben has nothing to worry about. His little pearly fangs are perfectly safe. I would never harm him. He's not like those other vampires that were blood crazed."

Surely he couldn't mean... He was just so small and delicate looking.

“Yeah, that’s him.” Vlad chuckled. “The big, bad Executioner.”

My jaw just about hit the floor. He had to be joking. Sam was nowhere near what the legends said the Executioner was like.

“But that’s a story for another time. What else did this person know about?” When I told them about the picture of the fire and wind damages, the redhead waved. “That would be me, or at least the fire part. We’re still tracking the soul of air. He’s gone rogue. By the way, I’m Barbie, and this is my Steven. Don’t worry, the dread Executioner has agreed to spare him and his cousin Crissy over there.” The woman snuggled next to Vlad waved when he said her name.

You could have knocked me over with a feather. Not only was I in the presence of a nearly extinct race as well as the Executioner of that race, but also a soul of fire who turned out to be corporeal.

And they were all friends?

I’d left the commune because I’d wanted to find normal people that I could fit in with, but now I was even more outmatched.

“Don’t feel bad, I thought I was dreaming when I found out about Barbie. I didn’t even know anything else existed and then *boom*—my best friend is a flaming mythical being,” Crissy said.

“You just had to work in the flaming part didn’t you?” Barbie muttered. “I’m never going to live that down.” Crissy snickered and snuggled into Vlad again.

Chapter 11

Mitchell

What was I going to do to get over this infatuation that I had with Angels?

I couldn't stop thinking about him. He invaded my dreams like Russia invading Poland.

After finding out about his magical ability, a few more things made sense.

I bet he was the reason why I was in panties. Which was more evidence that he was not gay. If his magic tried to put ladies' undies on me, surely that would mean he was looking for a lady? But then why did they end up on me?

Then there was the mess with my mom's branch of officiousness. I still had no clue what kind of endgame she was looking for. I knew she had to have one. As much as she seemed surprised by the existence of other beings, she'd come here with the awareness that this was a possibility, so she would have a goal in mind. Would it be elimination? Eradication? Education? Exposure? I just hoped that her love for me would help temper her decisions since I was fixated on one of the paranormal people.

And that's just it. He was still just a person to me, not a witch that I needed to be scared of or hide from. So what if things happened around him? So far, it was just moving things around. How dangerous could that be?

With those thoughts, I finally took myself off to bed.

I had just nicely settled in when my cell on the bedside table started vibrating.

I flailed at it and managed to grab it only to see an unknown number. Normally, I would ignore any calls like that, but after what had gone down, I held out hope that Angels would decide to call me. Just to talk. Maybe to explain a bit more.

"Hello?"

I heard some commotion in the background. "Hi, um, it's Angels. Look, I know I said I didn't know anything about the other stuff going on, but I did track down some folks that I think you and your mom need to speak with. In fact, they insist."

I could hear the hesitation in his voice. If he did have any information on what was going on, I knew my mom would be out the door in under a minute. No one could keep her from what she saw as her duty.

“Sure, just tell me where we need to go.”

I heard some whispering in the background, but I couldn’t make out what was being said.

“Can I text you an address?”

“Sure,” I said, and within a few seconds there was a ding as a new text arrived from a different number. I pulled up the address and recognized the street.

“OK, I’ve got it. Give me a bit to get over there with my mother.” He hung up as soon as I had finished speaking to him.

I rolled out of my nice comfy bed and pulled on a new pair of jeans and a T-shirt. Even the prospect of seeing Angels couldn’t make me care too much about my attire. I shuffled down to the spare room and knocked lightly on the door. A few seconds later and there was my mother, looking as perfectly put together as if she was going to a business meeting.

“Angels has some people you need to meet. Are you up to it?” I asked, even though, with her appearance, I thought I already knew.

“Of course, kiddo, it’s what I do,” she said as she swept out of the room and out toward the front door. “I assume you know where we’re going, so you can drive.” I barely got my hand up in time to catch the keys that were sailing toward my face.

I slipped on my shoes, and I was out the door behind her and driving to the address.

The brick house was quaint and unassuming. My mind flashed on all the horror movies I’d ever seen. It was the middle of the night, and there was an assortment of cars parked around, I thought I might have recognized one or two from on campus.

No matter my misgivings, my mother was already out the door and striding purposefully toward the front, where she turned on me with a look that clearly said, “Well, are you coming or not?” I had to hurry to show that I understood and was suitably intent on going in with her. She rang the doorbell, and I could hear the chiming inside the house, followed by muted footsteps.

When the door swung open, I was confused. What would Dr. Dvorak have to do with this?

“Welcome, come join the festivities. Let me introduce you around.” He stepped back and waved toward the others standing or sitting around the room.

Angels looked comfortable in an easy chair next to the guy from that picture of the miracle recovery. Without the blood, he looked a lot less threatening.

“I hear you know humans aren’t the only folks on this planet,” Dr. Dvorak said. A quick glance around and I saw a couple former students from my classes. I tried to remember their names.

“In fact, you still wouldn’t if not for your boy here.” He then addressed my mother. “And you, my dear, are looking into things that are out of your league.”

“That’s not for you to decide. My duty is to protect American interests and citizens. If there is a threat, it must be neutralized.” Mom came off as a hard-ass. And I wasn’t sure if she was bluffing or not. I didn’t think she was though.

“There’s really nothing you can do to get rid of us that wouldn’t result in destroying you and your government. It’s not in the American citizens’ best interest for us to be enemies,” Vlad said. I could see my mother fighting to not agree with everything he said. I didn’t know what was going on. I’d never seen that look on my mother before. She always knew her mind or at least never let on if she didn’t.

