

THE MAGIC WITHIN

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FADE IN:

Wild magic tears across a town. The sky is dark gray, fires are everywhere. Terrified innocents marked by tears and blood are fleeing, some clutching small children to their chests.

A small city burns as horrifying magical lightning rains down, obliterating everything it touches.

The scale of destruction turns incomprehensible as New York City is ravaged to nothing by the same lightning and a magical tornado that crackles with pure energy. Blazing purple slits that look like narrowed eyes appear in one of the massive storm clouds, bathing in the chaos. Evil laughter roars.

INT. A DARK SPACE - DAWN

The piercing green eyes of JULIETTE STORMWIND snap open in alarm. A vague outline can be made of her face as her heavy breathing occupies her already claustrophobic space.

INT. ARLIE'S ROOM - DAY

AURELIA (ARLIE) MAGANTI (18) sits on her neatly made full-sized bed. She types away on her laptop, which sports a pretty pink case that's covered in cute stickers.

Her room is bright, natural light flooding in from her big bay window. A mandala tapestry hangs above her bed and a lounge chair sits in the corner of the room.

A DING comes from Arlie's laptop. She stops typing and opens the text message from PEYTON FARR. It's a photo of Peyton in Italy, looking like she's keeping the Leaning Tower of Pisa from falling over.

The message reads: It's. So. Heavy!!

Another message in the same group chat pops up from IAN DELARC. It's a selfie of him sitting outside on a porch with an elderly woman.

His message reads: Chilling with the World's Best Grandma.

Arlie smiles at her friends' texts as she responds: Jealous you guys actually get a vacation!!

Arlie switches back to the document she was working on before. The title reads: A Treatise on Magical Creatures.

She starts typing again when her MOM calls her from downstairs.

MOM (O.S.)

Arlie, can you go grab a fresh bread for me? I completely forgot to pick one up for dinner, and Dad won't be home for a little while.

ARLIE

Yeah, just give me a minute!

Arlie finishes typing out her last thought and closes her laptop. She gets off of her bed and goes over to her closet to pull out her Converse. She slips them on, then snatches a small backpack off of the floor and jogs out of her room.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Arlie wanders into the kitchen to find her mom chopping up carrots for a soup. The pot they're going to go into stirs itself on the stove. The recipe book that sits off to the side on the island casually flips open and leafs to the according page as Arlie's mom looks over at it.

This is completely normal.

ARLIE

You want me to go to Kaly's?

MOM

This is normally about the time she brings out fresh loaves, so that'd be great.

ARLIE

Alright, I'll be back.

Arlie drums on the counter before skipping out of the kitchen.

MOM (O.S.)

Thank you, sweetie!

ARLIE

Yep!

Arlie heads outside and grabs her blue bike, which had been leaning up against the house.

It has a basket in the front, perfect for carrying a small amount of groceries. Arlie bikes into the road.

EXT. JJ'S BURGER - SIDEWALK - DAY

Arlie bikes down the sidewalk toward the local burger joint. The sun is just beginning to go down, so the restaurant casts a long shadow off to its side, covering the gap between it and the next building in darkness.

A figure is huddling in this shadow, tucked up against the restaurant. She's holding her knees to her chest.

Arlie just barely sees her as she rides by. She does a double-take and skids her bike to a halt. She stays there for a moment, in front of the restaurant, with her leg down to balance. Debating.

Curiosity gets the best of her. Arlie gets off of her bike and goes back to the side of the restaurant. She peeks around the corner.

Juliette is there. She's shivering despite it being the middle of the summer. She looks fragile; one touch and you could break her. Her hair is streaked with white, her face is hollow. She's in a prettily patterned dress that makes it seem as if she came straight out of the 1940s.

Juliette turns her head to look up at Arlie. Her green eyes glow.

JULIETTE

Help...please...

A whisper. Arlie stumbles over her reply, wary.

ARLIE

Um, what...what do you need?

JULIETTE

I-I just need food. Couldn't make it.

Juliette weakly taps on the side of the restaurant. Arlie visibly relaxes.

ARLIE

Oh...um, I can get you a burger. Here, come on.

Arlie offers her hand to help Juliette up. Juliette hesitates.

JULIETTE

I'm a stranger. You're not afraid?

ARLIE

Well, you clearly don't want to eat *me*,
so no, I'm not.

Something like amusement flickers across Juliette's pale features. She reaches out with an effort and grabs Arlie's hand. Arlie helps her up with slight difficulty and puts Juliette's arm around her shoulder.

Arlie leaves her bike off to the side as she helps Juliette into the restaurant.

INT. JJ'S BURGER - DAY

The pair gets a lot of stares as Arlie helps Juliette into a booth. This isn't exactly an everyday occurrence.

Arlie sends disapproving glances around the room. The locals know who she is. They get the message to mind their business.

ARLIE

(to Juliette)

Wait here, I'll go get you something.

Juliette gives her a weak smile.

JULIETTE

Thank you.

Arlie smiles back before going up to the counter to put in an order.

Juliette glances around the restaurant. Black and white photographs of the restaurant and its customers from years past adorn the walls. The booths are the same red leather, the bottom half of the wall is still checkered with black and white tiles. Juliette gingerly touches a tile, nostalgic. Her other frail hand touches the small GOLDEN LOCKET around her neck.

Arlie comes back holding a RED TRAY with TWO BIG, JUICY BURGERS on it. She slides the tray in front of Juliette, who's expression lights up.

ARLIE

Dig in! These are the best burgers in town.

JULIETTE

Oh, I remember.

Juliette grabs the first burger, her hands slightly shaking. She brings it up to her mouth and opens it. Her incisors grow inhumanly sharp and long as they sink into the burger.

Arlie has an odd look on her face as she watches, but she's not surprised or frightened.

ARLIE

You know I've never met a vampire who so desperately needed a burger.

Juliette almost chokes on her food, clearly covering up a laugh. She swallows her bite.

JULIETTE

Well, we can't all be something from Eastern European folklore can we?

ARLIE

I suppose not, but even all of the vampires I know have to get blood bags from the hospital every now and then, not burgers from JJ's.

Color is flushing back into Juliette's face as she takes another bite of the burger. The white streaks are slowly leaving her hair, returning her naturally wavy black locks.

JULIETTE

Well --

(a pause, she swallows)

I'm a Mixed Blooded vampire. Blood, fortunately, doesn't have to be a part of my diet.

ARLIE

So, you're telling me you're a mix of different creatures?

JULIETTE

Yes. My vampire traits are predominant, but I also have a fair share of werewolf and zombie traits as well as my old human traits.

ARLIE

That's pretty impressive.

JULIETTE

(shrugging)

Pure Bloods like to stick their noses up at us. They think we're beneath them because we have "mud blood." Fights always broke out between us.

ARLIE

Humans now are still distrusting of supernatural creatures like yourself, but quarrels haven't broken out between us in years.

JULIETTE

I see. The times have certainly changed.

Juliette finishes her first burger and starts wolfing down the second one. She looks much healthier now; her skin has plumped back and everything. She could almost pass as completely human...almost.

Arlie doesn't say anything else so Juliette can finish her food, but she still watches her curiously.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

Arlie and Juliette walk down the sidewalk. Arlie wheels her bike next to her; a loaf of bread sits in the basket.

Juliette looks fully replenished beside her.

ARLIE

Wait, wait, wait. So, you're telling me that you've been alive for over two centuries?

JULIETTE

Yes. I've seen a fair share in my lifetime, but as you can imagine, there is large gap in my timeline from hibernating.

ARLIE

What made you wake up?

JULIETTE

Starvation. Seventy-five years of sleep will do that to you.

ARLIE

Clearly.

(a pause)

Were you buried in the old cemetery?

JULIETTE

I was. I may or may not have faked my death to get a proper burial for comfort's sake.

ARLIE

Damn that's sneaky. But totally something a vampire would do.

Juliette laughs, but pushes the conversation away from her.

JULIETTE

Enough about me. I can sense magic within you. Are you by chance a witch?

Arlie is slightly surprised as she glances over at her new friend.

ARLIE

No, I've never actually casted a spell in my entire life. My parents and my older sister are the wizards. We always just assumed I was human.

JULIETTE

Well, humans don't bear any traces of magic unless they've devoted their lives to the practice to become a Spellcaster, sort of like me.

Juliette holds up a closed hand and then unfurls her fingers, palm up. A small ball of flame appears as she does so, dancing in her palm. She wills it to turn into a prancing horse, then a bird, then a wolf.

Arlie eyes it wondrously.

ARLIE

I could actually do that?

JULIETTE

Yes, this is a very simple spell. It's one of the first ones I learned.

Juliette closes her hand again, extinguishing the molded flame. A confused look crosses Arlie's face.

ARLIE

If you can sense that I have magic, why can't my parents?

Juliette thinks.

JULIETTE

I'm not sure. Most supernatural creatures like myself have the innate ability to sense magic because it warns us about what we're dealing with. It may not be the same for wizards.

Arlie looks ahead of her. She contemplates.

Juliette knows what she's debating.

JULIETTE (CONT'D)

If you would like, I can teach you to tap into your powers. I've spent enough years studying magic...it's about time I pass my knowledge onto someone else.

ARLIE

You would really do that? I mean we've only just met.

JULIETTE

Like I said, I have a wealth of knowledge to share. It'll be fun to help you see what you can do.

A SOUPED UP MUSTANG suddenly passes by the pair, cruising around the bend in the road. Juliette pauses to watch it.

JULIETTE (CONT'D)

Can those fly?

Arlie laughs.

ARLIE

No, not yet.

JULIETTE

Not yet?

ARLIE

We're trying to figure out self-driving cars first.

JULIETTE

Self-driving cars...

Juliette looks as if she's trying to solve the world's problems. Arlie finds it incredibly amusing.

ARLIE

Hey, I have an idea. You teach me magic, and I'll teach you about the modern world.

Juliette shakes off her trance and holds her hand out.

JULIETTE

I'd greatly appreciate that. It's a deal.

Arlie shakes her hand.

ARLIE

Deal. Now, we just have to worry about explaining this to my parents.

EXT. ARLIE'S HOUSE - FRONT PORCH - EVENING

Arlie and Juliette step up to the front door. It's a cute pale blue with a summery wreath adorning it. Arlie reaches for the door knob. The bread is in her other hand.

Arlie's mom opens the door before Arlie's hand even reaches it. Her witch sense had been tingling.

MOM

Arlie, there you are, I was won--

She starts as she notices Juliette.

MOM (CONT'D)

Who's this?

Juliette fidgets. Arlie puffs out a breath.

ARLIE

Yeah, about that. Can we come in?

Arlie's mom is skeptical, but knows her daughter wants to talk. She lets the two into the house.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

A fairly formal space, the dining room holds a pristinely made wooden table that can seat eight. Four of the seats are occupied on the one end: Arlie's parents sit next to each other on one side and Juliette and Arlie sit next to each other on the other.

Spoons CLINK against the soup bowls as everyone eats. Juliette sports perfect etiquette with her silverware and dishes all correctly placed and her napkin in her lap.

Arlie's DAD (40s), ever inquisitive, is the first to break the slightly awkward silence.

DAD

So, Juliette, what's it like to be a Mixed Blood? I was always curious about how those different DNAs reacted to each other.

ARLIE

Dad, seriously?

Arlie shoots her father a sharp look, annoyed, but he ignores her.

Juliette, slightly taken aback since she hadn't mentioned it, slowly places her spoon on the table and takes her napkin off of her lap to dab her mouth. She puts the napkin back down.

JULIETTE

Well, it's about as normal as a Pure Blood, I suppose. My senses and strength are heightened, but other than that there's not much of a difference.

DAD

I see. How long have you been practicing magic?

JULIETTE

Oh, well over 150 years. I took it up when I was a little girl.

Arlie's dad chokes on his food a little, takes a drink to clear his throat.

DAD

I forget your kind can live so long.

A slightly offended look crosses Juliette's face. Arlie's mom comes to the rescue, placing her hand on her husband's arm and giving him a forced smile.

MOM

What he means to say is that the oldest vampire here hasn't reached 100 yet. The town is still integrating, right, honey?

DAD

Oh, yes, sorry.

Arlie's dad scrambles to correct himself. Juliette raises an eyebrow.

JULIETTE

I see. It hasn't changed much since I went into hibernating then.

Arlie's mom quickly changes the subject.

MOM

Have you ever had an apprentice before, dear?

JULIETTE

I'm afraid I was never given the opportunity to mentor someone before despite my vast experience. My non-human characteristics overshadowed everything else.

MOM

Oh, that's awful! People back then just didn't understand. Your characteristics have nothing to do with our decision. In fact, I'd be honored if you trained Arlie! We've never met someone of your caliber before.

JULIETTE

Thank you.

Juliette nods respectfully and shares a hopeful glance with Arlie. Arlie then turns to her dad, who meets her gaze.

ARLIE

Dad?

DAD

I share the same sentiment as your mother. She's clearly had the years of experience we could never. Not to mention she could sense magic within you even when we couldn't. After all these years of thinking you were human...we've failed as parents in that regard.

Arlie's parents exchange somber, guilty looks.

MOM

We're so sorry, sweetie. If we had known...

Arlie places her hand down on the table.

ARLIE

Mom, it's okay. I'm not mad at either of you. I may be late to the punch, but I can still learn! And I have a feeling Juliette will be a great teacher.

DAD

As do we. Juliette, we owe you a huge debt of gratitude. Thank you for taking Arlie under your wing.

JULIETTE

Of course! I look forward to sharing my knowledge of magic with her.

MOM

Do you have anywhere to stay, hun?

Juliette fiddles with her locket, troubled.

JULIETTE

My home was the first place I went, but all that was there was an empty lot. You don't have to worry about me though, I can--

MOM

Oh, don't be ridiculous. We have a spare bedroom we can make up for you. My parents are the only ones that use it when they visit.

JULIETTE

Are...are you sure?

MOM

You can stay as long as you need, hun. There's no such thing as overstaying your welcome in this house.

JULIETTE

Thank you. I'm truly in your debt.

MOM

Nonsense! No one gets left behind in this family, blood or not. Now, here, have another roll. We don't want you withering away!

Arlie's mom offers the bread bowl to Juliette, who takes another roll, albeit reluctantly.

When Juliette sets it on her plate, she keeps her hand on it for a moment. It's still warm. She hasn't felt that in decades.

INT. KITCHEN - THE NEXT MORNING

Arlie comes into the kitchen, following her nose as it leads her to the fresh scent of banana muffins. She spots the washed mixing bowl and cooking utensils in the drying rack before seeing the muffins cooling off in two cupcake trays on the stove.

Juliette, who's wavy hair is up in a very neat ponytail, sits at the kitchen island, reading through Arlie's mom's BAKED GOODS BINDER.

Arlie goes over to the muffins. Then she looks back at Juliette.

ARLIE

Did you make these?

Juliette looks up.

JULIETTE

I did! It's my own recipe. I noticed your mom had browning bananas on the counter, so I asked if I could use them. She was nice enough to show me where your baking supplies were and showed me how to use the oven. You're welcome to try one!

Arlie doesn't have to be told twice. She snatches a muffin out of one of the trays and bites into it.

Holy muffin.

ARLIE

(as she chews)

Oh my god that's so good.

The muffin is gone in seconds. Arlie grabs another one.

ARLIE (CONT'D)

If this is what Heaven tastes like I'm ready to go.

Juliette laughs.

JULIETTE

I'm glad you like them! I used to bake a lot in my old house because I simply adored the kitchen.

(MORE)

JULIETTE (CONT'D)

It's strange to see how vast baking has become though...I mean, look at this!

Juliette holds up the binder to show it to Arlie, shaking it a little. A pink cake with white icing and veins of strawberry juice is on the page.

JULIETTE (CONT'D)

Strawberry poke cake? Who thought of that? Who thought of a poke cake in general? Did they just accidentally poke their cake with a toothpick?

Arlie can't contain her laughter. Juliette is adorable.

JULIETTE (CONT'D)

What? I'm serious!

ARLIE

My mom just found that on Pinterest and thought we could try it out. I have no idea where it originated.

JULIETTE

Wait, Pinterest? What's a Pinterest?

ARLIE

You have so much to learn.

JULIETTE

You do too, little missy.

ARLIE

Touche.

Arlie goes into the pantry to grab a box of cereal. She puts it on the island and then opens a cabinet behind her to grab a bowl.

ARLIE (CONT'D)

Speaking of which, we need to go get you some new outfits before we do anything else.

A hurt look crosses Juliette's face.

JULIETTE

What's wrong with my dress?

ARLIE

Nothing, but you're going to stick out like a sore thumb if you don't have period appropriate clothing. Besides, you can't keep wearing the same thing.

Juliette doesn't respond for a moment. She glances down at her dress. Her jaw clenches ever so slightly as she smooths the fabric over her legs.

Arlie pours her cereal.

JULIETTE

I guess you have a point.

Arlie notices Juliette's apprehension. Her dress must not just be any dress. Arlie doesn't press.

ARLIE

Hey, I promise it'll be fun! You've probably never been to a mall before.

JULIETTE

A mall?

There's the curiosity.

ARLIE

Yeah! We can go after I eat. It's not very far from here, so we'll be able to bike.

JULIETTE

Alright.

Juliette absentmindedly levitates a muffin out of one of the cupcake trays and into her hand as Arlie pours milk into her cereal. Arlie notices that Juliette's incisors don't grow this time when she bites into it.

EXT. WILEYVILLE MALL - DAY

The mall is large for being in such a small city. It has multiple parking lots and entrances and is two stories of both name brand and casual stores. It's one of the most modern attractions in Wileyville.

Arlie and Juliette ride up to the mall's main entrance, which has a slowly filling bike rack. Juliette is already astounded by what she's looking at.

JULIETTE

This is a mall?

ARLIE

Yep! The best and biggest one in the county.

Juliette keeps looking around as she and Arlie place their bikes into the bike rack. Arlie swings her SMALL BACKPACK around to pull out two BIKE LOCKS. Juliette doesn't notice as she takes a few steps away.