“Dude, you know you can’t always work your mojo on folks with a strong mind and the opposite mindset. You should have known better,” the short blond twink—Sam, if I remembered right—said as he smacked Dr. Dvorak in the back of the head. “Pardon my friend, he hasn’t had to deal with accidental discovery in many years. He comes on a bit strong, but he is essentially right. Now, I know you’re going to think we’re just being self-serving and evil. We’re really not evil or the enemy here. Angels told us you already had info on Ben here being a vampire or at least the characteristics if not the word. You scared him so much that something would come after Ben that he ran straight to warn Ben.

“Now, can we all agree to live and let live? You don’t have the power to stop us,” Sam continued.

“I might not be able to stop you, but even if you kill me, that won’t be the end of it. More folks will be sent out if I don’t report back with my findings.” My mother. Bless her bravado. I still wasn’t sure if all of these folks were vampires or not. Angels slid off to the side, almost like he didn’t want to be caught between us and whatever was going to happen.

The stare down continued, and the air thickened with tension.

Dee da didi do What the hell was that noise? It was coming from... my phone and my mom's phone?

The tall red-haired man smirked at us. "You better answer that. Trillian gets tetchy if you keep her waiting."

How did he know who was calling us? My mother and I both picked up anyway, since that seemed important.

"You guys are trying to meddle in affairs you know nothing about. You have no authority over any of the beings in this room. While I know your orders are to investigate, we know that if the investigation were to reveal the truth that they would call for destruction or research... neither of these are an option," said an unfamiliar female voice. I could only assume that this was, in fact, Trillian.

My mom burst in. "You don't know what my orders are." She didn't deny any of the rest.

"Oh yes, I do. I know all about those orders, e-mails, surveillance, video, audio, records, accounts, everything. Nothing can hide from me. I'm the ghost in the machine. All machines, everywhere. You have no way to touch me and I can touch every aspect of your life and everyone you know. By the way, Mitchell, did you know your mom has five different cameras and a biometric scanner at your place? Lillian, I even know where you put all of the pictures you took of that cute Russian bear you were with three months ago in Guatemala." Trillian's voice was kind of smug.

"Ha! He wasn't Russian, he was Norwegian," my mom said.

"No, he only said he was Norwegian to get access to those documents you had liberated from the embassy in Prague five days earlier. He'd been tracking you since then. The tattoos on his back sure were pretty weren't they?"

My mom looked a bit sick.

"I didn't think it was in anyone's best interest for him to have all the information, so I clipped most of the files. You're welcome, by the way."

"How... How did you know about that?" My mom, again, was no longer in character.

"Oh, cheer up, Lillian. Like I said, I'm in everything."

Chapter 12

Angels

After a night of negotiations to keep Mitchell's mom and her bosses from getting annihilated, I chose to ride home with Mitchell instead of begging a ride from any of the others.

"Hey Angels, I have to ask, did you have something to do with me wearing panties that afternoon you got bashed? I know you saw them on me, and I have never bought or worn women's underwear before in my life. When you said you'd been having trouble with your magic, I immediately thought of that. I wasn't going to say anything in front of the other folks, but I need to know."

What could I say besides the truth? "I think so. Mackenzie had shown me some on her tablet and when you came into the Creamery, I guess the magic jumped or something. I'm not entirely sure." Should I say it? I was already in trouble over that incident. "Those weren't women's panties. Those were for men."

His lightly tanned skin turned a subtle pink.

"You said there were other times your magic had acted up. What else really happened?"

"Ummm, that morning at your place, when you came to check on me, that might have also been my magic." His face still showed his confusion at the way I had worded that statement. "I think it might have untied and pushed down your pants."

I had never seen skin turn the color his was now, both pale with horror and pink with embarrassment.

"If you're the reason they came down, then why did you react like you did, shrieking and hiding under the covers?" he asked in genuine confusion.

"Because I knew I was responsible. When it first started happening I didn't think it was coming from me, but that was the first time I was sure that it was."

"So then you weren't scared of what you saw?" I could tell that was exactly what he had thought, now that he was speaking about it.

"No, not scared at all." I smiled a bit with the memory.

"I also remember when you teleported me, that some of my clothing had come off. Was that part of the teleporting going haywire or something else?"

Why did he have to be so perceptive? “I don’t think the clothes had anything to do with the teleporting.”

“Then why were they off?” He looked pointedly at me.

What the hell, I might as well admit it. “Because I was thinking about when you were naked in your house in front of me.”

“So let me get this straight. Your magic has been stripping me and dressing me in lingerie?” he asked incredulously.

“Umm yeah.” I hung my head just a bit.

“And it’s been doing this after you’ve had that on your mind? Do you think it might be related?”

Of course, it was related. I’d finally figured out that fantasizing about him lead to trouble. Trouble that was magic in nature.

“Yeah, it might be.”

“Were you full-on fantasizing about me, not just a passing thought?”

“Yes,” I said, and his eyes lit up. Maybe that was what he was hoping to hear?

“Does that mean you’re interested in me? Regular me without magic?” He gave me a shy smile. For being so put together, he wasn’t very confident. With looks like his, he should be a lot more self-assured.

“Oh yes, you don’t know just how interested I am,” I said in my most flirty tones.

Then he slowed the car, and I realized we were at my apartment. He cleared his throat. “Would you care to join me for dinner Saturday night? I’d like to take you out.”

Just two days away. I could wait that long. “Yes, of course, yes,” I responded.

“And there we were at the... Hey, are you even listening to me when I talk to you anymore? I swear sometimes it feels like I’d be better off talking to myself.” Mackenzie thwacked me on the shoulder.

“I’m listening, I swear I am. It’s just I’ve never really visited anywhere else besides my hometown, so it’s not like I have a big load of experience with travel. It sounds wonderful though. I’m just sure you had a lovely time.” OK, so

I hadn't been paying attention at all, not even a little bit. I guess she could tell that too. Her face was a storm of disappointment breaking over my kneecaps. Please don't break my kneecaps. Not that she would. Mackenzie wanted peace and harmony for all living things. As long as it didn't put her out too much.

I had made it through all the details of the food and the acts that she'd seen while on her cruise. I hadn't yawned once. I hadn't even interrupted her while I did her job for her. I ran the till as well as dished the ice cream and toppings. Just catching a word or two as she rambled on. I'd practically been a saint as I resisted thoughts of my date tomorrow night.

"We finally got to go diving for pirate treasure. Did you know there were several pirate ships sunk in the Caribbean, and not all of them have been found? Imagine finding an undiscovered pirate ship, preserved all these years in the depths of the ocean. A slice of what life was like at that time."

Against my better judgment, I did start to think about what it must have been like to sail around as a pirate. Freedom to choose your own destiny. I told myself that I was free now, but the chains of silence and family proved how little freedom I had.

I tuned out Mackenzie's ramblings again and concentrated on what life had been like back then. I'd often wondered if there had been any gay men who had chosen the life of a pirate instead of the confines of their home on the land.

And, of course, thoughts about gay pirates got me thinking about my favorite fantasy man.

I swear I almost heard a faint warning bell, but I ignored it. As long as I wasn't thinking about sex and getting Mitchell out of his clothes, surely my wayward magic would leave me alone.

I hadn't even seen him since he dropped me off at my place yesterday morning. Surely any possible power I had would be limited by distance anyway. And it wasn't like this was a sexual fantasy. It was just imagining another time period...

So I gave in and let my imagination run away with me during our post-lunch rush lull in customers. It was just a couple more hours until I got to go home to my lonely apartment anyway.

I gave up making excuses and just went with it, picturing him in pirate finery, which I always thought of as like Jack Sparrow. I couldn't stop the imagination then.

I would be his loyal first mate, and he would be the noble captain. Standing at the bow of the ship as it cut through the waves, his brunette locks curling and waving in the breeze of our passing.

We'd chase down merchant ships, and together, we'd take their cargo.

In the aftermath of a successful raid, we'd be sitting together on the chests of all the booty, drinking rum and reliving our fights. It would be just him and me on all that loot, him sprawled wantonly across it. Daring me to push and engage my captain in another kind of sword fight.

I don't know how long I stood there lost in my own fantasy though when I looked around we were still fairly empty.

I made a round of busing tables to burn some time before my shift ended.

I was jerked out of my reverie by the vibration of my phone against my hip. When I picked it up, I nearly squealed with delight. It was Mitchell!

"Hello, Dr. Anderson, what can I help you with today?" I said in my most calm and collected way.

"What the hell were you thinking about? I'm pretty sure it was you."

The gruff tone in his voice threw me off. I had no idea what he had to be angry about. Whatever it was, it surely wasn't my fault. "What happened?" I asked with a certain amount of trepidation.

"I was in the middle of preparing for a lecture and I find myself in the storage for the anthropology department, wearing a pirate costume."

Shit.

Chapter 13

Mitchell

Just one more class to go. I relaxed in my cushy desk chair in my office and tried not to dread the next class. I stretched my arms up over my head and felt the pull of my muscles, letting my eyes drift closed. I felt a tingle work its way rapidly from my center out to my extremities.

Ah, that felt good. What's digging into my back? I could have sworn my chair was not this lumpy. I put my arms down and totally failed to find the armrests. Something was off. Through a dim glow, I could just make out piles and piles of boxes and crates, some cardboard, and some wood. My ass was crushing down a box labeled:

Property of Auburn University

Anthropology 4500—Chihuahua, MX

All of the other boxes had similar slips.

I stood up to get a better look, absently brushing the dust off my ass. My ass that was not in the boxers and jeans I'd just had on. I looked over my body and craned my head to see my ass was hidden under the fold of the fabric.

What happened to my jeans? Are those... pantaloons? And three, four, no five belts and sashes?

I looked down, dreading what I'd see. Full-on Jack Sparrow pirate wear, including boots with the tops folded over.

When my head tipped, I felt an unusual extra weight. Based on what I was wearing, I had an idea of what was on my head.

I pulled the tricorn hat off my head; there was a scarf tied around my head.

After my initial what the fuckery, I knew who was responsible. While not completely sure where the anthropology department storage was, I knew I needed to get back to my office. And hope like hell my clothes were still there.

No way would I be able to teach a class like this. What student would take a professor dressed like a pirate seriously?

In the dim light, I found the exit by the light coming through the window of the door. Luckily, the deadbolt had a lever on the inside so I wasn't locked in. My stomach unclenched when I made it into the hall and saw the exit sign.

Four flights of stairs and I found my way outside into the sunlight on the far side of campus. I didn't have my watch or wallet, but I figured I didn't have any time to spare before my next class.

I had to hustle, so I broke into a jog down the sidewalk. Students stopped to gawk at me. I tried to ignore them.

"Arr, Dr. Anderson!" I snapped my head around and recognized a student from last semester. He grinned at me good-naturedly.

What could I do? I remembered asking my mother once how she pulled off all the characters she pretended to be.

She told me, "All you have to do is own it. That's who you are."

I waved and shouted "Yarr" and kept going.

It wasn't long before I had to slow down. It's a long way to jog across campus. Too long for the shape I was in. I promised myself that I would start working out even more. I had a younger man to impress after all. I couldn't do that if I looked like a slob. Maybe if I looked like a pirate?

In between waving to admiring students and "Yarring," I thought about how I could have ended up in this situation. Obviously, Angels had been thinking about something pretty hard. Did it just randomly jump to me, or was I the subject of his thoughts? What else had he wanted to go along with the pirate get-up? I had no reason to be in the anthropology storage. Unless it had to do with something in the boxes... Or maybe having me alone in a darkened storage space?

By the time I reached my office, I realized that, aside from the physical exertion, the trip across campus had been the most fun I'd had in a long time. Everyone had been happy to see me.