JULIETTE

You know what used to be here before?

She's holding her finger up like it just dawned on her.

JULIETTE (CONT'D)

A textile mill. It was open up until 1930 and then the Depression shut it down. It never reopened because it didn't have the means to convert to wartime production.

Arlie finishes locking the bikes to the rack and turns to Juliette with an amused smile.

ARLIE

I'm starting to think you should be the resident historian.

JULIETTE

(slightly offended)

I have a store of other talents, you know.

ARLIE

I'm just playing! Now, come on!

Arlie takes Juliette's hand and drags her up to the mall's entrance.

INT. WILEYVILLE MALL - CONTINUOUS

Arlie and Juliette approach the center of the mall. It opens up to reveal the second floor.

Two sets of escalators transport people between the floors. A large fountain rests in the middle of the indoor courtyard. The sound of the water gives the bustling mall a strangely tranquil feel.

Skylights make up the roof of this particular area of the mall, flooding the courtyard in natural light. The greenery placed here and there and around the fountain pop with color.

Arlie has seen it all before. Juliette is mystified.

Juliette grabs Arlie's arm when she sees the escalators.

JULIETTE

Arlie, are those stairs...moving?

Arlie glances down at Juliette's hand, slightly startled.

ARLIE

Yeah, that's called an escalator.

JULIETTE

(excitedly)

Can we ride it?

ARLIE

Today's your lucky day because the first store I want to take you into is upstairs.

Juliette is gone before Arlie can say anything else, her childish curiosity unrivaled. Arlie shakes her head and runs to meet up with her at the bottom of one of the up escalators.

Juliette sticks one foot on it to test it, and when the stair starts going up, she pulls her foot back. Then, she immediately hops onto the next stair as it starts to make its way. Arlie gets on normally behind her.

JULIETTE

This is so weird!

Juliette peeks over the railing of the escalator to see the floor moving away below. Arlie nudges Juliette with her elbow.

ARLIE

Make sure to watch your step when you get off. That's what always gets people.

Juliette turns so she's facing the top of the escalator.

She takes Arlie's advice very seriously when her stair reaches the top, taking an unnecessarily large step off to make sure she doesn't trip.

Arlie just walks off.

Arlie starts leading Juliette down one of the hallways that branches off of the center of the mall. They pass a few stores and Juliette peers into them.

One of the stores they begin to pass by is a BRIDAL BOUTIQUE. Since Arlie is focused on getting to their destination, she passes right by it, just barely realizing that Juliette is no longer beside her.

Arlie freezes and turns around.

ARLIE (CONT'D)

Juliette?

Juliette has become completely immobile as she stares into the window of the bridal boutique.

Confused, Arlie goes back over to her. She looks into the window to see what Juliette has her gaze fixated on.

It's the WEDDING DRESS in the window. It's a lovely, strapless, mermaid style dress with a sweetheart neckline and stunning lace embellishments. Because of the way the dress is staged in the window, Juliette's reflection fits perfectly into it.

Arlie notices Juliette FINGERING THE LOCKET around her neck. Something's wrong, but Arlie knows better than to ask.

ARLIE (CONT'D)

(softly)

That's a beautiful dress.

JULIETTE

I-it is.

Juliette's eyes are watery. She sniffles.

Arlie gingerly places a hand on Juliette's shoulder and squeezes it.

ARLIE

Hey, come on.

Juliette doesn't fight. She just nods. Arlie leads her away.

INT. WILEYVILLE MALL - H&M - CONTINUOUS

Arlie brings Juliette into H&M. Juliette's expression is still somber, but upon noticing the slough of clothes now before her, her jaw nearly drops.

The best summer styles are still out, but in typical H&M fashion, all-season options, like jeans and cute knit sweaters, are still up for grabs too.

Arlie claps her hands together.

ARLIE

This is one of my favorite stores! I
can't wait to show you around.

Juliette tentatively goes over to a rack of skinny jeans
and looks a few pairs over. She moves to a rack of cami
tank tops and does the same thing. Then to a shelf with
different washes of shorty-shorts.

She picks a pair of the shorts up, flabbergasted.

JULIETTE

Women wear things like this now?

Arlie, who had been following her curiously, pops up at
her side.

ARLIE

What, too scandalous for you?

Juliette eyeballs a YOUNG WOMAN who had just walked into
the store. Her t-shirt is so cropped that her boobs would
pop out if she lifted her arms and her shorts might as
well be cut like the bottom of a bathing suit.

JULIETTE

(disgusted)

If they look like *that*, yes.

ARLIE

Point taken. That's a little extreme, but
it's also pretty normal.

JULIETTE

Normal? Heavens, societies standards have
plunged.

ARLIE

Oookay, no shorts for you yet.

Arlie plucks the pair of shorts out of Juliette's hands
and puts them back.

ARLIE (CONT'D)

Let's go look at some other stuff.

Arlie turns Juliette away from the shorts and pushes her
to the women's side of the store.

Arlie shows Juliette multiple tops and bottoms, making
outfit suggestions as they go. It isn't long before both
of Juliette's hands fill up from holding hangars. Arlie
ushers her over to the fitting rooms.

IN A MONTAGE, Juliette tries each outfit on, coming out each time to show Arlie. Arlie lets her know if she likes it or not with a shake of her head or a certain facial expression.

Juliette gets more confident as she goes, striking poses when she comes out. It makes Arlie happy to see her having a good time.

The two come out of the store successfully, laughing as they go. Juliette holds two big bags.

INT. WILEYVILLE MALL - CONTINUOUS

Arlie and Juliette roam around on the first floor of the mall. They're both holding DIPPIN' DOTS. Juliette scoops some of the vanilla pearls onto her spoon and stares at them.

JULIETTE

It's almost too perfect to eat.

Arlie puts a spoonful in her mouth.

ARLIE

But it's good.

JULIETTE

It better be! Over three dollars for two of these...you'd think it's a delicacy! One scoop of ice cream was five cents in 1945.

ARLIE

I hate to break it to you, but nothing is just five cents anymore.

JULIETTE

So I have learned.

Juliette sticks her spoon in her mouth. Her eyes instantly light up as the taste of ice cream floods back to her.

The girls continue along, eventually strolling by HOT TOPIC. Juliette stops again, her spoon still in her mouth. Arlie pauses; now what?

JULIETTE (CONT'D)

Your mall has an apothecary?

Arlie deadpans.

ARLIE

Juliette, it's just another--

Juliette disappears into the store before Arlie can finish. Arlie lets out a sigh and follows after her.

INT. WILEYVILLE MALL - HOT TOPIC - CONTINUOUS

Arlie finds Juliette poking through the many trinkets of Hot Topic. She seems very fascinated.

JULIETTE

I didn't know you sold magical items in big places like these. Usually, they're really hard to find!

She curiously holds up a necklace with a pentagram on it.

JULIETTE (CONT'D)

Could this one summon Brolgod?

Who?!

Arlie snatches the necklace from Juliette's hand before she tries anything.

Juliette starts. Arlie puts the necklace back.

ARLIE

All of this is fake. A) you don't screw with demons, and b) do you really think normal human beings could handle actual enchanted items?

JULIETTE

I suppose not. Brolgod was good, though.

ARLIE

How on Earth could demons-- you know what, never mind.

Juliette's attention gets drawn away from the necklace when she sees the CASHIER moving around behind the register. He's a tall, slender guy with a purple mohawk that just says it all.

Juliette has never seen hair like that before. She flashes over to the poor guy with inhuman speed, scaring both him and Arlie, who gets a rush of wind to the face. Vampires.

JULIETTE
(to the cashier)
How did you do that?

The cashier is clearly startled. He's backed into the corner of the counter.

CASHIER
Do what?

JULIETTE
Your hair! It's purple and...spiky. Is it wolfsbane and lavender? Maybe a ground viper fang and a touch of ginger root?

CASHIER
Lady, you're crazy. It's just dye and hair gel.

JULIETTE
(confused)
No potions?

Arlie comes up then, grabbing Juliette's arms and slowly turning her away. She glances at the cashier, apologetic and embarrassed.

ARLIE
I'm sorry, she's not from around here.

The cashier smiles nervously in response. Arlie turns away from him and starts pushing Juliette towards the exit.

JULIETTE
What was that for?

ARLIE
I think you've had enough of the modern world for one day.

The two leave the store, Arlie continuing to nonchalantly shove Juliette out.

EXT. ARLIE'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - THE NEXT DAY

Arlie steps onto the back patio wearing a comfy workout outfit and her favorite sneakers. Her hair is tied back.

Juliette is already there, sitting with her legs crossed on a cushion she had placed on the stone. Her eyes are closed, her hands are on her knees.

She's in the leggings and baby blue cami top she had tried on yesterday. Comfortable.

Arlie approaches quietly, but Juliette already knows she's there. Juliette motions for Arlie to sit on the cushion she had placed across from her. Arlie obeys.

Once Arlie is settled, Juliette's eyes finally open to look at her.

JULIETTE

Are you ready?

ARLIE

I think so? I just...wasn't expecting meditation to be a part of learning magic.

JULIETTE

As I wasn't expecting to see a man with a purple...mohawk is what you called it? Yesterday.

Arlie stifles a laugh. Juliette smiles.

JULIETTE (CONT'D)

Patience is very important when you're managing your magic. You have to take the time to connect with your core. Meditation is the best way to learn this.

ARLIE

My core?

Juliette nods.

JULIETTE

Think of it as your magical center. It's how you'll channel your magic. If I tried to teach you even the most basic of spells right now, you wouldn't be able to cast them because you haven't formed that connection.

ARLIE

How do I access it?

JULIETTE

I find that stillness is how it speaks to you.

Juliette closes her eyes again, settling back into her meditative state.

JULIETTE (CONT'D)

If you listen to what is going on around you and allow your mind to clear and free itself, your core will awaken naturally.

Arlie watches curiously as Juliette turns her palms face up. Luminous green balls of light spark to life in both of her palms. She lifts each hand gently, and the orbs float to shoulder height.

JULIETTE (CONT'D)

The stronger the connection you have with your core, the more you will be able to manipulate your magic.

Juliette wills the orbs to float to one another. When they meet, she brings her hands up and carefully touches them, then pulls them apart. A sparkling green line of magic is formed between them as they separate.

Arlie is in awe as Juliette begins to create complex patterns and symbols in the air before her. Her magic weaves together to form an intricate shield, separating her and Arlie. Arlie stares.

Juliette opens her eyes again.

JULIETTE (CONT'D)

Go on and hit it.

ARLIE

Hit it?

JULIETTE

We have to see if it works, don't we?

Arlie hesitates. She balls her hand up into a tight fist and lifts her arm. Hesitates again.

Juliette gives her an encouraging nod.

Arlie lets out a breath and releases her arm. She's shocked when her fist connects with the shield. A shower of green sparks flies upon impact.

Arlie keeps her fist on the shield for a moment.

ARLIE

Holy shit.

Juliette makes a face and peeks around the edge of the shield.

JULIETTE
Language, missy.

ARLIE
Uh, sorry.

Arlie's still too stunned to argue it's a norm.

Juliette waves a hand, and the shield disintegrates in a shower of green sparkles. Arlie lets her hand fall.

ARLIE (CONT'D)
Will I be able to do that?

JULIETTE
In time. For now, let's just focus on
conjuring an orb. Close your eyes.

Arlie does as she's told. Juliette reaches forward and gently takes Arlie's hands, placing each one palm up on Arlie's knees.

JULIETTE (CONT'D)
Find your stillness. Listen to your
surroundings. Don't be afraid to let go.

Juliette's calming voice helps Arlie settle into herself. She begins to breathe deeper. Tune into her surroundings.

A gentle breeze blows by. The faint RING of a wind chime can be heard. The shrubbery of the backyard RUSTLES softly.

Something stirs within Arlie. A connection. Her fingers twitch slightly as a spark of light tries to ignite in her right hand.

Arlie's forehead crinkles in unintentional concentration. The orb tries to ignite again, but to no avail.

Arlie's eyes open as she lets out a frustrated sigh. She flexes her fingers.

Juliette watches her carefully.

ARLIE
I didn't expect this to be easy, but...I
was hoping it would come more naturally.

JULIETTE
Your powers have been dormant for
eighteen years. It's going to take a
little while for them to blossom.

Arlie keeps staring at her hand, still flexing her fingers.

JULIETTE (CONT'D)
(gently)
Look at me.

It takes a moment, but Arlie complies. Juliette taps the side of her head.

JULIETTE (CONT'D)
It's all in here. Don't think about it.
Let the connection guide you.

Arlie takes a deep breath and nods. She closes her eyes and settles back into herself again.

The breeze, the leaves, the chime, the birds. Peace is created within the still moments. The connection stirs again. Stronger. Arlie latches onto it.

Arlie's fingers twitch again. A tiny orb flickers to life in her palm. This time, it doesn't go out. This time, it blooms into a brilliant ball of light.

Arlie opens her eyes and looks at her palm. A look of sheer joy crosses her face as she sees the mini sun she has created. She smiles excitedly at Juliette, who beams back at her proudly. There was hope after all.

INT. ARLIE'S HOUSE - GUEST BEDROOM - NIGHT

Juliette tosses and turns in her sleep. She's muttering to herself a little bit; must be a nightmare.

UNSEEN VOICES whisper in the darkness. They get louder.

Louder.

Juliette's sleep becomes even more fitful.

The whispers grow until a DEEP, EVIL LAUGHTER resonates within the dark space. It could almost swallow the room whole.

Juliette sits bolt upright, shaken to her core.

JULIETTE
NO!

She's breathing heavily. Her eyes blaze. She looks over at her door. Dread.

JULIETTE (CONT'D)

Arlie.

Juliette is gone in the blink of an eye. She flashes down the hall to Arlie's cracked bedroom door, not even hesitating for one second to open it all the way and look in.

Arlie is fast asleep, snuggled up with the pillows on her bed and without a care in the world.

Juliette visibly relaxes when she sees this. A breath of relief goes out of her nose, but her jaw still clenches.

EXT. ARLIE'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - THE NEXT DAY

Arlie and Juliette are back on their respective cushions on the patio. Both of them are in a meditative state, but Juliette is still instructing.

JULIETTE

Remember what you learned yesterday.
Tranquility is your friend. Stillness
will allow you to listen to your core.

A green orb appears back in Juliette's palm. She waits quietly, sensing Arlie's attempt to do the same.

It takes Arlie a moment, but she's much more in tune with herself than the day before. The same bright orb from before ignites in her palm.

JULIETTE (CONT'D)

Good. Now, I want you to focus your
energy solely on the orb. If it's your
will for it to float into the air, it
will go.

Juliette's orb easily hovers about a foot into the air. Arlie still keeps herself steady, patient. Her orb slowly begins to leave her palm.

Juliette smiles when she senses it.

JULIETTE (CONT'D)

That's it. Continue to focus your energy,
but this time, try to control it to make
your orb float in front of you.

Juliette's orb drifts in front of her. Arlie's orb stays put for a moment, then starts drifting sideways. One of Juliette's eyes pops open and she casually reaches out to nudge Arlie's orb back in the right direction.

Arlie gets control of it again and manages to summon it back to her palm.

ARLIE

Sorry!

JULIETTE

It's alright, you're doing great. Give it another try.

Arlie nods and focuses back in. Her orb rises out of her hand again. This time, it drifts in front of her. She wills it to stop before it goes any further.

Both of Juliette's eyes are open now as she smiles again.

JULIETTE (CONT'D)

There you go. Open your eyes.

Arlie does as she's told. She looks down at the orb in front of her, then at Juliette.

ARLIE

What's next?

JULIETTE

Let's see if you can make it bigger.

Juliette places her hands on each side of her orb, then begins to draw them apart. Her orb grows as her hands move.

JULIETTE (CONT'D)

Imagine you want to engulf a space in your magic. Your energy naturally responds.

Arlie watches for a moment, then mirrors Juliette. When her orb doesn't budge, she wrinkles her nose and closes her eyes again, then gives it another go. Gradually, her orb starts to obey.

As the orb grows, it begins to look more and more like a mini sun. Raw power churns within it.

Arlie can feel it. The connection, growing stronger.

She keeps growing the orb. It shines brighter.

Shock registers on Juliette's face. Her orb dissolves.

JULIETTE (CONT'D)

Arlie.

Arlie can't hear her. Her magic is consuming her. Her skin has started to take on a strange radiance. Her hair begins to float.

Juliette leans back, squinting against the light.

JULIETTE (CONT'D)

ARLIE!

Arlie snaps out of her trance. Her deep concentration vanishes and her magic slips.

Juliette barely has enough time to throw her arms up and create a shield as Arlie's magic floods over her.

Arlie looks traumatized when her magic clears. Her hands shake slightly.

ARLIE

I-I'm so sorry! I-I don't know what that was!

Juliette slowly lowers her arms and her shield flickers out.

JULIETTE

(reassuringly)

It's okay, I'm okay. You just let your magic overwhelm you is all. Why don't we take a break?

Arlie nods vehemently. She wrings her trembling hands.

Juliette reaches out to comfortingly place her hand on top of both of Arlie's.

JULIETTE (CONT'D)

Hey, the theater is still here, right? Why don't we go see a film?

Arlie nods again, ever so slightly starting to relax.

EXT. WILEYVILLE MOVIE THEATER - ABOUT AN HOUR LATER

Situated downtown, the movie theater is one of Wileyville's main attractions. Throughout the years, it's somehow retained its old-timey look.

Juliette is ecstatic to be looking at something very familiar to her as she and Arlie approach the box office.

JULIETTE

Arlie, this is amazing! It's almost the same as when I last came here to see The Body Snatcher.

ARLIE

I'm sorry, the what now?

JULIETTE

The Body Snatcher! You know, Boris Karloff?

Arlie looks at her blankly.

JULIETTE (CONT'D)

Bela Lugosi?

Arlie shakes her head. Juliette's shoulders drop in defeat.

The girls go up to the box office window. Purchase the tickets. The cashier slides the tickets and two pairs of 3D glasses through the hole in the window.