What would happen if I just bit the bullet and taught class like this? If I didn't take the time to change back into the jeans left piled on the floor of my office, I could make it in time for the start of my lecture.

I grabbed my phone from the tangle of clothes, telling myself that everything would be OK. I didn't have to always do what was expected. Hell, this would probably be good for me. Push me out of my comfort zone and all that.

He picked up just as I'd closed the door to my office. "Hello, Dr. Anderson, what can I help you with today?"

A quick glance confirmed that I was alone in that part of the hallway. “What the hell were you thinking about? I’m pretty sure it was you.”

There was a pause and then in a more worried tone, “What happened?”

“I was in the middle of preparing for a lecture and I found myself in the storage for the anthropology department, wearing a pirate costume.” I heard his sharp indrawn breath. “Now, I don’t have time to get changed before the next class, so I’m going to have to teach looking like a pirate.”

“I’m so sorry, I don’t know why it keeps happening. Mack was just talking about her cruise and looking for pirate ships. I don’t know why you got hit with it.”

“You’re just going to have to make it up to me. I’ll call you later,” I said and hung up before going into the lecture hall.

I was really going to do it. My mind quailed at the thought of being humiliated in front of my students. But I also remembered the trip over to my office. I just had to own it.

Everyone reacted to me in full pirate gear. Before they could recover, I swaggered my way to my desk.

This wasn’t too bad.

Every student paid attention to me and what I was saying. I peppered my lecture with piratical phrases. In the beginning, some folks had their phones out and I knew they were taking pictures and video.

Remember, you’re a pirate. A pirate lecturing on Roman civilization.

I didn’t try to excuse or explain, I just rocked it hard.

Chapter 14

Angels

I definitely needed to learn control. My powers kept acting up, and now I was in trouble with Mitchell.

After class and studying, I was almost ready to turn in for the night. Look at me being a wild party animal thinking about bed at nine p.m. That and I felt guilty about what I did to Mitchell. He'd been so understanding before, but I was afraid I may have just gone too far. He was such a reserved man and then to be forced to be seen as a pirate? I could see that as the straw that broke the camel's back. Would he even speak to me again?

There it was, the ringing of the death knell on my hopes. With dread, I answered my phone.

"Hello, Angels. That was a very naughty thing to do to me." His voice held the strength of his disappointment.

"I'm sorry, I swear I didn't mean for that to happen. I don't know what to do about my magic." I had no excuses beyond that. I shouldn't have been fantasizing about him. It was all my fault.

"Your magic is going to get you in trouble. Lucky for you, I played it off as a stunt for my class, but next time we might not be so lucky."

When he said trouble, I couldn't help but to flash on a different kind of trouble. The kind of trouble where he would take me over his knee and punish my bare bottom for being so bad.

My mind pulled up an image of him sitting on his bed, shirtless, demanding that I submit to correction. His pants would be tented with that marvelous cock that I'd gotten just the briefest glimpse of before.

I would tug my jeans down to my knees and... *Oh shit.* There were the tingles again.

When I opened my eyes, all I saw was the dark blue fabric in front of my face.

I heard a gasp, then "Angels!" coming in stereo from my phone and somewhere above me. I dreaded what I knew I was about to see. I lifted my

head and looked. Sure enough, I was face down over Mitchell's knees, my pants around my thighs.

I tried to squirm myself off his lap, but the second I started to move, a hand firmly grasped my butt cheek. I immediately stilled. What should I do? I really didn't want to get off of him, but maybe I could get off on him? My mind was still partially stuck in my fantasy, and that's what I blamed for what I did next.

"Harder, please," I moaned before lifting my hips and ass into his hand. When his hand came off, I couldn't help the anticipatory gasp. "Please!" I begged.

Something must have snapped together in his head, because, in the next second, his hand thudded into my right butt cheek, right where it had been resting. I gasped and moaned and wiggled my butt. "Again, please."

The next swats weren't hard enough to really sting, but the thought of being bare-assed over his lap while he punished me for being naughty was too much for me to refuse.

When he spoke again, he stilled his hand on my ass. "Angels, please tell me why you showed up on my lap, begging for a spanking."

I swear my brain short-circuited. "I've been naughty and got in trouble."

I wiggled my ass again. He didn't swat it but rubbed a gentle circle.

"And what did you do that was so naughty?" he asked.

I still couldn't think straight, not with his hand on my bare ass. "I fantasized about being with you when you were dressed as a pirate."

"Umm hmm, and just how was I being with you in your fantasy?" His voice caressed me as well, and I felt my secrets slip out.

"I knew I shouldn't, but I couldn't help thinking of having sex with you as a pirate."

He didn't speak for nearly a minute, just kept rubbing my ass. "And how many of the other times your magic went haywire were you thinking about me sexually?"

"All of them." I might as well admit the truth; he had me over his knee after all.

He rewarded me with three sharp swats to my cheeks. I had never even thought that I could be into spankings, but it turned out when Mitchell was

giving them, I wanted more and more. And whatever he wanted to give me. He went back to gently rubbing me.

“Now tell me why that is.”

I paused and tried to think. He delivered a light tap to my ass, keeping me on track. “Because I can’t stop fantasizing about you. I want you so bad. I don’t dare masturbate, or I know my magic will kick in.” He’d gone back to gently rubbing and encouraging my confession. “Every time something happens, I’m scared it’ll get worse. I don’t know how to control it.” Practically in tears, I confessed my fears and inadequacies. No other witch allowed themselves to not be in total control.

“How can I help you get control?” he asked.

Fuck me! I wanted to shout. On further reflection, that might be what I needed, to just resolve this sexual tension. What if it resolved the tension and I had no magic again?

Thwack. I’d taken too long to answer; he’d put more power into that swat.

“Have sex with me, please. If we have sex, maybe it will stop.”

“Will it stop everything?”

“I don’t know, just I want you so bad. Why won’t you give me what I need?”