Arlie grabs it all and hands Juliette a pair of the glasses. Juliette turns them in her hands confusedly.

JULIETTE (CONT'D)

Why do we need sunglasses in a movie theater?

ARLIE

(mischevious)

You'll see.

Juliette sends her a sideways look. So, the master has become the apprentice once again.

INT. WILEYVILLE MOVIE THEATER - FIFTEEN MINUTES LATER

Arlie and Juliette sit down in their seats. They have a medium-sized popcorn to share between them as well as a soda that has two straws sticking out of the lid.

JULIETTE

(whispering)

How did inflation get so out of hand? I was starting to think I was going to need to sell a kidney to buy some of that stuff.

Arlie nearly spits out her drink trying not to laugh.

JULIETTE (CONT'D)

Also, these seats are very comfortable.

Juliette nestles into her seat. Arlie glances at her.

ARLIE

Being with you has put so many things
into perspective for me.

JULIETTE

As it should. Now, please tell me what
these are supposed to do.

Juliette holds up her glasses.

ARLIE

Put them on when the movie starts and
you'll find out!

JULIETTE

Fine.

Arlie giggles to herself. Juliette has no idea what she's
in store for.

INT. WILEYVILLE MOVIE THEATER - DURING THE MOVIE

The first true action sequence has finally started up on
the screen. Both girls have their glasses on, Juliette
holds the popcorn.

Objects start flying on screen and the 3D experience
takes effect.

Juliette nearly jumps out of her seat when she sees
things hurtling towards her. The popcorn bag drops out of
her hand as she reflexively casts a shield in front of
her, illuminating the seats in a grassy green glow.

Arlie somehow manages to catch the popcorn bag at the
last second, saving what's left. She reaches over and
puts her hand on Juliette's arm.

ARLIE

(quietly)

Hey, hey, it's all fake, dissolve your
shield.

Juliette slowly puts her arms down and peeks over the
shield before it fizzles into green sparkles.

JULIETTE

But, things were--

ARLIE

It's just the glasses. It's supposed to look like things are coming out at you.

Juliette takes the glasses off for a moment. Squints at the screen.

JULIETTE

So, that's why it's so hard to see without them. Say, how did they--

ARLIE

Juliette! Just watch the movie.

Juliette sinks back in her seat sheepishly. She puts her glasses back on.

JULIETTE

Sorry.

For the remainder of the movie, Juliette continues to flinch at things popping out at her even though she tries not to. She's having a good time though, and Arlie finds her reactions comical.

EXT. WILEYVILLE MOVIE THEATER - LATER

Juliette and Arlie leave theater. Juliette still can't get over what she was watching.

JULIETTE

That was so weird! I never thought cinema would go down a path where it simulates bombarding you with objects.

Arlie laughs.

ARLIE

Whatever you say. I just really needed that break. I'm still a little shaken up about earlier.

JULIETTE

Well, remember what I said? You were unintentionally letting your magic overwhelm you. It's nothing to be frightened of. You're just stronger than you thought. And I have the perfect thing to teach you to help you gain better control.

ARLIE

What is it?

Juliette sends her a playful smile.

JULIETTE

We're going to cast some spells next.

Arlie's initial apprehension vanishes and is replaced by excitement. She jumps up and down a little with a squeal.

EXT. ARLIE'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - THE NEXT DAY

Arlie and Juliette stand in the grass. Arlie has conjured one of her bright orbs and is passing it between her hands, practicing.

ARLIE

So, what's first? Throwing fireballs?
Summoning lightning?

JULIETTE

What happened to that fear you had
yesterday?

ARLIE

(purposely oblivious)
What fear?

Juliette rolls her eyes playfully.

JULIETTE

Even *if* you were ready to cast spells of
that level, I wouldn't let you. You need
a safe space to practice first.

ARLIE

So I don't cause any damage?

JULIETTE

Precisely. Watch.

Juliette holds her hand out and a white spark sizzles to life in her palm. She tosses it up with force and it streaks into the air, leaving a trail of sparkles behind.

When it gets to be just above the house, it blows. A DOME flows from the center point, shimmering over the entire Maganti property.

ARLIE

(looking up)
Whoa.

JULIETTE

This is Reyling's Dome. Wizards and Spellcasters use this to practice their magic and even to duel. Anything that happens in here will not affect the outside world.

Arlie dissipates her orb.

ARLIE

How do I conjure it?

JULIETTE

Good question. The base word is *gniomha*, or *activate*. You need to imagine the event happening so your core understands exactly what to cast. In time, you'll internalize it and no longer need to speak the word to cast, like me. Want to try?

ARLIE

If I could?

Juliette nods once and holds out her hand again. The same white spark ignites and she throws it up into the air. This time it hits the dome and dissolves into it. The dome ripples and starts to vanish.

Once it's gone, Juliette motions for Arlie to try. Arlie holds out her hand and closes her eyes, imagining.

ARLIE (CONT'D)

Gniomha.

The white spark ignites in Arlie's hand now. Arlie opens her eyes, glances at her palm, then at Juliette, smiles, and tosses the spark into the air. Reyling's Dome once again comes over the property.

Juliette glances up at the dome, pondering.

JULIETTE

Onto something harder we go, then.

ARLIE

Fireballs?!

Juliette laughs, pushing Arlie slightly.

JULIETTE

No, you goof. But I *could* teach you a fire spell that's fairly similar. Since you seem to have an itch to burn things.

ARLIE

And you never have?

A shadow suddenly passes over Juliette's face, erasing the kindness she usually exudes. Her jaw tightens.

JULIETTE

Everyone wants to burn things sometimes, Arlie.

Arlie shrinks back a little, startled. Juliette immediately snaps out of it, however, and shakes her head.

JULIETTE (CONT'D)

Anyway! Hold your arm up like this--

Juliette takes Arlie's arm and lifts it, pointing it at one of the neatly trimmed hedges of the backyard. Arlie shoots her a weird look, but Juliette ignores it.

JULIETTE (CONT'D)

Firestreak is a target spell, so you need to make sure you aim before casting. Point at the object you want to target, take a moment to concentrate, and then say *lasi*, or, in other words, *blaze*.

Arlie points her finger at the hedge, hesitates.

ARLIE

You're sure this won't actually destroy the backyard?

JULIETTE

Reyling's Dome has never failed me in the two centuries I've been alive. I'm positive.

Arlie hesitates another moment, then closes her eyes. She finds her focus.

ARLIE

Lasi.

A streak of fire bursts from her finger...and fizzles out almost immediately after.

Arlie fidgets frustratedly.

JULIETTE

It's alright. Try again.

Arlie repositions herself and concentrates again. Feels the connection to her core.

ARLIE

Lasi.

An orangey-red pulse snakes through the veins in Arlie's hand and into her finger. Another streak of fire bursts forth and powerfully tears through the air. It meets the hedge in a mini explosion.

Arlie starts at the noise and opens her eyes.

ARLIE (CONT'D)

Holy-- I did that?

JULIETTE

Yes! Now, before you get too excited, I need you to conjure a water sphere to put the fire out. It's very similar to conjuring a light orb, but you have to focus on the moisture in the air around you. Imagine you're summoning it to the palm of your hand.

Arlie nods. She opens her palm and closes her eyes once more. Concentrates.

A little droplet of water begins to spin around in her hand. It quickly grows as it draws more droplets in from the air around her. A perfect sphere of water soon forms.

Arlie already knows what she needs to do next. She keeps her concentration and rotates her wrist, then launches the sphere of water at the flames. It bursts over the hedge, extinguishing the fire instantly.

Arlie glances at Juliette excitedly. Juliette smiles proudly and nudges her shoulder.

JULIETTE (CONT'D)

You're becoming a natural, missy. A word of advice, though: remember not to get too eager.

ARLIE

Mmm, alright. Can we keep going, though?

JULIETTE

Of course!

IN A MONTAGE, Juliette shows Arlie how to cast Cyclone Force, a spell where wind flurries around the fist and is released in a forceful draft when the fist is thrown.

Arlie casts this spell with unintentionally raw power as well.

Juliette then teaches Arlie to create simple wards, such as a protection ward, and shows her how to create a shield.

Arlie takes everything in stride, absorbing the knowledge Juliette is providing. It seems as if she was in fact born to do this.

INT. ARLIE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Arlie lies wide awake on her bed. Small balls of light float above her, illuminating her face.

Arlie creates another small orb and adds it to the bunch. Then she creates another and sends it into the air as well.

She holds her hands up just a little, expression intent. With tiny motions, she wills the orbs to spin around each other and gather. Then she manipulates them into shapes.

It looks as if tiny constellations are being formed.

EXT. BACK PATIO - THE NEXT MORNING

Juliette is fast asleep on the blue couch that accents the patio. The morning light highlights her face; the remnant of a tear trail can be seen on her cheek.

She clutches her LOCKET.

Arlie is suddenly there, shaking her shoulder gently.

ARLIE

Hey. Juliette.

Juliette groans a little. Her eyes flicker open and she squints slightly in the light. Arlie squats down to get eye-level with her and hugs her knees.

ARLIE (CONT'D)

What are you doing out here? I was worried when I didn't see you in the house.

JULIETTE

I...came out to stargaze last night. My--

Juliette stops herself short. She squeezes her eyes shut and lets out a shaky breath.

JULIETTE (CONT'D)

I must've been more tired than I thought.

Arlie's not fooled. She's seen this too many times now.

ARLIE

Are you okay?

Juliette's eyes open again. They're watery.

JULIETTE

No.

Arlie's face falls, but only for a moment. She senses Juliette still isn't ready to talk about it, so she pulls another trick out of her sleeve.

ARLIE

Well, I have some news that might cheer you up. Guess what just started today?

JULIETTE

(voice cracking a little)

What?

ARLIE

The county fair! I haven't gotten to go in a few years, and I've heard it's gotten a lot better, so I was thinking we could pay it a visit?

Juliette's face lights up just a little. Yet another thing she's familiar with.

JULIETTE

I'd love to go. I'm sure it's changed a lot since 1945.

Arlie springs back up, energized.

ARLIE

Yay! Come on, let's get you up and ready!

She offers her hands to Juliette, who takes them. Arlie helps pull her up and off of the couch.

EXT. THE COUNTY FAIR - A FEW HOURS LATER

The fairgrounds are a vibrant place, filled with life and laughter.

Rides spin, attendees play carnival games, the Ferris Wheel stands tall. The Big Top embodies the childish joy of watching a circus performance.

Juliette and Arlie step through the main gates. Juliette's face lights up as she sees the familiar sights.

ARLIE

Is it the same as you remember it?

JULIETTE

Yes! Minus a few additions and upgrades, of course. Do we still need tickets for the rides?

ARLIE

Yeah, but I'm here to seize the day. I say we get a roll of them.

JULIETTE

Then I concur. This day shall not go to waste!

Arlie laughs.

ARLIE

What am I going to do with you?

JULIETTE

Play me in one of the water gun games. I'm an undefeated champion.

ARLIE

Oh, it's on!

The girls rush to buy their tickets from the ticket booth, and then skip away towards all of the carnival games.

It takes them a few moments to weave through the masses of people, but they soon come across one of the water gun games that's modeled after horse racing. They hop in line.

Once it's their turn, Arlie pays the attendant two dollars for her and Juliette to have a go at the game. The two girls hop on their respective water guns.

They wait, fingers on the triggers. They eyeball each other.

The bell goes off.

Water spews from their guns simultaneously, the streams landing on the targets and making the horses slide across the wall.

Arlie's finger slips a little on the trigger. The water shoots the wall and her horse stops. She scrambles to shoot the target again and Juliette stifles a laugh beside her.

Arlie nonchalantly bumps Juliette with her hip to get revenge and Juliette loses focus.

Arlie's horse slides ahead just a little...but Juliette's horse catches back up. Juliette's horse ultimately crosses the finish line first.

Juliette celebrates.

JULIETTE

Ha! That's what you get for trying to cheat! The champion reigns!

Arlie slumps over, defeated.

ARLIE

I need to redeem myself. Balloon darts?

JULIETTE

Sounds good to me!

The girls move onto balloon darts. Arlie wins this time.

The two move onto rides next. Arlie takes Juliette onto the Tilt-a-Whirl first. Juliette is slightly confused by the mechanism, but once it starts going she and Arlie laugh their hearts out.

They move onto the swings next, managing to catch a higher view of the fair as they spin around. Juliette looks at the world below her with wonder.

It's onto the coasters after that. Arlie throws her hands up almost immediately, but Juliette has to get used to the feeling. By the third go around, she's having the time of her life.

On their way to the next ride, the girls pass by a small group of people trying to lead one of the MAJESTIC WHITE CARRIAGE HORSES to the stables. The stallion struggles against his lead and rears.

Juliette notices as the MAIN HANDLER tries to calm him down. She reaches out to Arlie to get her to stop.

JULIETTE (CONT'D)

Hey, hold on a second.

Arlie pauses as Juliette wanders fearlessly over to the distressed creature.

MAIN HANDLER

(while struggling)

Hey, lady, get out of here! This horse is dangerous.

Juliette ignores him and reaches out to the stallion, making shushing noises as she goes. As the stallion senses her, he begins to calm.

Juliette gently touches his neck and wordlessly takes the lead line from the handler, who suddenly seems just as mystified.

Juliette continues to shush the large creature, lovingly rubbing his neck. His coat shimmers in the sunlight as he relaxes, and he dips his head so Juliette can rub it. It's almost...magical.

JULIETTE

That's it...there's a good boy.

Juliette smiles at the stallion as he presses his forehead into her chest. The handler is shocked beside her.

MAIN HANDLER

How...how did you do that? He's never calmed down that quickly for anyone.

JULIETTE

A word of advice, my friend. Don't fight him, and he won't fight you. All Olwin here wants is respect and to be treated equally, isn't that right, boy?

Olwin nickers in response.

MAIN HANDLER

(confused)

Wait, how'd you know his name?

JULIETTE

He told me.

Juliette winks at the speechless handler and hands him the lead line.

JULIETTE (CONT'D)

Remember what I said, and you two will get along just fine. It was nice to meet you, Olwin.

Juliette plants a kiss on Olwin's forehead. His coat shimmers again as he nickers softly in response.

Juliette joins Arlie once more, leaving the handler to wonder what the heck just happened. Olwin glances over at the pair with his ears perked. His tail swishes.

Arlie looks on for a moment.

ARLIE

So, you're an animal handler now too, huh?

JULIETTE

No. Magical creatures just need each other sometimes.

Arlie glances at her, confused, but when she looks back at Olwin, she sees it. The horn. Her jaw drops.

Olwin nickers happily in their direction, sensing Arlie's realization.

What a day.

EXT. THE COUNTY FAIR - NIGHT

Since the night is coming to a close, the fireworks show has begun. Bright colors and patterns light up the sky as people gather to watch.

The girls are splitting a funnel cake at one of the picnic tables and watching on as the fireworks burst in the air.

JULIETTE

You know, I actually can't remember the last time I saw fireworks.

ARLIE

Well, you're seeing them now, aren't you?

JULIETTE

Yes, and it's beautiful. Thank you for taking me here today. I had a lot of fun.

ARLIE

I did too! It's a well-deserved break, I think.

JULIETTE

I agree.

Both girls pop funnel cake in their mouths. The fireworks continue to go off in the air.

The hair suddenly stands up on the back of Juliette's neck. She freezes. Someone screams. Juliette shoots up, searching.

A DARK, CLOAKED FIGURE descends from the sky. Dark magic swirls around him, causing people to scatter in panic as the fireworks continue to crackle.

JULIETTE (CONT'D)

Arlie, we need to go *now*.

ARLIE

Don't have to tell me twice!

The girls abandon their funnel cake, making a beeline for the exit.

ARLIE (CONT'D)

What the hell is that thing?

JULIETTE

I don't know! Just run!

They dodge through the masses of people, scrambling for the gates.

TWO MORE DARK, CLOAKED FIGURES suddenly materialize from the shadows, floating directly into their path.

JULIETTE (CONT'D)

Dammit!

Both girls skid to a halt. Juliette instinctively pushes Arlie behind her. The cloaked figures move in on them.

Juliette looks behind them for an escape, only to see that the first cloaked figure has materialized there, diminishing any hope.

CLOAKED FIGURE 1

Give us the girl.

The figure's voice rasps in a way that makes creepy sound generous. He reaches out a smoky hand.

Arlie clutches Juliette's arm. Juliette keeps Arlie behind her, watching for any oncoming attacks. Her eyes blaze.

JULIETTE

No. Now, if you could kindly go back to whatever hellhole you came from, we can forget this ever happened, and no one will get hurt.

CLOAKED FIGURE 2

Let us make this easier for you. Give us the girl, or *die*.

Black energy suddenly crackles in this figure's hand. Juliette narrows her eyes, doesn't even flinch.

JULIETTE

I said *no*.

CLOAKED FIGURE 2

Then you have chosen death.

The same black energy crackles in all of the figures' hands now.

JULIETTE

And you have chosen to mess with the wrong Guardian.

Raging lightning bursts into life around Juliette's hands. Simultaneously, two of the figures launch their dark energy at her as she releases her lightning. The dark energy and lightning collide, buzzing in a stalemate.

The third figure launches his energy. Juliette sees the oncoming attack. Her eyes blaze brighter than before as a green shimmer appears in the air in front of her.

The stream of dark energy slams into a large shield and pulses against it. Juliette is miraculously holding all three attacks at bay.

The figures attempt to add more power to their energy, but fail. Juliette, on the other hand, is able to push back the dark energy until it reaches the two figures.

They screech as Juliette's power explodes over them, sending them flying backwards. Juliette focuses back on her shield, still fending off the third stream.

She places her hands behind it, and it burns brighter than before, rippling with power.

She throws her hands out to the sides, and the shield erupts into a wave of magic, instantly crumbling the dark powers of the last figure.

This figure also screeches as the wave slams into him and blasts him back.

Juliette pants, Arlie is stunned behind her. Arlie is about to say something when Juliette whirls around and grabs her, hugging her tight.

JULIETTE (CONT'D)

You're not going to like this.

Arlie barely has time to react before Juliette whispers a single word and they vanish in a whirlwind of green magic.

INT. AN UNKNOWN LOCATION - NIGHT

The DARK SORCERER sits on his throne, masked in shadows. He leans on his hand, bored, as the three cloaked figures manifest from the shadows. They immediately kneel before him.

CLOAKED FIGURE 1

My Lord. We are so sorry. The Mixed Blood was stronger than we thought.

CLOAKED FIGURE 3

My Lord, she must be taken care of! Otherwise we cannot obtain the girl.

DARK SORCERER

Patience, men. In time we will have what we want, and Ms. Stormwind will realize that she is powerless to stop what is coming.

The Dark Sorcerer leans back, smugly steepling his fingers.

DARK SORCERER (CONT'D)

A Guardian can only do so much, after all.

Cue the maniacal laughter.

EXT. BACK PATIO - MORNING

Arlie sits out on the couch. Her hands rest palm-up on her knees and her eyes are closed. She's concentrating, but not on conjuring light orbs.

Very small bolts of lightning begin to dance around in her hands. She twitches a little, struggling.

The door to the patio opens and shuts. Juliette comes over to the couch with a steaming cup of coffee in hand.

JULIETTE

That's pretty impressive.

She sits down as Arlie gives up. Arlie's eyes pop back open as she lets out a defeated sigh. The lightning bolts dissipate.

ARLIE

Yeah, but nowhere near good enough.

Arlie looks down at her hands, flexing her fingers.

JULIETTE

It took me years to master lightning spells, you know. You're already doing better than I was.

(a pause)

How are you feeling?

Arlie sighs.

ARLIE

Tired. Useless. Confused. I mean what were those things last night?

Juliette takes a sip of her coffee and stares into the distance.

JULIETTE

I can't say for sure, but I have a hunch. Have your parents ever taught you any magic history?

ARLIE

Not much, no. I guess they didn't really think about it since we all thought I was human.

JULIETTE

Well, a very long time ago, a Dark Sorcerer by the name of Erebus tried to take over the Earth.

(MORE)

JULIETTE (CONT'D)

His henchmen were the ones who kept people in line. I'd only ever seen drawings of them since I wasn't around then, but from what I remember, they look exactly the same.

ARLIE

So, you think the sorcerer is back again?

JULIETTE

It's quite possible. A man with the power that he had can only be sealed up for so long.

Arlie goes quiet for a moment, then dares to ask what's on her mind.

ARLIE

But what would he want with me?

JULIETTE

He might see the potential in you like I do. After all, if he acquired an apprentice, he'd be unstoppable. He'd have to go through me first, though.

A small smile creeps onto Arlie's lips.

ARLIE

What you did last night was pretty amazing. I'd be toast if you weren't there. Made me realize how much I still need to learn.

JULIETTE

That's what I'm here for.

ARLIE

To be a human shield?

JULIETTE

You know what I mean.

Juliette pushes Arlie's shoulder playfully. The two sit in silence for a moment. Arlie conjures up a light orb and passes it between her hands.

ARLIE

Apparently my sister is coming to visit this weekend.

JULIETTE

Oh? That's a little short notice, don't you think?

ARLIE

I guess she was able to get off of work so she wanted to stay with us for a few days. Her fiancé, Will, is coming too.

Juliette noticeably stiffens. She forces a smile.

JULIETTE

Well, it'll be nice to meet both of them.

Arlie sends her a sidelong look.

ARLIE

When are you going to tell me what happened?

The stiffness leaves Juliette's body as she slouches, saddened.

JULIETTE

I don't know. I just...I'm afraid that if I talk about it, I'm going to live it all over again.

Arlie reaches out to touch her shoulder comfortingly.

ARLIE

It's okay. I didn't mean to press. I just want you to know that I'm here to listen.

JULIETTE

Thank you.

Juliette gives her a sad smile. Arlie squeezes her shoulder.

INT. ARLIE'S HOUSE - A COUPLE DAYS LATER

Arlie's parents bustle around the kitchen, prepping the night's dinner. Juliette is vacuuming in the living room; pictures, books, and decorations alike float in the air as a small SWIFFER DUSTER picks up dust from the bookshelves and coffee and side tables.

Arlie comes running down the stairs and sweeps into the kitchen, looking for her next task.

ARLIE

Vanessa's room is ready to go. Has the table been set yet?

Arlie's mom swipes diced tomatoes into a salad bowl as she acknowledges her daughter.

MOM

No, would you mind doing it? Your sister will be here soon.

ARLIE

Should I get out the china set?

MOM

And the red tablecloth. Both are still in the hutch.

Arlie gives a brisk nod and heads into the dining room.

She steps into the room and eyeballs the dark wood hutch. This would be risky, but...

Arlie closes her eyes and stretches out her hands. She feels for the china and tablecloth.

The bottom cabinets of the hutch open, and the red tablecloth flutters out. It unfolds as it makes its way to the table, drapes over the polished wood. The china set follows: six plates, bread plates, and salad bowls flow out and place themselves onto the table.

A drawer in the hutch pulls open and silver utensils dance out and place themselves around the dinner sets.

Arlie puts her hands down and opens her eyes. It's perfect. She stands there for a moment, sighs.

ARLIE

At least I can set a table.

INT. FOYER - 30 MINUTES LATER

A KNOCK sounds at the front door, and it opens. VANESSA (22), the incredibly put together older sibling, and WILL (23), a big teddy bear despite his large stature, step in, bags in hand.

VANESSA

(very chipper)

We're here!

Arlie comes running and tackles Vanessa in a hug. Vanessa laughs and hugs her right back.

Arlie's parents follow just moments later, each embracing Will while Vanessa is occupied with Arlie. When Arlie moves to hug Will, her parents greet Vanessa.

Juliette tentatively trails in after a minute.

Arlie's parents immediately come to her side and introduce her to Vanessa and Will. Juliette greets both with a firm handshake and a smile. It seems genuine.

INT. DINING ROOM - 15 MINUTES LATER

Dinner is being passed around as everyone chatters. Vanessa's RED SUITCASE casually rolls into the room and bumps against the side of her chair. She looks down, a serving bowl still in hand.

VANESSA

You know where to go, you oaf. It's the same place as always.

The suitcase grumbles and turns around, rolling back in the direction of the foyer. Vanessa watches it go with a funny look. Arlie, who is seated beside her sister, nudges Vanessa with her elbow.

ARLIE

Who needs a dog when you have an enchanted suitcase?

VANESSA

Can you imagine? A dog would have a field day chasing that thing around!

Vanessa finally passes the serving bowl across to Will, who thanks her with a smile.

VANESSA (CONT'D)

Speaking of all things magical, how's training going?

ARLIE

It's great! Juliette is a really good mentor.

Arlie smiles at Juliette, who is sitting on her other side. Vanessa leans forward a little to see her better.

VANESSA

Arlie's told me a lot about you, you know.

JULIETTE

Oh? Only good things I hope.

VANESSA

Very. I'm glad someone's taken her under their wing.

(MORE)

VANESSA (CONT'D)

I know a lot about magic, but obviously it wasn't enough for me to recognize that we had another witch in the family.

Vanessa lightly ruffles Arlie's hair, a guilty look on her face.

VANESSA (CONT'D)

(to Arlie)

Your powers must've been buried pretty deep for us to miss it.

Arlie gently pushes her hand away.

ARLIE

Yeah, but like I told Mom and Dad, it's okay. Better late than never, right?

Juliette clears her throat, just soft enough for Vanessa to hear it.

JULIETTE

Arlie is the best student I've had. She's learning quickly and accelerates in her magic studies.

Arlie shoots Juliette a grateful look. The corner of Juliette's mouth twitches into a smirk.

VANESSA

(with a smile)

I'm very glad to hear it! What about you Juliette? Mixed Blood Spellcasters aren't very common.

JULIETTE

Yes, I suppose you could say I'm an oddity. I have been fascinated by the arcane arts since I was a little girl. My curiosity ultimately turned into a lifelong pursuit of knowledge.

VANESSA

That's pretty cool. If you don't mind, I'd love to sit in on a training session while I'm here. I'm sure I could still learn a thing or two.

ARLIE

That'd be fun! What do you think, Juliette?

JULIETTE

I don't see a problem with it. You know I enjoy sharing my knowledge.

Arlie and Vanessa smile at each other, excited. Juliette, on the other hand, doesn't look very thrilled. She pokes at a green bean on her plate and places it in her mouth.

Arlie's mom, who had been talking to Will and Arlie's dad, chimes in

MOM

Vanessa, dear, let me see your ring again. Will said it was a family heirloom?

VANESSA

Yes, it is.

Vanessa stretches her left hand out and Arlie's mom takes it, studying the SPARKLING, VINTAGE ENGAGEMENT RING on Vanessa's finger.

MOM

I can't believe it's in such good condition! (to Will) How long has this been in your family?

WILL

My great-grandfather gave it to my great-grandmother before he went off to fight in World War II. It was his way of saying he'd come back to her safe and sound.

In the middle of taking a sip of water, Juliette suddenly chokes. Alarmed glances get sent her way.

MOM

You okay, dear?

JULIETTE

Yes <cough> sorry. I just <cough> swallowed wrong.

Juliette takes another sip of water. Arlie's mom turns to Will again.

MOM

Where did your great-grandfather fight?

WILL

He got deployed to Europe to help with the Allied offensive. He actually ended up fighting in the Battle of the Bulge.

MOM

Oh my! Did he make it back?

WILL

He did. His right leg had to be amputated, but he came back safe and sound, just like he promised. He and my great-grandmother were married only a month later.

Juliette's glass suddenly shatters, sending her water spilling all over the tablecloth. Arlie is the first to send her a shocked look...and she sees Juliette's face is completely drained of color. It finally makes sense.

ARLIE

Oh my god, I'm so sorry!

Arlie scrambles for an excuse, trying to draw the brunt of the attention away from Juliette. She stands and nervously begins to pick the broken glass up.

ARLIE (CONT'D)

Sometimes my magic just flares when I get too deep into thought. I haven't learned how to get it to stop yet.

DAD

Ah, your mother used to be like that. It's perfectly normal.

Arlie's mom shoots daggers at Arlie's dad. He doesn't notice and casually waves his hand. The jagged pieces of glass and large water spot vanish in an instant, leaving small sparkles behind.

DAD (CONT'D)

We can always get a new one. It's about time we get a new set of glasses anyway.

Arlie smiles nervously over at him and sits back down, relieved her excuse worked. She peers at Juliette, who's still white as a sheet. Arlie reaches for Juliette's hand and squeezes it reassuringly. It takes Juliette a moment to respond, but when she does, she holds Arlie's hand tightly.

EXT. BACK PATIO - LATER

Arlie finds a somber Juliette out on the couch. Her knees are pulled up to her chest and her chin rests down on them. Tear trails stain her cheeks.

Arlie carefully sits down beside her, pulling her legs up onto the couch. She waits a moment before saying anything.

ARLIE

He fought in the Battle of the Bulge too, didn't he?

Juliette nods solemnly.

ARLIE (CONT'D)

That was his last.

It's not a question, but a statement. Arlie deflates when she sees Juliette nod again. More tears spill from Juliette's eyes.

ARLIE (CONT'D)

I'm so sorry, Juliette.

Arlie scoots closer to her distressed friend and leans into her, placing her head on Juliette's shoulder. Juliette moves her head to place it gently against Arlie's. She snuffles. They sit, just like that.

JULIETTE

(a little hoarse)

His name was Robert. He was the sweetest man I'd ever met, and the only man I've ever loved. You know what the best part was? He didn't care that I was a Mixed Blood. A Spellcaster. He adored everything about me.

Juliette reaches for her LOCKET and unclasps it from around her neck. She offers it to Arlie, who gingerly takes it into her hands.

Arlie opens the locket to find a SMALL PICTURE OF ROBERT IN HIS UNIFORM. Juliette was right when she said he was sweet; his kindness seems to exude from the photograph as he flashes his gorgeous smile.

ARLIE

He's very handsome.

Arlie glances up at Juliette, who expresses a trace of a smile as she looks lovingly at the photograph.

JULIETTE

He is, isn't he? You'd laugh at the number of times I caught other women trying to flirt with him.

ARLIE

(poking fun)

Hey, I don't blame them. He only had eyes for you though, huh?

JULIETTE

Ohhh yes. I made plenty of envious enemies whenever we would go out.

Juliette sniffles again, pausing for a moment to continue composing herself.

JULIETTE (CONT'D)

He proposed to me before he went off to fight, too. Promised me we would get married right when he came back. He wanted--

Another sniffle. Juliette wipes away tears trying to sneak out.

JULIETTE (CONT'D)

He wanted to start a family. I did, too. We would talk about it all the time in our letters. He really wanted a baby girl. I wanted a boy. We bet on what we'd have first.

Juliette laughs a little, wiping another tear away.

JULIETTE (CONT'D)

We were able to communicate frequently since I had enchanted parchment on hand. Robert said that it would constantly scare the members of his battalion whenever one of my letters came through. <beat> I still remember the date of his last letter. January 19th, 1945. Just days before the end of the battle. I thought that was why his response had been delayed, because it was the last push towards victory. But a few days turned into a week, and then two. It was the fateful knock on my door that told me what had happened. Robert was gone. Killed in action. I didn't know what to do.

Juliette's hand drops, giving up on wiping tears away. Arlie, who had been listening quietly, also has watery eyes as she takes Juliette's hand and folds the locket back into it. She squeezes her hand tightly.

ARLIE

He's still right here with you, okay? And you know what? He would be so proud of you. Don't ever forget that.

JULIETTE

Thank you.

The two girls sit, leaning on each other for support. What started as a student/teacher relationship was now an unbreakable bond.

EXT. BACKYARD - THE NEXT DAY

Vanessa and Will step out onto the back patio to see Arlie and Juliette hurling spells at each other. It's the most intense training session yet: attacking and defending. Juliette is yelling out commands to Arlie.

JULIETTE

Firestreak!

Arlie throws her hand out, aiming right at Juliette.

ARLIE

Lasi!

A powerful streak of flame tears toward Juliette, who throws up a shield to counter.

JULIETTE

Good! Now, shield!

Juliette launches a ball of raging lightning at Arlie, who quickly conjures a shield to block. The lightning crackles against it.

Will fidgets nervously as he watches.

WILL

Damn, they're really going at it. Is that even safe?

VANESSA

The Dome is up, so yes. I'm just surprised Juliette is already teaching her the basics of dueling.

Vanessa looks on as Arlie conjures a light whip. When Arlie swings it, it takes on an eerie orange glow as a dark stripe races through it. It's almost as if the whip is being pulled from an eclipse. Vanessa's eye widens.

VANESSA (CONT'D)

Oh no.

Juliette notices as well, but doesn't move to block it. Both Vanessa and Will watch in shock as Juliette catches the whip with her bare hand. She clenches her teeth as it sears into her skin.

Not a second later, Juliette's green magic swirls around her arm and rushes down the length of the whip, strangling it. The whip suddenly vanishes in a puff of light, neutralized. Juliette shakes her hand out and looks at her palm.

Arlie runs over to Juliette, alarmed. Vanessa and Will continue to look on. Will is aghast, but Vanessa has a very odd look on her face.

VANESSA (CONT'D)

(muttering to herself)

She shouldn't have been able to do that.

WILL

What?

Vanessa ignores him and steps toward Arlie and Juliette, leaving Will incredibly confused.

Arlie is holding Juliette's hand, studying her burned palm.

ARLIE

Are you sure you're okay? That looks pretty bad.

JULIETTE

Yes, it won't take but a few hours to heal. Perks of being a Mixed Blood.

As she speaks, the singed flesh of her hand begins to patch itself up. Arlie watches, slightly horrified.

ARLIE

God, that's so weird.

VANESSA

You two alright?

Vanessa comes up to the pair.

VANESSA (CONT'D)

Will and I saw what happened.

JULIETTE

Nothing a few hours won't fix. I've had worse.

Juliette shrugs, flexing her healing hand.

ARLIE

Why didn't you block?

JULIETTE

You put a little too much into your whip. It would've smashed right through my shield and hit me.

ARLIE

Oh geez, I'm so sorry. I'm still trying to work on that.

VANESSA

Hey, if it makes you feel any better, I used to do the same thing.

Vanessa places a reassuring hand on Arlie's shoulder.

VANESSA (CONT'D)

You still up for more?

ARLIE

Of course! What's next, Juliette?

Juliette smirks.

JULIETTE

An unfair fight. How much do you know about dueling, Vanessa?

VANESSA

I learned enough to hold my own. I could use a refresher though.

JULIETTE

Good. It's the two of you against me. Shall we continue?

The girls take their positions, Arlie and Vanessa facing off against Juliette.

Juliette once again barks out commands, mostly for Arlie's sake. Cast, shield, counterattack, shield, counterattack. They dance around each other, firing off spells. Will watches from the couch. Where was the popcorn when you needed it?

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Juliette sits on the soft, beige couch of the living room, leaning against a decorative pillow.

She's ironically reading DRACULA, an amused expression on her face as she turns the pages.

Vanessa suddenly comes through the living room archway and plops herself on the other side of the couch. It doesn't surprise Juliette in the least; she was expecting this.

JULIETTE

I met Dracula once, you know. He was visiting some distant kin in London. Quite a pleasant fellow despite what's been written about him.

Vanessa doesn't respond, doesn't even spare Juliette a glance. Juliette sighs and closes the novel.

JULIETTE (CONT'D)

You don't trust me.

VANESSA

You're not a normal Spellcaster. Being a Mixed Blood has nothing to do with it.

JULIETTE

You are correct, but I am not your enemy.

VANESSA

Why are you *really* training Arlie?

Vanessa finally faces Juliette, defensive.

JULIETTE

She needs to be able to fend for herself, just like the rest of you. I could ask you why your family never told her the truth.

Juliette glares at Vanessa, eyes glowing. Vanessa flinches, standing down.

JULIETTE (CONT'D)

Witches and wizards don't *miss* sensing each other. The tension is always there.