His hand ghosted lightly over my rump to the small of my back. I felt my shirt lifted away from my back so I raised up, offering him easy access to slide it off me. He used both hands to lift it over my shoulders and past my head to pool on my forearms.

Slowly he brought his hands back to my upper arms and slid them across my shoulders and down my back. His dry skin rasped against mine, creating a soft susurrantion for my ears.

He took his time, and it was pure agony for me to wait. My mind stayed strangely quiet, not running off with “what-ifs” or “wish-he-woulds.” What fantasy could I have that would trump this perfect moment?

Those wonderful hands smoothed my inflamed butt cheeks and fell to cup where my thigh met my ass. Sensitive skin begged me to twitch and giggle, but iron will kept me still for him. Then his thumbs found the waist of my half-off jeans and encouraged them to tangle over my shoes.

His hands took back up where they left off and continued down my legs, occasionally catching and tugging my sparse leg hairs. Once past my knees, he bent my legs up so that my jeans fell back to my knees and he could untie my shoes and pull them off, freeing my jeans to slip off into a pile on the floor.

I was naked in front of another man with the express intention of having sex. My cock wanted in on whatever action it could get as it pushed insistently against his thigh, abrading itself on his pants. As my subtle movements became noticeable, he pulled me up to straddle his legs and kiss him.

Finally, I was allowed to kiss his beautiful lips. Not holding back, I plastered my mouth on his. No breath of air could slide between our lips. I held on to his shoulders as if my body could no longer support me.

For my first kiss, I thought it couldn't get any better, and then he showed me just how much better he could make it.

He used his hand on my chin to pull my lips back slightly. Before I could protest, he licked my lower lip. Just a simple swipe of the tongue. Then in for a full kiss, his tongue sliding in and back out, before he pulled my head back for another lick.

No way could I compete with his skill. I freely relinquished control of the kiss and followed his lead.

Within moments, I nearly came from the kissing and rubbing. My hard cock strained to break through his pants and make close, personal friends with Mitchell's dick. Anyone would agree that it was cruel to separate them when they so clearly belonged together.

When I flipped the waistband of his pants below the head of his cock, he gasped into my mouth. No way could I stop there, and when he raised his ass up, I took the hint and freed the rest of him from the confines.

His dick deserved worship. Hymns sung in its name. When his lips withdrew from mine, no power on earth could stop me from slipping off his lap and onto my knees before that wonderful tower of desire made flesh.

I had to touch him. More than that, I had to taste him. I didn't wait or ask permission; I dove forward onto the head of his cock. I knew enough to know that teeth were a bad idea in the bedroom, but that took all of my concentration. My mouth had never been so full. So that was what all the fuss was about. But I didn't have it all in my mouth. I wrapped both hands around what wasn't in my mouth. Surely there wasn't that much more outside of my lips?

I'd overestimated just how much I actually sucked into my mouth. I barely had the head inside, and there was an awful lot of shaft left to go. How could anyone deep throat any cock? There was just no way. Guess what, I was going to give it my best try. I'd seen enough porn and talked to enough guys to know that was the pinnacle of a blow job experience. If I could just do that for Mitchell, then I'd be happy.

Mitchell rested his palms gently in my hair. "You don't have to... Ugh," he said as I pushed my face toward his crotch. I felt the ridge of his head rub along the roof of my mouth, heading toward my throat. When it hit the back of my throat, my stomach clenched and I gagged hard. I pulled back immediately, needing relief. I took a deep breath around the head still in my mouth. I felt a twitch slither up the shaft and, if anything, it got even harder.

Surely that meant he liked what I did to him? He would tell me if he didn't, wouldn't he? If only I could control the gag reflex. Just one small thing. To make room for something decidedly not small. OK, I hadn't actually made a survey of dicks, but Mitchell's had about an inch over mine and mine was average. I had looked it up. And measured.

I tried again to get more of him in my mouth with marginal success. No way was he going to snake his way down my throat, but I wasn't about to hurl anymore either. After years of dreaming about getting to play with another man's cock, this exceeded my expectations.

I remembered how Mitchell showed me the difference between my amateur kissing and his experience. Would that apply to cocksucking? I wanted to find out.

I licked the bottom of his shaft as it glided in and out of my mouth.

"Oh, Angels, yes!"

Jackpot. That exclamation sealed the deal for me. I decided to see just what I could do to get another reaction like that.

I experimented. I conducted studies. I listened to how his breathing changed and how he would grunt and moan for me. He gave me so much power over him.

My hands roamed free, petting up his sides, stroking down his legs, and caressing his flat abs. For a while, they got lost in combing through his pubic hair. Those dark curls sprang away from my fingers and curled in tight to his groin.

Finally, I found his kryptonite; one stroke on his balls and he couldn't be still. Two strokes and he cursed like a sailor. Three strokes and he moaned and gasped and filled my mouth. I spluttered and swallowed as fast as I could, but semen oozed and slimed its way down my chin.

Chapter 15

Mitchell

When I finally made it home from classes, I found a note from my mom informing me that she would be out, probably all night, with our new friends. She was a grown woman. I wasn't going to worry about her getting into something she couldn't handle.

I stripped out of the pirate gear and hung it up in my closet. No sense in not taking care of the outfit even if I hadn't chosen to wear it to begin with. Maybe it would work for Halloween?

What was I thinking? Angels was a student, I was a professor. I should be beyond temptation. What would my dean think if he knew that I'd just...? Well, he wasn't actually my student. He wasn't majoring in anything in my department. Most people that lived in Auburn were attached to the university in some way or another so I surely wasn't the first or only. In accordance with those odds, I knew several professors that recently had gotten engaged to former students and I was sure they all didn't wait until they graduated to start flirting with each other. I tried not to feel too proud of rationalizing my way out of feeling responsible for corrupting a student.