VANESSA

We were just trying to--

JULIETTE

Trying to what? Protect her? When did keeping someone from their powers ever go right?

Vanessa falters, looks guiltily down at her hands.

VANESSA

Please don't tell her.

Juliette stands and THUMPS her novel down on the coffee table, done.

JULIETTE

It's not my place to. I just hope you find it in your heart to come clean.

Juliette leaves the room. Vanessa sits, hurt and conflicted.

INT. ARLIE'S ROOM - THE NEXT MORNING

Arlie sleeps peacefully in her bed. The silence, however, is shattered by her PHONE BUZZING on her nightstand.

Arlie starts awake and groans, rolling over with all of her sheets to reach for her phone.

ARLIE

Who the heck...

She looks at her screen to see PEYTON is trying to video call her. Arlie slides her thumb across the screen and the call connects. Peyton's usual, cheerful self appears.

ARLIE (CONT'D)

(groggy)

Peyton, what the hell? It's 7:30.

PEYTON

I know, I know, but I couldn't wait! Ian should be joining in a minute too.

ARLIE

We both know Ian's never going to--

IAN appears on the screen right at that moment, wide awake and apparently outside.

ARLIE (CONT'D)

Okay, I stand corrected. Why on Earth are you up so early?

IAN

My dad and I are helping our neighbors move out. They needed some extra hands.

ARLIE

Ah, I'm sure all that werewolf strength is coming in handy.

IAN

Are you insulting my lupine qualities?

Arlie smiles playfully.

ARLIE

Perhaps.

IAN

Damn. You'd have another thing coming for you if I didn't think you would turn me into a toad.

Arlie giggles. Peyton rolls her eyes on the screen.

PEYTON

Are you two done now? I called because we have important matters to discuss.

IAN

You mean another party? You only get this excited when you're about to throw a big bash.

PEYTON

Exactly! Come on, show some enthusiasm! This one will be a lot of fun.

IAN

Fun as in dealing with drunk dickheads that make me wolf out?

ARLIE

Ian, leave her alone. She already said she was sorry for that.

PEYTON

I didn't know they were going to be like that, okay? They were super chill when I met them. <beat> Look, needless to say, they're not invited. I'm not about to have my costume party ruined.

ARLIE

A costume party is a great idea! It'll fit right in with Comic Con.

PEYTON

Yeah, that's what I was thinking. My parents will be out of town this weekend, so that's when I was hoping we could do it.

ARLIE

Sounds good to me. Besides my training, I don't have much going on. What about you, Ian?

IAN

Ah, what the hell, I'm not about to leave you guys hanging.

PEYTON

Yay! I'll go ahead and get decorations and look at food options. Arlie, why don't you invite Juliette too? I'd love to finally meet her.

ARLIE

Of course I will! We can probably bring some food to the party too. She's a really good cook.

PEYTON

Perfect! I'll let you know what to bring.

Peyton pauses, listening for something outside of the call.

PEYTON (CONT'D)

I think I'm being summoned, so I should probably go. Talk to you guys soon?

ARLIE

Sounds good!

IAN

(with a salute)

See ya.

Arlie and Peyton wave goodbye and the call disconnects. Arlie places her phone back on her nightstand, lies there for a moment, then rolls over again. She shuts her eyes, scraping at another hour of sleep.

EXT. BACKYARD - AFTERNOON

Arlie and Juliette are back at it again. Spells fly as they attack and defend. Vanessa watches from the patio couch, her arms crossed.

Will steps out onto the patio and over to Vanessa. She looks up at him and he bends over to give her a kiss.

VANESSA

Is everything okay at work?

WILL

Nothing is on fire, so I'd say they're holding the fort down.

Will plops down beside Vanessa, nods in Arlie and Juliette's direction.

WILL (CONT'D)

How's the session been?

VANESSA

Arlie's improving by leaps and bounds. She's already better than she was yesterday, and that's a feat to accomplish. I hate to admit it, but Juliette's trained her well.

Will studies her face for a moment.

WILL

You still don't like it.

VANESSA

It's just...this wasn't supposed to happen, that's all.

Will reaches out and wraps his arm around her shoulders, rubbing her arm comfortingly.

WILL

She'll be okay. She's strong.

VANESSA

I know. That's what I'm afraid of.

Will sends Vanessa an odd look, but doesn't ask. He keeps rubbing her arm as they watch the duel.

Juliette looks as if she's really testing Arlie. Tendrils of fire snake around her arm and she thrusts it forward, releasing a torrent of blazing fire.

Arlie is quick to retaliate; she casts Cyclone Force and throws her fist forward, sending a booming wall of wind at the stream of fire.

The wind collides with the fire and shoves it backwards towards Juliette in a storm, forcing her to throw up a strong shield to avoid impact.

When the firestorm clears, she has a small smile on her face.

JULIETTE

That was a smart counterattack, but your opponents won't always play fair!

Juliette slams her hand into the ground and a green pulse rages over it. The ground shakes a little. Arlie is given no time to react before roots spring out of the ground around her and trap her where she stands.

Somehow, Arlie doesn't panic. She wiggles around, stops, closes her eyes. She could get out of this. Just watch.

Her core is buzzing with life, completely energized. She feeds off of it.

Arlie's body begins to take on a strange glow, slowly growing brighter and brighter. Her fists clench and her arms tense against the roots. The roots begin to crackle and smoke like wood in a fireplace.

Arlie can feel the roots' weakness as she burns through them. One more moment and...CRACK! The roots shatter as she breaks them off of her, revealing her full, eerie luminescence. Another moment and she's launching an attack right back at Juliette, pulsing, eclipsed light raging forth.

Juliette's eyes widen in shock and she throws up a blazing shield. The torrent of light smashes against it ruthlessly, and the shield immediately begins to split. She grits her teeth and tries to hold it, but the power is too much.

Juliette's shield shatters and the light bowls into her, sending her flying backwards. She lands flat on her back and doesn't get up.

WILL

Holy shit.

Will is on his feet in a second, running to make sure Juliette's okay. Vanessa, who has a a hard look on her face, doesn't follow.

Arlie stumbles a few steps forward as her glow fades and puts a hand to her head.

It takes her a second to realize what she's done, but when she sees Juliette she's horrified. She sprints over to her and falls to her side.

ARLIE

Oh my god...oh my god...

Juliette had been hit directly in the torso. Her shirt is completely burned away chest down, revealing her charred flesh. She's wincing with every breath but is still conscious.

Will, who is on Juliette's other side, is frantic.

WILL

What do I need to do? Should I call 911?

ARLIE

I don't know! I don't know. Juliette, please talk to us.

Arlie is on the verge of tears as she takes Juliette's hand and clutches it to her chest. Much to her relief, Juliette's hand tightens around hers.

JULIETTE

(wheezing)

Both of you...calm down...please. I just...need a minute.

Arlie nods, but doesn't let go of Juliette's hand. She spies Juliette's flesh once again repairing itself, but this time it seems agonizingly slow.

After a few minutes, Will and Arlie are able to get her to her feet. They help her up to the patio, where Vanessa's narrowed gaze instantly clashes with Juliette's.

Vanessa catches Will's hand before they get too far. Arlie nods her head, she's got Juliette. Will pulls back, turns to his fiancée. One look is all he needs to deduce something is up.

WILL

I'll go unpack the bags.

Vanessa nods sheepishly. Will squeezes her hand and kisses her before heading inside. Vanessa wraps her arms around herself, bites at her thumbnail.

EXT. BACK PATIO - NIGHT

Juliette sits peacefully on a cushion, meditating. She's wearing a CROPPED T-SHIRT that reveals the BANDAGES wrapped around her torso.

The patio door slides open and Vanessa steps out. She purposefully strides forward, her multi-colored magic swirling about her. She stops right behind Juliette.

JULIETTE

I'd stand down if I were you.

Vanessa holds firm.

VANESSA

You need to stop.

JULIETTE

No.

VANESSA

Excuse me?

JULIETTE

I said *no*.

The piercing glance Juliette sends over her shoulder is nearly enough to scare Vanessa's magic right out of her. Those glowing eyes are horrifying. She tries to stand firm, using her anger as a vessel.

VANESSA

Are you insane? Did you already forget about what happened to you earlier?

JULIETTE

Well, I'm not dead, am I?

VANESSA

That's not the point! This is exactly why we never told Arlie about her magic. She can't handle that power!

JULIETTE

I'm not sure you understand the gravity of the situation.

VANESSA

The gravity? *What* gravity? For all I know you're just exploiting my sister for her power!

Juliette suddenly lets out a disdainful laugh and slowly gets to her feet, turning to face Vanessa head on.

JULIETTE

Or maybe I'm trying to keep someone else from doing that. Tell me, have you ever seen destruction? True destruction?

Juliette starts stepping toward Vanessa, forcing the witch to move back.

JULIETTE (CONT'D)

Have you ever seen entire cities burn? Witnessed the slaughter of thousands of innocent civilians? Watched as everything you know is torn to pieces?

Vanessa shakes her head. Juliette stops approaching her.

JULIETTE (CONT'D)

Well, *I have*. It wasn't starvation that pulled me from my grave, and I'm not here purely by coincidence. If it weren't for my interference, Arlie would already be in the wrong hands.

Vanessa starts relaxing, realization dawning on her.

VANESSA

Erebus.

Juliette nods slowly. Vanessa meets her gaze.

VANESSA (CONT'D)

You're her protector.

JULIETTE

I am.

The two women gaze at each other, finally coming to a silent understanding.

INT. KITCHEN - THE NEXT MORNING

Arlie strolls into the kitchen, surprised to see Juliette pulling a heavenly-looking FRENCH TOAST CASSEROLE out of the oven. She places it on the stove so it can cool off as Arlie sits at the island.

Juliette glances over her shoulder as she takes her OVEN MITTS off.

JULIETTE

What do you think?

ARLIE

It looks great but...shouldn't you be resting in bed?

JULIETTE

Oh, nonsense. My wounds are already almost healed.

She says this, but Arlie notices she still struggles as she reaches into a cabinet to get TWO PLATES out.

ARLIE

Juliette, I think we should take a break. What happened yesterday really scared me. I don't want to hurt you again.

Juliette sighs.

JULIETTE

You're lucky I agree. I realize I've been pushing you a little too hard. Why don't we take this week off?

ARLIE

Please? I have some other things in mind that we could do.

JULIETTE

I'm listening.

Juliette grabs a SERVING SPOON from a drawer and scoops out her piece of casserole. It steams as she puts it on her plate.

ARLIE

Peyton's hosting an end of the summer costume party this Friday. I offered to bring food since I know you're such a good cook.

Juliette scoops Arlie's piece of casserole onto the other plate, grabs both plates, and makes her way around the island to join Arlie.

JULIETTE

Is that the only reason I'm being invited?

ARLIE

Of course not! I thought it would be more fun if we both went. Besides, Peyton and Ian want to meet you.

JULIETTE

I would like to meet them as well. I just have one question...do I *have* to dress up? I always thought it odd pretending to be something I'm not.

ARLIE

Juliette, you'd be crazy to show up without a costume. We are *definitely* getting you one.

VANESSA

What are you buying costumes for?

Vanessa and Will suddenly walk into the room, both still in their PAJAMAS. Arlie is visibly surprised while a flash of annoyance crosses Juliette's face.

ARLIE

I thought you guys were leaving today.

Will immediately goes to the casserole, starving. He pauses before getting a plate out and glances at Juliette, pointing at the dish as if to say "can I?" Juliette nods at him. He digs in.

Vanessa shrugs as she pauses in front of the sink, leaning back against it.

VANESSA

We're opting to stay. We decided we both needed a longer break. Besides, I figured Mom could help us with some wedding planning.

ARLIE

What about work?

WILL

We've been smart about saving time off.

Will turns around, a heaping serving of casserole on his plate. He moves over so Vanessa can get some too.

WILL (CONT'D)

Figured it was better to use it now while things are quiet. Like Ness said, it'll give us time to sit down and solidify plans.

Vanessa gets a plate out and goes to scoop her share of casserole, but the dish suddenly jerks to the left, preventing her from doing so.

She lets out an annoyed sigh, sets her plate aside, and tries to scoop out a serving again. When the dish jerks back to the right, she catches it, pinning it to the counter.

Will glances over at her.

WILL (CONT'D)

You okay?

Vanessa gives him a forced smile.

VANESSA

Yeah, the dish just seems a little slippery today.

He obviously doesn't buy it, an eyebrow raised, but turns away anyway with a decisive huff and goes to the kitchen table. Witches.

Vanessa sends daggers over her shoulder at Juliette, who keeps eating her casserole. There's a smirk on her face. Arlie, who is slightly confused, tries to break the awkwardness.

ARLIE

Sooo, how'd everyone sleep last night?

INT. LIVING ROOM - A FEW HOURS LATER

Arlie sits on the couch scrolling on her LAPTOP. She's going through various costumes, trying to find something to her liking.

She scrolls past a witch costume, pauses, goes back to it.

ARLIE

Well, that's kind of cute.

She clicks on the costume. A larger picture pops up next to the cost and sizes. She checks that there's a small.

ARLIE (CONT'D)

Guess I'll just pull a Marnie Piper.

She adds the costume to her cart, which already has another item in it. Juliette wanders into the room then, plopping down beside her with a BOOK in hand.

JULIETTE
Have you found anything?

Arlie turns to her, excited.

ARLIE
Yes, but forget about me. Look what I
found for you!

Arlie turns her screen to show Juliette a costume. Shock registers on Juliette's face.

JULIETTE
You want me to wear *that*?

ARLIE
Hey, you're the one that said you find it
odd dressing up as something you're not.

Juliette glares.

JULIETTE
I'm not putting that on.

INT. ARLIE'S ROOM - DAY OF THE PARTY

Juliette stares at herself in Arlie's FULL BODY MIRROR. She's in a SEXY VAMPIRE COSTUME with her HAIR DOWN AND CURLED, SHADOWY MAKEUP done.

JULIETTE
I can't believe I'm doing this. <beat> I
look like Dracula's ex-wife.

Arlie, who's in the middle of perfecting her PURPLE LIPSTICK, nearly smudges it from breaking into a laugh.

ARLIE
I didn't even know he had a wife. I take
it she was a temptress?

JULIETTE
Oh, she was *horrible*. Makes me feel weird
wearing this.

Juliette turns in the mirror, studying herself. Arlie faces her for a moment, wiggling her eyebrows.

ARLIE
Hey, you know who would've liked it?

JULIETTE
Who?

ARLIE

Robert.

Juliette's face flushes, her cheeks the pinkest they've ever been.

JULIETTE

Arlie!

Arlie laughs again.

ARLIE

Sorry, sorry, I had to.

Juliette makes a face at her, then glances back in the mirror.

JULIETTE

He would certainly tell me I've outdone myself this time...but that it looked good all the same.

The look on her face is soft as she touches her locket. Even after seventy-five years, her devotion is pure. Arlie admires her.

ARLIE

I hope I find a love like yours someday.

Juliette smiles at her.

JULIETTE

It's rare, but you will. I don't need my intuition to tell me that.

ARLIE

Thanks.

Arlie smiles back and Juliette gives her a little wink.

JULIETTE

I'm going to go check on the cupcakes. They should be cool enough to frost now.

ARLIE

I'll be down in a minute. I just need to finish my makeup.

Juliette vanishes from the room in a flurry of green magic. Arlie gazes at the spot where she had been.

ARLIE (CONT'D)

I really need to learn how to do that.

She turns back to her mirror and puts on the finishing touches, then places her WITCH HAT on her head. Arlie snaps her fingers and the lights around her mirror turn off. She stands up and begins to walk towards her door, but pauses. If only she could remember the word that Juliette had uttered...

Suddenly, it hits her.

ARLIE (CONT'D)
Hopefully this works...

Arlie closes her eyes and settles herself, imagines appearing in the kitchen.

ARLIE (CONT'D)
Tarais.

She vanishes from the room in a flurry of light.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Arlie appears in front of the island in the same whirlwind of light, stumbling a little from the sensation. Juliette looks up from delicately frosting one of the cupcakes, finally surprised for once.

Arlie glances down at herself, then at Juliette, and a huge smile breaks out on her face.

ARLIE
Did you see that?

JULIETTE
I guess that's my cue to teach you higher level spells. I'm impressed.

ARLIE
(with a gasp)
Can I learn how to throw fireballs now?!

JULIETTE
Asks the girl who's worried about hurting me again.

Arlie puts a finger up to defend herself, then stops.

ARLIE
You have a point.

Juliette sends her a look that says "of course I do." Arlie relents and goes around the island to watch Juliette decorate the cupcakes.

Juliette has multiple frosting colors in squeezable bags on the counter and is giving each cupcake its own touch by creating a variety of different flower designs. When she's finished, it looks like an entire garden.

Arlie shoots her a pointed look.

ARLIE (CONT'D)

Will you just open a bakery already?

Juliette laughs.

JULIETTE

I suppose I'll look into it. Go take the other stuff out of the fridge so we can head to Peyton's.

Just as Arlie heads to the fridge, Vanessa comes into the room and pauses at the corner of the island.

VANESSA

You guys look great.

Juliette glances at her and scoffs as she tosses her frosting bags into the trash.

JULIETTE

Ah yes, because this is exactly how creatures like us dress on a daily basis.

VANESSA

It's the twenty-first century, Juliette. Have a little fun for once.

JULIETTE

I *do* have fun, thank you very much. You just haven't been around for it.

Juliette goes to grab the cover for the cupcakes. Vanessa crosses her arms. Arlie, who's trying to ignore them, pulls a colorful fruit salad and homemade chili dip out of the fridge.

VANESSA

Well, I actually happen to have a life, so excuse me for not being present all the time.

Juliette pauses from placing the cover over the cupcakes. She closes her eyes, takes in a breath and lets it out. She holds her tongue.

Arlie closes the fridge door and glances between Vanessa and Juliette.

ARLIE

What the hell is with you two?

VANESSA AND JULIETTE

Nothing.