When he slipped into my bathroom, to clean up I presumed, I prepared myself for any of the excuses I'd ever been given and the ones that I feared the most. I hoped he wasn't going to run away from me after he'd scratched a bit of the itch. Praying that his magic stayed out of control so he would keep fantasizing about me didn't sound mature or responsible, but it didn't stop me from doing it.

He came out of the bathroom looking like my best dream. Naked and hard. I smiled when he wasn't making any attempt to cover up as he stalked toward me. I hadn't moved from where I'd collapsed back on the bed following the best blow job of my life.

When he reached me, he grabbed my shoes and pulled them off before pulling my pants off. "I hope you're still OK with fucking me because I still can't stop thinking about you," he whispered into my ear.

I shivered. I didn't want to admit that it'd been years since I had wanted to try to get another erection in the same night as I'd already had an orgasm. That was shades of my college days and those times mostly hadn't actually been

with a lover, only my own hand. I didn't need to think that kind of depressing thought when I had this beautiful boy in front of me. It didn't turn out to be much of a problem. He'd given me enough time when he took his little trip to my bathroom for the thoughts to encourage my wayward libido back into action. Let there be more action because I was ready for it. Was I ready? I knew I had plenty of lube, I thought I still had a new box of condoms that I'd bought the last time I'd had a date and didn't need them. No thinking about the pitiful mess my dating history presented.

Then his hand wrapped around my cock, and I gave up and pulled his mouth in for a kiss. I'd missed kissing most, but Angels proved adept at learning what I liked. I tried to not be selfish, to give him as much enjoyment as I could, but everything I did to him was met with the loveliest sighs and moans. He liked everything. My hands caressed down his back and finally landed on his firm, delectable ass. While he was distracted with my lips, I worked a finger across his crack and felt the soft hairs gently give. My marauding fingers finally gave up being subtle, and I slid both hands to pull his cheeks apart so I could brush against the base of his crack, from spine to taint and that delicate little piece of flesh in between.

"Ah, yes! Do that again," he said into my ear to show his approval. So being the good host that I am, I did it again, and again. He pressed up against me, quivering and shaking, his cock sandwiched between us. I dragged one hand away to fumble in my nightstand drawer for the familiar bottle of lube and the new box of condoms. After that success, I tried for my next trick, to lube up my fingers without moving the wonderful man on my lap.

Marginal success, most of the lube ran off my fingers and onto my thigh, leaving a slick patch in my leg hairs. Which gave me an idea. A few gentle pushes and Angels straddled that thigh, sliding in the slick lube spill.

While the new feelings distracted him, I slipped my lube-drenched finger back to his crack and prepared his tight little hole for myself. Such a wonderful stretch of his muscles and he kept moaning and gasping into my ear and rubbing his chest against mine. He kept tilting his hips to rub his dick on my thigh. I hurried as fast as I could to get him stretched enough before he came from just rubbing on me. I finally used my spare hand to hold his hips still. He whined in my ear when I did that.

I pulled my hands away from him to fumble the box open, tear through a wrapper, and finally unroll a condom down my shaft. I barely had time to get my hand out of the way before his perfect ass wiggled on top of the head and

searched to find my cock with his hole. I'd never had a lover so eager for me that he couldn't wait for me to take him, but had to fight to steal my cock.

I flipped him to the side and down onto my bed so I could get some traction to slide into the most wonderful person my cock had ever been inside.

"Oh, thank you, thank you, I never dreamed I could feel this good," Angels gasped out around his squeal.

I couldn't speak a coherent word, just grunted and groaned my agreement.

With each stroke I lost more of my mind until there were no thoughts left, just the need to pound into him.

"Yes, yes, that's it, give me what I need," Angels gasped with his head thrown back, arching into me. His hands flew over my body, pulling me into him and clawing at my back.

With a shout, he stiffened in my arms, and I felt his cock against my stomach spasm as his ass clenched and gripped me so tight, I followed him into orgasm.

Sometime later, I heard the lock turn on my door

"You better not be naked. Ever since you pulled my cameras, I can't do the decent thing and only visit when you're dressed."

Of course, I wasn't clothed, but at least the door to my room was still closed. The friendly body at my side turned his face into my armpit, snuffled sleepily, and mumbled something. I should have been more panicked, but after last night's unexpected bonus, even my inappropriate mother couldn't harsh my good vibes.

"Don't come in here." A quick glance at my window showed it was still dark, so I craned my neck to look at the clock behind me without dislodging Angels—4:28 a.m. I didn't even want to know what she'd been up to. It was normally best not to ask because she would tell me. In vivid details that no son should ever have to know about his mother.

"Come out here when you're decent, Mitch. We need to talk." Just what everyone wants to hear from their mother. While still in bed with a lover a decade younger. Who also was a witch.

I tried to extract myself from Angels' grasp without disturbing him. That lasted until I pulled my arm out from under his head.

“Why are you moving? I need my pillow.” So cute.

“Tell him to come on out. He needs to hear this too,” my mother said from what sounded like the kitchen. Then I heard my refrigerator door followed by the hiss of a bottle cap letting go.

“Is that your mom? Or am I just dreaming?” He grunted as he snuggled his face into the pillow I’d just vacated.

“Yeah, it’s Mom. I have no idea what’s going on though. She just let herself in and is making demands,” I said as I pulled on my robe from the back of a chair.

He groaned and sat up, looking around to find his wrinkled clothes lying where they had fallen in our haste. He lifted each piece and gave them a quick inspection and sniff before putting them on. My robe made it quite obvious what we had gotten up to, but if Mom couldn’t figure it out by having Angels speaking from my room at this time of the morning, the robe wouldn’t make a difference. Besides—my house, my rules. This time of morning meant taking or leaving whatever state I was in and not complaining.

Angels certainly hadn’t complained.

“Come on, you two, I haven’t got all day.”

“Coming, Mom.”