Juliette and Vanessa send irritated glares at each other and Arlie rolls her eyes.

ARLIE

Well, I have a party to attend, so if you'll excuse me...

Arlie waves her hand and each food dish lifts off of the countertop. She strides past Vanessa and makes her way to the front door, the dishes trailing after her.

ARLIE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Juliette, are you coming?

Juliette sighs and drags herself around the island. She goes to pass by Vanessa as well, but Vanessa grabs her arm.

The women stare at each other for a moment.

JULIETTE

We're going to be fine.

Vanessa's jaw clenches but she relents, releasing Juliette's arm. Juliette turns away and heads to the front door. Vanessa watches her disappear through it.

EXT. PEYTON'S MANSION - ABOUT 30 MINUTES LATER

Arlie and Juliette step up to Peyton's front door. Music can be heard THUMPING from the backyard.

Arlie knocks on the door. It takes a second, but FOOTSTEPS can be heard running up to it. The door clicks open to reveal Peyton, who's COSPLAYING DAENERYS TARGARYEN FROM GAME OF THRONES. A bright smile immediately crosses her face when she sees her best friend.

PEYTON

Arlie!

The two wrap each other in a tight hug. When they let go, Peyton turns to Juliette and offers Juliette her hand.

PEYTON (CONT'D)

And you must be Juliette! I'm Peyton.
It's nice to finally meet you.

Juliette smiles warmly at her and shakes her hand.

JULIETTE

It's a pleasure to meet you as well.
Where is your other friend?

PEYTON

He's out back! Come on, I'll take you to
meet him.

Peyton ushers Juliette and Arlie through the door and
closes it behind them.

INT. PEYTON'S MANSION - CONTINUOUS

The mansion's interior is elaborately built. Lavish
archways accent room entrances, old wallpaper captures
the charm of a time now lost, expensive pieces of art
adorn decorative tables, the corners, and the walls.

Juliette looks around wondrously as Peyton leads the way
to the back of the mansion. She runs her hand along one
of the walls.

JULIETTE

This is just as I remember it.

Peyton glances over her shoulder.

PEYTON

You've been here before?

JULIETTE

Yes, a long time ago. I knew the old man
that used to own this property. He
enjoyed having me over for tea, and we
would talk of many things. Say, is he
still around?

Peyton's face pales a little.

PEYTON

Still around?

JULIETTE

It seems his soul was quite unsettled. I
heard this place was left abandoned for a
little while because of it.

ARLIE

(to Peyton)

I don't suppose that would explain why objects suddenly go missing and turn up in the strangest places?

PEYTON

It would certainly explain the rustling noises I hear in the drawing room from time to time.

JULIETTE

Ah, yes, that was his favorite room.

PEYTON

Gotta love haunted mansions...

The trio cuts through the kitchen, which is filled with multiple food and drink options. Arlie, who still has the three food dishes floating around her, pauses and levitates them onto the counter while Juliette and Peyton slip through the sliding glass doors and into the backyard.

Arlie is about to follow when she spies the punch bowl over on the kitchen table. Snack options are littered all around it, from chips to Cheez-Its.

ARLIE

(muttering to herself)

I told her not to do this again...

Arlie wanders over to the punch bowl and peers into it, watching her reflection on the red surface for a moment. She waves her hand over it and yellow ribbons snake through the red liquid, indicating another substance.

Rolling her eyes, Arlie moves away from the punch and heads outside to find her friends.

EXT. PEYTON'S BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

Juliette and Peyton have found Ian, who is sporting a legit MARTY MCFLY COSTUME, amongst the crowd of people and are both talking to him when Arlie runs up to them.

ARLIE

Peyton, someone spiked the punch bowl.

PEYTON

Shit, I knew I should've just gotten cans instead.

ARLIE

You think?

Peyton gives Arlie an annoyed look, spares a glance at everyone else.

PEYTON

I'll be right back.

She scampers off towards the kitchen, squeezing through the groups of people. Ian sighs as he watches her disappear.

IAN

She's never going to learn is she?

ARLIE

I'm giving it ten more years.

Both of them laugh. Juliette glances between them, confused.

JULIETTE

What is spiking a punch bowl?

IAN

Basically when someone deliberately adds alcohol or another drug to a drink without anyone knowing. Kids like to do it as pranks to get someone drunk or high.

Juliette looks horrified.

JULIETTE

That sounds awful! The kids I used to know would only ever go as far as throwing toilet paper or egging someone's house...with a little bit of vandalism here and there.

IAN

Well, it *is* the twenty-first century.

JULIETTE

(a little annoyed)

So I keep being told.

Arlie nudges Juliette reassuringly, looks to Ian again.

ARLIE

To be fair, she's still adjusting. How would you feel if your life suddenly fast-forwarded seventy-five years?

Ian's expression grows a little guilty.

IAN

I see what you mean. Sorry, Juliette.

JULIETTE

It's alright. Just remember to be a little more mindful in the future.

IAN

Yes ma'am.

Peyton suddenly flounces back over to the group, looking a little out of breath. She bends over slightly as she comes to a halt.

PEYTON

The punch has been disposed of.

ARLIE

What'd you put out for substitutes?

PEYTON

Water, juice, and whatever soda cans I already had. Most people brought their own beverages too, so I think they'll live. Anyway, now that that's done, who's up for some food? I'm starving!

ARLIE

Well, we didn't bring the chili dip and fruit salad for nothing.

The group begins to head back towards the house.

PEYTON

Oh, forget that! I'm heading straight for the cupcakes. Juliette, you really should think about opening a bakery. Those look *amazing*.

Juliette smiles, shakes her head.

EXT. PEYTON'S BACKYARD - A FEW HOURS LATER

Arlie and Peyton mingle with the crowds, talking to their HIGH SCHOOL FRIENDS. All of them have DRINKS IN HAND and seem to be having a good time.

Juliette, on the other hand, has decided to keep to herself. She takes enjoyment from people watching over by the corner of Peyton's LARGE POOL, and, funnily enough, sips on a GLASS OF RED WINE.

As Juliette surveys the area, she spots Ian on the other side of the pool. He's sitting by himself with his legs dangling in the water and seems to have become a little dejected.

Worried, Juliette makes her way around the pool and comes to sit beside him, taking him by surprise. Juliette slips her heels off and sticks her legs right in the water.

JULIETTE

Quite refreshing, isn't it?

Ian stares.

IAN

So, it *is* just a myth.

JULIETTE

I hate to break it to you, but everything about vampires is a myth.

IAN

You're not even afraid of the cross?

JULIETTE

Of course not. I do respect it, though.

Ian glances down at his hands, fidgeting a little.

IAN

I've never met a Mixed Blood, you know.

Juliette looks at him.

JULIETTE

There's nothing to be afraid of.

IAN

No, I know, you just have a very strong presence. More so because of the wolf in you. It's very...

JULIETTE

Alpha female?

Ian cracks a smile.

IAN

Yeah.

Juliette nods across the pool at Arlie and Peyton, who are still mingling with their other friends.

JULIETTE

Why aren't you over there with them?

IAN

I just needed a little break. Parties aren't exactly my scene, but I didn't want to let the girls down by not coming. What about you?

JULIETTE

I'm sure you can gather that I'm completely out of my element.

Juliette laughs a little.

JULIETTE (CONT'D)

The parties I used to attend were never quite so...rambunctious.

Ian smiles again.

IAN

If you think this is bad, just wait until you see a modern frat party.

JULIETTE

I don't want to know.

The two sit in silence for a moment, watching the hustle and bustle. Juliette takes a sip of her wine. Ian fidgets a bit again.

IAN

Hey...thanks for looking out for Arlie. She always talks about how much fun she's having learning magic, and she told us about what you did back at the fair. That takes guts.

A tender look crosses Juliette's face as she finds Arlie amongst the crowd.

JULIETTE

I haven't had a family in a very long time...I was just doing what I had to in order to protect it.

Ian glances at her, admiration getting the best of him.

IAN

Do you think that, maybe, you'd be able to teach me a few things? I, um, want to learn how to protect her like that too.

Juliette smiles at him.

JULIETTE

I'd be a fool not to. I know how much she means to you.

Ian's face turns slightly red.

IAN

It's that obvious?

JULIETTE

Just a little.

Ian groans and sticks his face in his hands, totally embarrassed. Juliette laughs and tousles his hair.

JULIETTE (CONT'D)

You're a good kid, Ian. You just need to be more confident in yourself.

Ian mumbles something incomprehensible and Juliette just giggles again.

Juliette goes to take another sip of her wine, but immediately stops. Her eyes flash. Something is wrong. Beside her, Ian lifts his head, sensing the same thing.

Across the pool, Arlie freezes from heading to the snack table that has been moved outside. Peyton, who's beside her, stops too.

PEYTON

What is it?

Arlie looks around, her guard up.

ARLIE

I don't know, but something's not...

Someone screams. People start shouting in alarm and scattering, running back for the mansion. Arlie and Peyton both glance up and see a vortex of black magic floating towards the ground. The sphere, however, quickly clears as VEZATHAR, the dark figure in center, throws his hands out to the sides to dissipate it.

ARLIE (CONT'D)

...right.

Dread overcomes both Arlie and Peyton as they begin to back away slowly, watching as Vezathar continues to descend to the ground.

He quickly spots Arlie. Arlie's eyes widen as bolt of writhing dark magic forms in his hand. He wastes no time in launching it straight at her.

Arlie's hands instantly glow with her strange light magic and she throws them up, reflexively conjuring a blazing shield to defend both herself and Peyton. The dark bolt splatters against it, causing the shield to flash with light.

JULIETTE

ARLIE!

Juliette leaps to her feet and tosses her wine glass aside. It SHATTERS on the patio as she flings herself right over the pool. Ian scrambles to his feet as well, following right after Juliette and landing on the other side of the pool beside her.

Juliette immediately shoves everyone behind her, glancing over her shoulder at the girls.

JULIETTE (CONT'D)

Are you alright?

Peyton nods quickly. Arlie looks down at her hands, which are still faintly glowing.

ARLIE

Your training is really coming in handy right now.

JULIETTE

Good. I need you to be ready. Put the Dome up, quickly.

Arlie gives a brisk nod and the white spark sizzles to life in her hand. She tosses it up without a moment of hesitation.

Juliette turns to face Vezathar just as he touches the ground. The black magic swirling around him billows away to reveal his gaunt face and the smirk that sits upon it.

VEZATHAR

Well, well, well, look what we have here. It's much too easy to attract your attention, *Guardian*. You must not have a lot of faith in your student.

Arlie irks upon hearing this. Her magic immediately flares around her clenched fists as she takes a step forward.

ARLIE

You listen here, you son of a--

Juliette calmly holds her hand out to stop Arlie.

JULIETTE

What did I tell you about not getting too eager?

Arlie relaxes ever so slightly, knowing she needs to listen to her mentor. She still keeps her magic swirling around her fists, however.

VEZATHAR

A feisty one, isn't she? I'm surprised you've managed to contain all that power.

JULIETTE

If you've come here to take her, I'm afraid you're not going to get very far.

VEZATHAR

Take her? Oh no, that's the Boss's job. As a matter of fact, I'm here to kill you.

The evil grin that spread's across Vezathar's face sends chills right down Arlie's spine. She looks up at Juliette, who is still somehow calm as ever.

JULIETTE

Ah, how unfortunate. You must've really pissed off Erebus if he's giving you the dirty work.

VEZATHAR

Oh, but my dear, this is the fun part.

That horrifying black magic hurricanes around him again. It makes a horrid streaking sound as it rushes, like the pained cry of lost souls.

Vezathar throws his hands up and pushes them forward, sending a torrent of magic straight towards Juliette. Juliette, fast as ever, retaliates with her own magic.

Green orbs burst to life in both of her hands, pulsing with pure power. Tendrils of magic snake up her arms as she raises them. When she pushes them forward, a river of magic breaks forth, clashing against the dark magic that stampedes towards her.

Both casters push against each other, each trying to overwhelm the other and stop the stalemate.

Arlie, Peyton, and Ian watch in shock. Ian instinctively pushes Peyton behind him as they back away cautiously. Arlie moves slightly in front of Ian, her magic still blazing around her hands. Ian grabs her arm and squeezes it.

Juliette grits her teeth as she pushes back against the evil force. She had never gone up against someone this powerful. Her eyes glow fiercely as she wills her magic to seep into the crevices of the black current, bright green contrasting against the darkness.

Vezathar's eyes widen slightly as he realizes what she's trying to do. He summons more of his dark magic, sending yet another wave forth. It rams into Juliette's magic like a train. The impact is enough to force her back.

She makes a surprised noise, falters, then quickly regains her balance, her temper clearly flaring as wisps of her magic begin to steam from her body.

JULIETTE

Two can play at that game, sweetheart.

Juliette's magic suddenly flares even brighter as she draws her hands back ever so slightly and pushes them forward again, sending a pulse of power out.

It crashes right back into Vezathar's magic, instantly shaking him up. Green lines snake their way back into the dark force, rushing all the way to his hands.

Before Vezathar can react, Juliette throws her hands out to the sides, immediately dispelling her own magic and ripping Vezathar's apart.

Vezathar stumbles back, but quickly regains his balance. Infuriated, he yanks a LARGE, SIVLER STAKE from the depths of his trench coat and launches it straight at Juliette.

Juliette sees it rocketing through the clearing magical mists a moment too late. Before she can react, it slices into her chest and pierces right through her body.

Everything goes still. Juliette looks down at the stake as if not quite registering it's there. She tries to reach for it, her hand shaking, but falls straight to her knees instead, just barely catching herself with her hands. Blood dribbles out of the corner of her mouth. Her breathing is already labored.

Peyton and Ian are both incredibly pale. They stay frozen, not knowing what to do. Arlie is traumatized.

Her whole body shakes. Her magic vanishes from her trembling hands. She takes a weak step towards Juliette, who, though struggling, manages to hold her hand out to tell her to stop.

JULIETTE (CONT'D)
(weakly)
Don't.

Vezathar begins to step towards the fallen caster, menacing as ever.

VEZATHAR
So much for your little show. It's a pity to see that you can be taken out so easily. I was hoping to have a little more fun first.

He pauses mere feet away from Juliette, placing his hands on his hips as if thoroughly disappointed.

VEZATHAR (CONT'D)
I guess you Guardians really aren't as strong as you claim to be. Such a shame. At least the Boss will have fun with his new apprentice.

Vezathar sends a devious glance Arlie's way. Arlie can't help but flinch and move back a step.

Juliette finally makes a quiet sound...and immediately starts laughing. Everyone stares at her with a mix of confusion and shock. Disgust registers on Vezathar's face.

VEZATHAR (CONT'D)
Have you gone mad?

Juliette looks up at him with an amused grin, her fangs fully out. Her green eyes blaze.

JULIETTE
A silver stake? Really? I expected more out of Erebus's right-hand man.

VEZATHAR
What are you saying, you wench?

JULIETTE
It would've worked. Really, it would have, but you forgot about one thing.

Vezathar's lip curls.

VEZATHAR

And what is that?

Juliette slowly gets to her feet and sizes him up. Her joints crack as she clenches her right hand into a fist.

JULIETTE

That I'm also part zombie.

She takes a small step forward and sends her fist straight into Vezathar's torso in one fluid motion. The ungodly strength sends him flying backwards and right into the brick wall surrounding Peyton's backyard.

Vezathar's body connects so hard with it that the brick nearly shatters upon impact. Vezathar immediately slumps to the ground, knocked completely unconscious.

IAN

Oh my god.

Juliette turns around and smiles weakly at the three friends, but collapses back onto her knees again. Everyone rushes to her.

ARLIE

(frantically)

Please tell me this isn't as bad as it looks and you only need a few days to heal.

JULIETTE

I'm fine, I'm fine. This is just a little painful.

PEYTON

A *little*?

Peyton still looks horrified.

PEYTON (CONT'D)

You have a stake through your heart!

JULIETTE

I'm aware.

Juliette finally grabs a hold of the stake. Everyone holds their breath, thinking she's going to yank it out. Juliette's hand, however, doesn't move. Blue light glows from under her palm and transfers to the stake. In the next moment, it turns into water and rains to the ground, leaving Juliette's open wound completely exposed.

A collective sigh of relief goes around as Juliette quickly covers the wound with her hand. She raises her eyebrows.

JULIETTE (CONT'D)

I'm not that vulgar.

IAN

I mean they do it in movies sooo...

Everyone sends and "are you serious" glance Ian's way. He closes his mouth.

ARLIE

What do we do about him?

Arlie nods over at Vezathar, who's still very much unconscious. Juliette looks over her shoulder.

JULIETTE

It seems he'll have someone else to deal with.

Arlie glances over at Vezathar again; Ian and Peyton follow her gaze. Peyton's eyes bug.

Standing in front of the fallen caster is an ethereal being, it's shape a stark white against the night lighting.

PEYTON

Please tell me that's not--

JULIETTE

The old man himself. A welcome intervention, though I do wish it had been sooner.

The ghost sends a look over his shoulder and meets Juliette's gaze. They nod to each other.

JULIETTE (CONT'D)

Restless spirits have the ability to dampen a caster's power while they're around. We need to move while he has enough energy to keep his form.

IAN

Where do we go?

Juliette turns, glances at the kids.

JULIETTE

I have an idea.

EXT. JJ'S BURGER - ABOUT 15 MINUTES LATER

Arlie, Ian, Peyton, and Juliette all stare at the restaurant. Juliette's hand still covers her wound, but this time her palm is emitting green light, signaling that she's using a healing spell.

IAN

JJ's Burger? Seriously?

JULIETTE

There's a reason it stays open this late, my friend. Our assailant won't want to cause a ruckus either so this is our safest bet for now. Come on.

Juliette opens the door to the restaurant and enters. The kids follow behind her.

INT. JJ'S BURGER - CONTINUOUS

The group sits down in one of the booths. Arlie looks around the near-empty restaurant, noticing that they're not getting any of the strange stares she and Juliette experienced when they first met.

ARLIE

There aren't any humans in here.