Dressed all in black, with her hair tucked into a scarf, my mom was back in my easy chair with a beer in one hand.

She leered at Angels when he slipped out of the bedroom to stand behind me.

“OK, Mom, out with it. Why did we need to come out here and talk to you when we were perfectly fine where we were?”

“Don’t get uppity with me. I’ve been working all night.” She pulled another swig from the bottle. “I investigated those people that attacked Angels.”

“How did you find out who they were?” Angels piped in.

“That Trillian is some kind of special. Called Dr. Dvorak to see if he could help me to try to identify them based on your descriptions or if he had any other contacts, because you know, vampire and shit.” She rolled her eyes like it was the most common thing for her to comment on. “He couldn’t help, but I hadn’t been off the phone with him ten minutes and Trillian calls to give the full identities.”

“What did they want? Why did they pick me?” Angels blurted out as he sank down on my sofa. I sat down beside him and wrapped my arm around his shoulders.

“According to Trillian, they’ve got someone who can spot a paranormal taint on people, and he’s mobilized groups to kill the folks that he claims have been tainted by the devil.

“She assures me that they won’t be a problem for you again, Angels. She wanted to let you know that she has everyone responsible under surveillance until they are taken care of.”

“What’s going to happen to them?” Angels asked.

“I don’t know. Trillian wouldn’t say exactly, only that the human law can’t govern what it doesn’t know exists. Then she assured me she wouldn’t meddle when the human law had everything under control. I got the impression I shouldn’t worry my pretty little head about stuff that doesn’t concern me.” I heard the bitterness in her voice at the last bit.

“You mean like you’ve always treated me?” I said.

She looked so startled, like she’d never expected me to question her.

“I don’t treat you like that at all,” she said defensively, crossing her arms over her chest.

“Mother, remember a couple months ago, when you were in the hospital with knife and gunshot wounds? I asked what happened, and you told me not to worry since it didn’t concern me and you would take care of it? Or growing up, when asked what my mother did, all I could say was I don’t know?” I couldn’t keep my voice calm any longer.

“That... that was for your own good,” she spluttered out.

This had been a long time brewing. Even I could see that. Finally, my mother knew how I felt about the way she’d always treated me. I understood some of the things she did were top secret, but to just brush off my fears and worries as unrelated had hurt me for years. I’d always gone along with her orders that I wasn’t to worry, but enough was enough. I’d only spoken with Trillian once. If she wanted to be closemouthed and condescending, I had no emotional investment or reason to give half a rat’s damn.

For the effect it had on my mother, I was prepared to sing Trillian’s praises, or at least send a fruit basket. Even if that was impossible.

“You’ve always treated my concerns about what you do as trivial. Hell, I don’t even know enough about what you do to judge whether your actions are for the good or for evil. Sometimes I worried that the reason you never told me was to keep me from becoming involved in something that I couldn’t handle morally.” I took a breath before continuing on. “Do you know what that kind of worry does to someone? It makes them choose the most respectable and upstanding job I could so that no one else would have the same questions about my motives as I have about yours. What you’re feeling now is only a fraction of how powerless I feel.”

My mother looked stunned. I didn’t worry about giving her a chance to recover before finishing my rant. “Besides, I’m not going to lose any sleep over what happens to those people. If they were responsible for hurting my Angels, I have no sympathy for whatever happens to them. After witnessing how much info Trillian has, I have more confidence in her judgment than I do in our legal system.”

After saying that, I realized how much I felt it was true. In my search for a straightforward job, I’d unknowingly landed one that highlighted just how untrustworthy governments and law enforcement could be.

“I didn’t know you felt like that. Why didn’t you ever say anything about this before?” Mom asked.

This was surely a visit of firsts for my relationship with my mother. I’d never seen her as shocked and confused.

Angels hadn’t left my side, giving me strength while I called my mom on all of her inconsiderate actions.

“Because you always brushed me off.” I tried not to raise my voice or sound unreasonable. My mom was over fifty, but she sure didn’t look it or act it. Why did she take my understanding for granted?

“I don’t know what to say or how to make it better.” My mom finally understood the damage she had unknowingly done over the years. And now I could let that resentment go.

“Just give Trillian the benefit of the doubt that she will arrange things to be taken care of. Don’t get all upset when she behaves like you always have and expect a different outcome.

“Now, did you learn anything else we need to know?”

“Well, no.”

“Good, because I’m going to go back to bed and invite Angels to join me.” I held my hand for Angels to take, and he didn’t wait a heartbeat before I felt the pressure of his palm to mine. I led him to my bed and stripped us both down. I felt physically and emotionally drained, and all I wanted was to cuddle up to the man of my dreams. Angels knew instinctively and wrapped his arms around me in the bed until we both fell asleep.

Chapter 16

Angels

Ah, the bright sunlight of the morning pouring molten gold across my face. Wait a minute. My apartment was a dinky little shoe box that never saw this kind of sunlight. The best I ever had there was the secondhand light reflected off of windows in other buildings. And I definitely wasn't back in my childhood bedroom, not the way I was curled around the wonderful body of Mitchell. We were still in his place. I didn't even know or care if his mom was still around. I should care of course, but I just didn't.

By the time I perked my head up to look at his face, his eyes cracked open to meet mine. "Good morning, beautiful," he said in his sleep-roughened whisper. I melted. I had no misgivings about jumping into sex with him. I should have, especially after practically begging him to spank my butt after just teleporting onto his lap. He'd been so understanding of my needs and wants. He fulfilled my fantasy better than I could ever have dreamed it up.

Speaking of fantasies, did this mean that my magic was done with me? Could I freely fantasize now?

Mitchell stroked down my body and ghosted his hands over my chest to lightly pinch my nipples. A light pinch and a stroke and a pinch again.