JULIETTE

Precisely. The human family that owns this property has always maintained 'after hours' for those who feel isolated from the normal world.

ARLIE

Kind of like a safe haven?

JULIETTE

Yes.

Peyton begins to shift uncomfortably in her seat.

PEYTON

Forget about all of that. Can you two please explain what's going on? We could've died!

Arlie glances at Juliette. She knows her too well at this point to miss the look of sheer guilt that crosses her features.

ARLIE

There's a powerful sorcerer that's out to get me. Juliette told me that he'd be unstoppable if he acquired an apprentice, but (directs this at Juliette) that's not all there is to it, is there?

All eyes turn to Juliette as she solemnly shakes her head.

ARLIE (CONT'D)

His henchman said something about 'containing all that power.' What did he mean?

Juliette squeezes her eyes shut for a moment. She takes in a breath and lets it out. Opens her eyes again to reveal the vast emotion swimming in them.

JULIETTE

I didn't want you to find out this way. I wanted you to--

Juliette's breath catches in her throat. Her hand clenches into a fist on the table. Arlie, knowing what happened last time she had a surge of emotion, immediately reaches out and takes her hand, unclenching her fist. Juliette looks at her with sad eyes.

JULIETTE (CONT'D)

I wanted you to experience the excitement of discovering your identity on your own. I was just there to nudge you along and protect you.

ARLIE

Juliette.

Arlie squeezes her hand and looks at her intently.

ARLIE (CONT'D)

What am I?

Juliette struggles to answer. Ian and Peyton share glances amongst the tension then look back at the two girls. Juliette finally breaks.

JULIETTE

You were born during the convergence of the sun and the moon. A time when the powers of light and dark intertwine themselves and find a balance of harmony. Eclipse births are very few and far between.

(MORE)

JULIETTE (CONT'D)

It could be hundreds or thousands of years before it happens again.

ARLIE

But what does that mean?

Juliette pauses again, then relents.

JULIETTE

You're an Eclipse Witch, Arlie. The most powerful witch of your kind. You can command both the light and the dark with a flick of your wrist. Erebus isn't after you because he wants an apprentice. He's after you because he wants to take your power.

Arlie stares, realization slowly sinking in. She can't find it in her soul to be mad or even upset with Juliette for not telling her. She's just lost.

ARLIE

(quietly)

And you're--you're my Guardian?

Juliette holds Arlie's hand a little tighter.

JULIETTE

I am. And I'm never going to let anything happen to you.

Arlie nods feebly. She glances between her friends, who are clearly just as worried. Ian, who's beside her, takes her other hand and laces his fingers with hers. Peyton reaches over and places her hand on top of Arlie and Juliette's joined hands, conveying the same message.

INT. ARLIE'S ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Arlie twitches and shifts around as she wrestles a fitful slumber. DISEMBODIED VOICES begin to whisper incoherently in the dark, torturing her. They get louder and louder until the EVIL LAUGHTER OF EREBUS rings through.

EREBUS (V.O.)

Poor little Aurelia.

The voice is scathing, taunting.

EREBUS (V.O.)

An Eclipse Witch who has no idea of the power she has been given.

(MORE)

EREBUS (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I could snuff out your light with the snap of my fingers, but it's so much better to watch you suffer.

Arlie flails, whimpering in her sleep.

ARLIE

Leave me alone...

EREBUS (V.O.)

What happens when your pesky Guardian can't protect you anymore? You are *weak*. To me, *you are nothing*.

Arlie becomes even more distressed as she tries to tear herself from the nightmare. Her body begins to glow.

EREBUS (V.O.)

You will watch as your loved ones fall before you, and I will have your power. This world will bow to me.

The evil laughter echoes through Arlie's room again, but is suddenly cut right off by Arlie sitting bolt upright. A wave of light explodes from her body.

ARLIE

I SAID LEAVE ME ALONE!

Arlie's chest heaves as she tries to catch her breath in the dead silence. Her whole body shakes and she looks around frantically. No one is to be seen.

Arlie draws her knees up to her chest as tears begin to spill out of her eyes.

Arlie's door swings open as Juliette rushes in, immediately coming to her side. Juliette wraps her arms around Arlie's shivering body and cradles her, stroking her hair to try and calm her down.

Although Juliette's demeanor is extremely gentle, her eyes tell a different story as they blaze into the darkness. She's had enough. She's out for blood.

INT. IAN'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - THE NEXT DAY

Arlie, Ian, and Peyton all sit on the large couch in the living room. Ian and Peyton are gaming their hearts out on Ian's Xbox, their characters running across the TV screen as they look for enemies to shoot.

Arlie has a controller in her hands, but she's not playing. Instead, she's staring into oblivion, almost expressionless.

Ian glances at Arlie while trying to maintain his end of the game.

IAN

Hey, you okay? You've been sitting like that for while.

Arlie doesn't seem to hear him. She just keeps staring.

Ian glances at the game again, then at Arlie. He finally drops his controller into his lap. Peyton, who's still absorbed in the moment, protests.

PEYTON

What are you doing? We're so close to winning! Four more kills and--oh.

She finally looks over to see what's going on and notices Arlie's still manner.

PEYTON (CONT'D)

Arlie?

Ian and Peyton share a worried glance when Arlie still doesn't respond. Ian reaches his hand out and waves it in front of her face.

Arlie suddenly starts, snapping out of her apparent trance. She looks at Ian, blinking.

IAN

There you are. You were pretty spaced out just now. I thought we lost you.

ARLIE

No, I just...

Arlie sighs and rubs her hands over her face, then tugs them through her hair.

ARLIE (CONT'D)

I can't do this guys.

PEYTON

Can't do what?

ARLIE

When I learned I had magic, I was ecstatic because it meant that I still had a chance to do the same things my family knew how to do, if not more. I didn't sign up to be the target of a Dark Sorcerer, and I certainly didn't expect to learn that I'm the most powerful witch in the world. I don't want this!

Ian fully turns to Arlie, holding up his hand.

IAN

Whoa, whoa, whoa, think about what you just said. If you hadn't learned about your magic at all, we would be screwed right now. Erebus would have already taken your power and wreaked havoc on our town. Hell, the world might be destroyed by now.

Arlie looks at him, her expression conflicted. Peyton peers around Ian to chip in.

PEYTON

He's right. I know we can't fully understand the position you're in, but it'd be wrong not to fight back. You can't let Erebus get to you. That's what he wants.

ARLIE

But it's not--

PEYTON

No. No buts.

Peyton stands up and skirts around the coffee table to place herself in front of Arlie.

PEYTON (CONT'D)

I've known you since we were five years old. You have never once given up because of the challenges in your way, and I'm not about to see you give up now. I'm standing here as your best friend and saying I will put everything on the line to fight with you.

ARLIE

Peyton, no, you--

Ian suddenly stands up, taking the same determined stance as Peyton.

IAN

If one member of the pack goes to fight,
we all go to war. You're crazy for
thinking we wouldn't follow you into
this.

Arlie gazes at her friends, torn.

ARLIE

I really appreciate the sentiment, but
you two don't even have--

PEYTON

What, magic? Maybe not, but Juliette sure
as hell made sure we were prepared.

Peyton pulls an ORNATE PENDANT out of her pocket. The
blue gem in the center glints in the light as Arlie makes
out the swirling magic within it. Ian pulls a GOLDEN RING
from his pocket, which has a shimmering crescent gem lain
into it.

Arlie looks between the artifacts.

ARLIE

A protection pendant that lets the wearer
cast powerful shields at will and a
lycanite ring to help the wearer shift
forms easier and faster...when did she
give you those?

IAN

Last night before we left the restaurant.
She told us the artifacts would protect
us when she couldn't.

ARLIE

What do you mean when she couldn't...?

Arlie's face suddenly drains of color as it dawns on her.

PEYTON

What? What's wrong?

ARLIE

We need to go back to my house. Now.

INT. ARLIE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The friends burst through the front door and immediately
run into the kitchen, knowing that's the most likely
place for Juliette to be.

Upon seeing the empty space, Arlie scampers to the patio doors and peeks outside while Ian and Peyton run into different rooms.

Much to Arlie's dismay, the backyard is abandoned too. She steps back inside and slides the door closed with a frustrated sigh. Thinking quickly, she shuts her eyes and reaches out with her magical senses as a last resort, trying to see if Juliette is at least somewhere nearby.

She can't feel her presence at all.

Peyton and Ian run back into the kitchen, frantic.

PEYTON

She's not here.

ARLIE

I know! I know. I can't sense her.

Arlie turns to face them, fear written all over her face.

It's then when Will strolls into the room, looking freshly showered. He stops short when he sees the three friends.

WILL

What's going on? I thought you guys were out.

ARLIE

(frantic)

When did Juliette leave?

WILL

About two hours ago, I think? Why? Did something happen?

ARLIE

Did she say where she was going?

WILL

No, she just mentioned she had something to take care of.

ARLIE

And you didn't think to stop her?!

Arlie's fists clench as her magic flares, igniting around her hands. Will holds his hands up, taken aback.

WILL

Arlie, calm down. If I had known it was serious, I would've--

VANESSA

You still would've let her go.

Vanessa suddenly steps into the room from behind Will. She pauses at his side and offers a note towards Arlie.

VANESSA (CONT'D)

She gave this to me before she left. Told me to make sure it got to you.

Arlie slightly relaxes, her magic vanishing as she unclenches her fists. She steps forward to take the note from her sister and gingerly unfolds it.

The note is written in Juliette's elegant, loopy handwriting. It reads:

Arlie,

I'm so sorry that I had to leave so suddenly. I didn't want to do this to you, but my patience ran out. I suppose I should've taken my own advice about not getting too eager, but it's time for Erebus to pay. After seeing what he did to you, I couldn't sit idly by. He can only torture my family for so long before facing the consequences. I know you're going to want to come after me, but as your mentor, I'm strictly telling you not to. I already lost Robert. I can't lose you too.

Juliette

Arlie's eyes water as she grips the note. Her jaw clenches as she looks at Vanessa.

ARLIE

We need to go after her.

Vanessa stares at her sister, guilt wavering on her features.

VANESSA

I know she means a lot to you, but we can't.

ARLIE

We can't? *We can't?* She's going to *die* if we let her fight alone!

VANESSA

It's not our fight to get involved in, Arlie!

ARLIE

Not our fight? Are you blind? Erebus has been after me for *months*. He's not going to stop until he gets my powers, and that means taking out whoever and whatever gets in his way!

VANESSA

You weren't even supposed to know you had powers!

Vanessa immediately regrets letting it slip. Everyone stares at her, shocked. The hurt and anger are clear on Arlie's face, but she somehow manages to keep her temper from flaring as she glares.

ARLIE

Are you going to help us or not?

Will fidgets beside Vanessa.

WILL

I know I can't understand exactly what's going on, and I hate to say this, but Ness, you owe it to Juliette for watching after and training Arlie. You also now owe it to Arlie for keeping such a big secret.

Vanessa glances at Will, surprised, and then looks back at Arlie, who's hard gaze says she's waiting for an answer.

VANESSA

Okay, okay, fine. Will is right. I do owe it to both of you. And I can't exactly let you kids march into battle alone.

Arlie's gaze finally softens. Ian and Peyton share satisfied glances. Vanessa looks at each of them.

VANESSA (CONT'D)

What do we need to do?

IAN

We have to be able to track down Juliette fast. I'd offer my services, but even a werewolf's nose needs time to work, and we don't have a lot of it.

PEYTON

What about a tracking spell?

VANESSA

It'd still be too slow. I'd suggest teleportation, but because we don't know where she is, it's impossible.

Arlie thinks for a moment. A strange idea suddenly crosses her mind.

ARLIE

Wait, no it's not. Do they keep the carriage horses at the fairgrounds year round?

VANESSA

Yeah, they have pasture space behind the woods, but what do horses have--

ARLIE

That's all I needed to know. I'll be right back. (to herself) *Tarais*.

Arlie disappears out of the room in a flurry of light.

Everyone exchanges confused glances.

EXT. FAIRGROUNDS - CONTINUOUS

Arlie appears in the middle of the now-empty fairgrounds and quickly looks around, spotting the stables back near the tree line. She vanishes again, this time reappearing at the entrance to the stables.

ARLIE

Olwin?

Arlie calls down the aisle as she steps in, but all she's met with is her own echo. The horses must be out.

Arlie wanders back out, rounding the side of the stable facing the woods to see if she can spot a path leading to the pastures. When she notices a small break in the trees, she runs for it.

The break in the trees is indeed the path leading to the pastures. Arlie darts down it, determined to find her equine friend.

As soon as she runs out of the trees, she notices the well-kept aisle that separates two sides of pasture. She glances around, trying to spot that bright white coat. Olwin could be anywhere.

ARLIE (CONT'D)

Olwin!

Arlie begins to jog down the aisle, calling as loud as she can.

ARLIE (CONT'D)

Olwin! I need your help!

A faint whinny echoes through the air. Arlie stops when she hears it, looking between the pastures.

Suddenly a white shape bolts from the tree line in the farthest pasture on the left. A smile breaks out on Arlie's face.

ARLIE (CONT'D)

Olwin!

She runs to the gate as he gets closer. His long horn glints in the sunlight as he approaches. Soon, he's soaring over the fence and standing in front of Arlie in all his majesty.

Arlie reaches up to stroke his face and he leans into her touch, big eyes trusting.

ARLIE (CONT'D)

We've got to find Juliette, big guy.
She's in trouble. Can you get us to her?

Olwin nods his head once in confirmation. Arlie smiles again.

ARLIE (CONT'D)

Let's go get everyone.

Olwin softly blows out of his nose in agreement. Arlie closes her eyes and sees their destination. A spark ignites from Olwin's horn and the pair is gone a moment later.

EXT. ARLIE'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

The two flash into the backyard, catching everyone's attention from inside of the house. Ian, Peyton, Vanessa, and Will all run out onto the patio.

WILL

Well, that explains what horses have to do with this.

VANESSA

No kidding...

Vanessa steps up to Arlie, gazing wondrously at Olwin.

VANESSA (CONT'D)

Arlie, where on Earth did you meet a unicorn?

ARLIE

He's one of the carriage horses for the county fair. Juliette and I met him when we went.

Arlie rubs his neck.

ARLIE (CONT'D)

He can get us to Juliette in no time. Is everyone ready?

Peyton clasps her pendant around her neck as she comes up.

PEYTON

Ready as we'll ever be, I guess.

Ian places his new ring on his finger as he joins them.

IAN

It's now or never.

Vanessa looks back at her fiancé, who approaches cautiously.

WILL

Is there anything I can do to help?

Vanessa places her hand on his chest, lightly gripping his shirt.

VANESSA

Wait for me, okay? I promise I'll come back to you.

Will's jaw clenches slightly before he pulls Vanessa into a hug.

WILL

Please be careful.

VANESSA

I will. <beat> Don't you dare try to micromanage any of our wedding plans while I'm gone.

Will laughs lightly as the two pull away.

WILL
You know me too well.

Vanessa smiles at him. They share a loving kiss before parting ways.

Will watches as Olwin gazes up at the sky and closes his eyes. His horn glows brightly as a flurry of dazzling white magic begins to swirl around the group. In the blink of an eye, they're gone, leaving behind a patch of shimmering air.

Will glances up at the clouds, praying for their safe return.

EXT. AN UNKNOWN LOCATION - CONTINUOUS

The group appears in the middle of a desolate field. Massive mountains dominate the horizon and ominous clouds roll overhead.

Olwin nickers lowly, his ears and eyes keen as he shifts to stand on his guard. Arlie places her hand on his shoulder, feeling just as uneasy as she scans their eerie surroundings.

PEYTON
(quietly)
Where the hell are we?

Peyton grips her new pendant, shifting anxiously on her feet. Ian, who's just in front of her, is pouncing on the slightest sounds and smells.

IAN
I don't know, but we're not alone.

Arlie starts when she finally sees a figure. It's Juliette, standing alone in a void space, waiting.

VANESSA
(slightly surprised)
She's here.

Arlie hesitates, finding herself sensing other, darker magic. She remembers the voice.

ARLIE
So is he.

Vanessa suddenly squeezes her sister's shoulder and forces Arlie to look at her.

VANESSA

Don't you dare show any fear right now.
Remember what you came here for. We're
all behind you.

Arlie gazes at her for a moment, sees the determination and faith in Vanessa's eyes. Arlie's own gaze hardens as she gives her sister a brisk nod. Vanessa nods back.

Arlie steps away from Vanessa and the group, courage racing through her veins as she approaches her mentor. The group soon follows Arlie's lead.

Juliette is quick to hold her arm out to the side before Arlie can stand beside her. She's obviously not shocked, but doesn't seem angry either.

JULIETTE

I explicitly told you not to follow me.

ARLIE

Did you really think a note was going to
stop me?

An amused smile touches Juliette's lips.

JULIETTE

My discipling skills must have tarnished
over the years.

ARLIE

You are quite an old lady.

Juliette lowers her arm and glances over her shoulder, her amused expression still present.

JULIETTE

I hope you're ready to bring that
attitude into this fight.

Arlie finally steps up beside her and cracks her knuckles.

ARLIE

They think I'm feisty, right? I'll show
them feisty.

The two share a knowing glance, the kind that can only be passed between two sisters.

Juliette then glances behind her at the rest of the group, which is now being helmed by Vanessa. Vanessa meets her gaze and they share affirmative, respectful nods.

Juliette turns her gaze to the wide open space before her, eyes flickering between the horizon and the gray sky.

JULIETTE

You've seen my pawns. It's your move.

A strong wind suddenly rushes over the field. The clouds above darken and a black mass thunders down, spilling to the ground to reveal Vezathar, who rises from a crouched position. His eyes immediately lock onto Juliette.

VEZATHAR

So we meet again, my dear. You know, I'm still sore from that nasty blow you gave me a little while back.

He rolls his shoulders as if to loosen himself up and prove his point.

VEZATHAR (CONT'D)

I believe a rematch is in order, don't you?

That wicked smile crosses his face, but he's quickly met with Juliette's scarily sinister expression, blazing eyes and all.