Would he appreciate me doing that to him? I brought my hands into play, but they kept getting swept away by his hands, he was so determined to touch me. What would it be like if I could touch him freely where his hands didn't keep getting in my way?

Handcuffs would take care of that problem.

If his hands were cuffed to his headboard, then his whole body would be mine to touch and take. I could see myself pulling his hands up and slipping the solid metal of the cuffs around each wrist with the snick of the latches locking in place.

Just like that sound, in fact. I felt the tingles and the ringing in my ears to know that something had just happened. Looking at Mitchell stretched out beside me, I realized that was exactly what had happened. He was now handcuffed to the headboard with very real looking cuffs.

"What... What just happened?" Mitchell asked a bit breathlessly.

“Oh God, I’m so sorry. I wasn’t thinking... well obviously I was, but I didn’t expect... I’m so sorry,” I babbled. Please don’t let this ruin things. This looked really bad.

“I’m not complaining, Angels. Just show me what you were thinking about,” he placated in a soothing voice. He was being so calm about the whole thing. Then inviting me to continue outside of my head and with his body... I surely must be dreaming, but I wouldn’t waste this opportunity.

I proceeded to touch and worship his body while he couldn’t raise a hand to stop me.

After we were both satisfied and lying against each other, Mitchell stretched against the cuffs.

“OK, babe, you can take these off now.”

How? I didn’t have the key.

“Umm, it was just the cuffs in my fantasy... so I don’t have the key.”

He got a little flustered at this. “How are we going to get them off? Can’t you just magic them away?”

I thought about it. I tried picking the locks. Mitchell tried bending his hand in half to slide it out. Nothing worked. I was honestly getting so desperate that I considered calling his mother since she likely could either pick them or knew some way out.

“Wait, Angels. You’ve said that magic happens when you fantasize in a sexual nature about me. Why don’t you fantasize about my hands being free?”

“Because that’s not like a fantasy... it’s just something to really get a hold of and get the magic to take. I mean I’ve tried, but it just didn’t work,” I admitted.

“What about in a way that hands-free wasn’t the point but was a requirement of it?” He stared off in space as he considered his words. “You would look lovely back over my lap, bending your hips up and spreading your legs to give me access to your most tender of places. I’d put some more lube on my fingers and just start teasing you, rubbing from the base of your pretty dick, over your balls and circling your hole. Maybe one hand stays at your hole and the other rubs your balls?”

Once he spoke, my mind filled in the images. Exactly as he had said, and I could feel what his hands would do to me. I’d be completely vulnerable to him and how he touched me. His hands would only incite me more. I’d arch my

back even more to spread my legs and display my undercarriage for him to inspect.

A tingle and ringing later, and I was positioned as I had been in my mind. I was torn between the urge to shout my pride at my success in getting his hands free, albeit covered in lube, or just stay as I was and hope Mitchell would turn his words that had stimulated me so into a reality.

After the experiment to get Mitchell unlocked, we had to figure out how to control my magic. I was of the opinion that it was out of control. I mean really, I handcuffed my lover—lover!—to the headboard with a stray thought.

My theory that I'd lose my magic after we had sex, that I wouldn't have unrestrained and wild fantasies about him?

Yeah, that didn't happen.

"I guess that's proof enough that you didn't lose your touch. I don't know if you ever could lose it at this point. I don't know anything more about your magic than anyone, but we can study it and figure out what rules it follows."

He propped himself up by fluffing and adding another pillow behind his shoulders. Then he reached his arm around my neck to hold me. He didn't do it in that creepy, dater way. He comforted me with just his touch.

"Why does it have to follow rules? It could be random." I hoped against hope that he was right. I needed to be back in control. It's all fun and games until someone gets charged with public indecency.

"Of course it follows rules. It tries to create your fantasy right so all you have to do is keep any fantasy within boundaries of what you want to actually happen."

He kissed me on my forehead.

"I don't set out to do it though. Something will snag my mind, and I put it together with you and next thing I know, it's costumes and panties." I tried not to whine, but it came out a bit on the "little girl asking for a pony" side.

His hand stroked my shoulder. "Just think about it, baby, I only want you to not worry about it, and feel comfortable in your own skin."

He might not have been born a witch, but I was learning more from him than I could ever remember from years of lessons. Maybe I could control it if I stayed in control of my thoughts, at least a little bit.

Epilogue

Angels

Trouble was brewing. I knew better. My control was nearly perfect, but I still had flare-ups. That afternoon had been one of them.

I discreetly checked the time on my phone—5:13 p.m. Mitchell’s last class of the day was almost over.

Barely a minute later and there he was, calling me. I picked up, with a knowing smile. “Hey, sexy.”

A short breath and then, “Stop thinking about me while I’m at work. I had to explain why I wore five-inch heels to my class.” I hated how I couldn’t see his face. I hoped he wasn’t super pissed. His voice held a faint trace of amusement if I wasn’t wrong.

“What are you going to do about it?” I asked, still holding a clear mind while waiting for his response.

“You are going to kneel at my feet beside my bed. You’re going to be wearing your panties for me. Then I’m going to sit in the chair by my bed. You are going to lift my foot into your lap and push your cock against the sole of my shoe.” Damn, he’d gotten good at this little game. I couldn’t help following his words and seeing exactly what he was saying.

A tingle later, and I moaned as my satin-covered cock was gently crushed against my body by a red leather pump. His eyes scorched my flesh as he watched me enjoying the pressure and slight bit of pain.

He looked relaxed as he slouched in his chair, but I could see his cock tenting his pants. This wasn’t just about me and my crazy fantasies. My haywire magic brought us together, he said, how could he get mad about it?

The End

Author Bio

I'm a slightly interesting person of average intelligence living an average life in the middle of Alabama. I've worked as a claims adjuster and a riding instructor. I'm an artist and a musician. Occasionally, I'm an activist and protester.

Contact & Media Info

[Email](#) | [Website](#) | [Facebook](#)