JULIETTE

Oh, honey, I have enough energy to take out *three of you*.

Vezathar visibly flinches, but quickly recomposes himself as he snaps his fingers.

VEZATHAR

Then let's make this more interesting, shall we?

Three more dark, swirling masses suddenly rain from the sky and spill onto the ground to reveal the three cloaked figures who had ambushed Arlie and Juliette at the fair.

Each figure, in turn, whistles out an eerie tune. Ghastly, snarling, jet black wolf creatures appear next to each figure, their red eyes glowing with blood.

Arlie, slightly unnerved by the sight, glances at Juliette to see an incredibly bored look on her face.

JULIETTE

Are you done now?

VEZATHAR

Well, you're no fun today, are you?

Vezathar genuinely seems offended. He lets out a sigh.

VEZATHAR (CONT'D)

Well, let's get this over with. Have to clear the way for the boss, you know?

JULIETTE

Yeah, you have fun with that.

Juliette's raging green magic ignites around her hands. Arlie takes quick notice and copies her, her light magic blazing around her fists.

ARLIE

(to herself)

Well, here goes nothing.

She mentally prepares herself as Juliette lunges forward. Vezathar springs to meet her. The cloaked figures rush forward as well, their beasts on their heels.

Olwin suddenly stampedes by, wasting no time in clashing with one of the creatures. Ian lets out a battle cry and charges forward, swiftly shifting into his large, tawny-colored wolf form with the aid of his ring. He locks into a fierce fight with another of the beasts.

The remaining beast and its master advance on Vanessa and Peyton while the other two cloaked figures rush for Arlie.

Arlie shields as a volley of dark bolts are launched at her, each splattering with a satisfying sizzle against her shield. Her training comes back to her all at once as she quickly summons wind around her fist and retaliates with Cyclone Force.

The two figures stop in their tracks and form a large, dark shield between them. The massive wall of wind collides with it, but the shield prevents it from sending them flying backwards. Instead, it shoves them back a few yards.

ARLIE (CONT'D)

Oh, no you don't.

Determined to lay on the pressure, Arlie runs forward and conjures her light whip, the same black streak racing through it as she launches it forward. It collides with the figures' shield and instantly shatters it.

As the whip fizzles out, the figures scramble to send a dark pulse at Arlie, but she dodges out of the way. Her hands blaze as she sends an unforgiving wave of her power their way. It crashes into them and sends them flying backwards. They land on the ground, smoking, and don't get up.

Arlie stops moving, but slams her hand to the ground. A green pulse runs across the dead grass. The ground shivers slightly and roots spring from the ground and wrap right around the two figures, trapping them down.

Arlie catches her breath, pure adrenaline coursing through her veins.

Nearby, Olwin rages as the beast he's locked in battle with leaps on top of him and sinks its claws into his shoulders and flanks.

When it sinks its teeth into the back of his broad neck, he rears and purposely tips himself right over, crushing the beast under his massive weight. Olwin quickly rolls back onto his feet as it lets go, then pierces its dark body with his horn and flings it right into the air.

Arlie cringes as she watches.

ARLIE (CONT'D)

Damn, Olwin.

PEYTON

A little help, here!

Arlie turns as she hears Peyton's call to see her friend casting a navy shield with the pendant's power. It's holding back the third beast, which is trying to break through it. Vanessa, who's nearest, is locked in a stalemate with the beasts master.

ARLIE

Oh, shit, I'm coming!

Arlie scrambles to Peyton's aid. Upon hearing her, the beast pauses, turns to face her. It snarls and charges.

ARLIE (CONT'D)

(to herself)

For Pete's sake.

Arlie stops in her tracks and points her finger directly at it.

ARLIE (CONT'D)
I can't believe I'm doing this. <beat>
Lasi!

A streak of fire rages from her finger and connects directly with the beast's chest. It explodes.

Arlie lowers her arm and glances over at Peyton, who looks slightly horrified.

Arlie shrugs nervously and is about to move to go aid Vanessa when the last beast goes flying overhead. Arlie looks from it over to Ian. His fur is completely mangled, his whole body littered with bite and claw marks. He slumps to the ground, panting.

Arlie flees to his side, falling onto her knees. She moves to touch him, hoping to try her hand at the healing spell she'd seen Juliette use, but he scoots away with a shake of his furry head.

ARLIE (CONT'D)
You're okay?

He responds with a single nod, gorgeous golden eyes gazing straight at her.

ARLIE (CONT'D)
Just tired?

He nods once again. Arlie's jaw clenches slightly.

ARLIE (CONT'D)
Okay, but if you need me, howl. I have to go--

She's cut off by the sound of a small explosion and sees Vanessa and the last cloaked figure both fly back, their stalemate over.

They both manage to catch themselves, and the figure immediately hurls dark bolts at Vanessa, who casts one of her multi-colored shields in response. The bolts splatter against it.

A pissed expression appears on Vanessa's face as her shield fizzles out.

VANESSA
That's it, you motherfucker. I'm done playing.

Her hand suddenly turns ice blue and she slams it onto the ground. A huge ice sheet erupts from her palm and surges over the dead grass, heading straight for the cloaked figure.

He tries to move out of the way, but the sheet is moving too fast and soon ices his feet in place. The ice races up his body, swiftly turning him into a solid ice sculpture.

Vanessa slams her other hand onto the ground. It shivers and sharp rocks erupt through the ice and tear over the ground, ripping straight through the frozen figure.

Vanessa straightens up, brushing her hands off.

VANESSA (CONT'D)

That's better.

Arlie can't find her words for a moment as she stares over at her sister.

ARLIE

Okay, um, never mind.

Ian makes a funny snorting sound, almost like a wolfish laugh. Arlie glares at him.

Another explosion suddenly grabs everyone's attention. Juliette and Vezathar are still going at it, having just blasted apart from each other.

Vezathar's dark magic curls around him, contrasting Juliette's bright green magic as it swirls around her.

JULIETTE

Is that all you've got, *sweetheart*?

VEZATHAR

Oh no, *dear*, I could do this all day!

As Vezathar pulls his arms back black balls of lightning form in his palms. When he shoves his arms forward, the lightning bursts forth, crackling towards Juliette.

Juliette lunges into the air, completely avoiding impact. A fierce ball of fire surges to life in her right hand, and she launches it down at Vezathar. Vezathar quickly halts his lightning and redirects it at the fireball, causing it to explode midair.

Juliette lands and immediately hurls another fireball, forcing Vezathar to leap out of the way.

When he regains his composure, he sends a volley of jet black ice spikes hurtling towards Juliette. Juliette jumps into the air again and flips over the spikes, grabbing two of them as she rolls overhead.

As Juliette lands, she slams the dark spikes into the ground and sends Vezathar a piercing glare.

JULIETTE

I guess you really can't teach an old dog new tricks.

The ground rumbles and splits where the ice spikes are. Raging cracks stampede to either side of Vezathar and circle around him.

Vezathar grits his teeth and leaps up to avoid the spell, but Juliette is already above him, a huge, angry green orb churning around her fist.

Alarmed, Vezathar casts a dark shield. Juliette rams into him, sending them both flying back at the cracked ground. There's a very loud THUD when they collide with the earth. A massive dust cloud erupts.

When the dust clears, it reveals a shallow crater now carved into the earth. Juliette stands in the center, towering over a defeated and crippled Vezathar. Her magic still rages about her.

JULIETTE (CONT'D)

I told you I had enough energy to take out three of you, bastard. I hope you've learned your lesson.

Juliette's expression is that of a hardened soldier as she goes to turn around, but then her face turns white. There, on the rim of the crater, stands Erebus.

EREBUS

It's a pity really. I was hoping he'd be more useful in killing you.

Since Arlie can spot everything from her vantage point, she sees the interaction.

Horror grabs hold of her whole body.

ARLIE

JULIETTE!

Juliette just barely has time to conjure a shield before a wave of Erebus's raw power slams into her, sending her flying backwards and into the other side of the crater.

Erebus turns around. His dark, scarred eyes fall straight on Arlie. Fear. She's frozen as he begins to approach.

With little warning, Erebus sends another huge rush of power in Arlie's direction. Peyton scrambles in front of her, calling on the power of her pendant to cast a powerful shield. Erebus's magic hammers against it.

The navy shield strains. Vanessa is there, casting one of her shields to bolster Peyton's. Olwin steps up, casting a glittering white shield of his own to bolster Vanessa's.

Then Ian is on all fours. He dashes away from Arlie and through the shields. Around Erebus's torrent of black magic. He attacks from the side, his muscles rippling under his coat as he snarls and lunges.

His fearsome teeth tear straight through Erebus's armor as he tackles him, halting the deadly attack.

Erebus howls in pain as Ian forces his jaw shut even further, biting into flesh as he crushes through the metal. Erebus suddenly latches onto his fur, casting a spell of lightning to shock Ian.

Ian yelps and his grip loosens. Erebus continues to shock him, prying Ian off of his body. Ian flails painfully, but manages to rake his razor claws across Erebus's face, leaving nasty gashes from his cheek to his nose before Erebus throws him to the side. Ian falls limp.

ARLIE (CONT'D)

IAN!

Arlie tries to run to him again, but Vanessa quickly holds her arm out to stop her.

Erebus is already back on his feet and angrier than ever. He approaches the girls and Olwin again, pouring another mass of power at the still-activated shields.

EREBUS

Your friends can't save you, Aurelia!
They will fall one by one at your feet,
and you will be mine!

Peyton strains to keep her shield up, her eyes screwing shut. Her pendant blazes brighter than ever, but as soon as a crack appears in the shield, it begins to crack too.

PEYTON

I can't--hold it--much longer!

The navy shield shatters and so does the pendant. Erebus's power now rams into Vanessa's shield, causing her to grunt in an effort to hold it back. Olwin adds more power to his shield, trying to offer as much assistance as he can, but the effort is futile.

VANESSA

He's too powerful!

Arlie shakes, finding herself unable to act to help. Vanessa's shield splinters. Then Olwin's.

Arlie lets out a cry as Erebus's power washes over them, black as night. Miraculously, Arlie manifests a glowing shield around herself, completely withstanding the impact as she hunkers down.

When the dark storm clears, Arlie reluctantly allows her shield to fizzle out as she uncurls herself and looks around.

Vanessa, Olwin, and Peyton are all lying on the ground, motionless. Tears begin to stream down Arlie's face.

The crunching of the dead grass signals Erebus's approach. Arlie starts, daring to face him. He towers over her, his new gashes doubling his sheer ferocity.

EREBUS

You have nothing left, Aurelia. *Bow to me.*

Arlie trembles. She doesn't comply.

EREBUS (CONT'D)

Bow!

Arlie flinches. She shakily begins to move to do so.

A rush of green magic comes flying out of nowhere, slamming into Erebus and knocking him away.

Arlie looks over and Juliette is there, beat and a little bruised, but still standing. She rolls her shoulders, working out the kinks.

JULIETTE

You're going to have to try a lot harder than that to kill me, old man.

Erebus gets back to his feet with some effort, looking more than a little perturbed.

EREBUS

Every other Guardian before you has
fallen easily enough; why won't you?

Juliette glances over at her fallen comrades and then
meets Arlie's gaze.

JULIETTE

I've got a lot left to live for.

EREBUS

(almost growling)
That'll change very soon!

Erebus powers up again, his deadly magic swirling around
him. Juliette turns her head to stare him dead in the
eye. Her green magic erupts around her like a furious
hurricane. The raw, untamed power of a Guardian.

Juliette pulls her arms back and then thrusts them
forward, sending a massive rush of her magic directly at
the Dark Sorcerer.

Erebus retaliates. His black magic collides with hers and
the two powers pulse in a stalemate.

Juliette pushes ruthlessly, using every ounce of her
being to shove Erebus's magic back. It's not, however,
enough. Erebus pushes back even harder, determined to
finally remove her from the equation.

Erebus's darkness overruns Juliette's blazing magic. She
makes a last stand and morphs her power into a massive
shield, holding back the rush with straining effort.

Erebus conjures a raging dark bolt and launches it
through the torrent. It smashes right through Juliette's
weakened shield and lodges into her torso. She falls to
the ground as it sends a merciless jolt over her body.

Arlie barely registers what's happening.

ARLIE

NO!

She screams. Moves to get up, back to her feet. A wall of
black wind erupts around her, trapping her in a slowly
shrinking circle. Then it spirals above her, creating a
vortex prison.

Everything closes in on her. She frantically looks
around, looks for a way out. Nothing.

Panic. But then, a light.

Arlie's core calls to her. She closes her eyes, remembers her training, and listens. She's roiling with emotions, and so is her core. Her power is begging to be let loose to avenge her friends and family.

Arlie's body begins to take on its golden glow. Her hair floats. When her eyes snap open, they're not her eyes; they're blazing with eerie eclipsed light. Her light magic begins to swirl around her, pushing back on the dark.

From outside the vortex, Erebus notices the change with a start. His dark magic continues to take on more and more of a golden glow. Then, BOOM.

Arlie erupts from the darkness, shining like the sun as she drifts into the air. Massive wings spread from her back, made entirely of eclipsed light. She's almost like a phoenix.

Erebus stands, rooted to the spot and glaring at her in disbelief.

ARLIE (CONT'D)
(a voice that's not her own,
booming, echoing)
YOU DARE CHALLENGE ME?

EREBUS
How?! You weren't supposed to be able to
access your power! You were supposed to
be nothing!

ARLIE
NOTHING? *NOTHING?* I HAVE ALWAYS HAD THIS
POWER. YOU WERE JUST TOO AFRAID TO
REALIZE IT!

Arlie fires a beam of light at Erebus, forcing him to leap out of the way. A charred patch of dead grass is left where he was standing.

Arlie fires another beam, then another, making Erebus almost dance around to avoid being hit.

ARLIE (CONT'D)
HOW DOES IT FEEL TO HAVE THE TABLES
TURNED, *DARK SORCERER?* RUNNING FROM THE
YOUNG WOMAN YOU THOUGHT YOU COULD TAKE
EVERYTHING FROM?

Erebus narrowly avoids another light beam. With a grunt he hefts himself into the air, floating to get even with Arlie as his power builds around him.

Arlie turns only slightly to face him just as he releases a screaming wave of his dark energy, more than he expelled before.

Arlie spreads her arms out and a massive orb bursts to life in front of her chest, raging with her eclipse power.

ARLIE (CONT'D)
YOUR EFFORTS ARE FUTILE SORCERER. YOU
DARED TO ATTACK MY LOVED ONES, AND FOR
THAT, YOU SHALL PAY!

A huge beam of light explodes from the orb. It clashes against Erebus's dark energy with unrivaled force and immediately begins to push it back.

Erebus summons more of his power and sends a volley of crackling dark bolts Arlie's way. Arlie's wings wave just a little and the bolts splatter onto a bright shield that now surrounds her.

Arlie's orb sends out another pulse of energy that travels the length of the light beam before colliding with Erebus's magic and forcing it back. Erebus's magic steams and light begins to seep into it.

His eyes widen a little.

EREBUS
No...

More and more light gets in as Arlie's magic gleams brighter. Black smoke curls everywhere as she overtakes Erebus's power.

Erebus roars, making a last effort to expel everything he has. Arlie's power, however, is too strong. It rips right through the darkness and engulfs Erebus, burning through his body until there's nothing left but the distant echo of his scream.

As Arlie's magic fades away, she drifts back down to the ground and delicately places her feet back on the grass. Then, with a blink of her eyes and a shake of her head, her magic falls away and her knees buckle.

Arlie just barely manages to catch herself on her hands. She groans a little and rubs her forehead. When she finally looks up, she sees that, somehow, everyone is okay and slowly getting to their feet.

Arlie breathes a sigh of relief, but when her gaze drifts over to Juliette, she realizes she's still down.

Arlie heaves herself to her feet and runs to Juliette as best she can. Juliette is flat on her back, the dark bolt still lodged in her torso. Her skin has taken on a strange, gray tone, perhaps signaling the effects of the bolt.

Her body jolts as the bolt gives her another shock. Arlie drops to her knees beside her. Juliette weakly grabs her hand and guides it to grasp the bolt, which sparks in response, but doesn't shock Arlie.

Arlie glances at her drained mentor and back at the bolt. She closes her eyes and focuses on it. Her hand glows and little tendrils of light wrap around the bolt, constrict it, and then dissipate it all together.

A slight shimmer runs over Juliette's body and she instantly exhales a sigh of relief. Her eyes flicker open as her skin slowly reverts to normal.

When her gaze meets Arlie's, she gives her the warmest smile ever.

JULIETTE

I knew you could do it.

Happy tears form in Arlie's eyes. Juliette moves to sit up and Arlie immediately hugs her tightly. Juliette hugs right back.

The rest of the crew hobbles over and everyone collapses next to each other, gently rejoicing and all too relieved it's over.

EXT. DOWNTOWN WILEYVILLE - 6 MONTHS LATER

Downtown is busy as ever. People are bundled in their winter attire as they bustle here and there and cars traverse up and down the street. Snow dusts the ground and the buildings.

Arlie excitedly runs up to the CART OF A LOCAL HOT CHOCOLATE VENDOR and greets the shopkeeper warmly. Ian appears behind Arlie, also greeting the shopkeeper as he places his hand on Arlie's back. Arlie smiles up at him.

The shopkeeper hands BOTH OF THE HOT CHOCOLATES to Arlie as Ian digs out his WALLET and pays for them. The three exchange farewells, and Arlie and Ian continue down the sidewalk.

Arlie hands Ian one of the hot chocolates and then wraps her arm around his. They look very content.

The couple stops their trek just before the corner of the street when they notice a YOUNG MAN standing outside of the bakery they want to go into. He's wearing a LONG COAT; DRESS PANTS and clean DRESS SHOES stick out from underneath it. A nice HAT adorns his head.

He seems to be pretty lost as he tries to interpret the MAP he's holding in his hands, turning it this way and that to figure out the streets.

Arlie and Ian share a look. They can't sense anything menacing about him so...they decide to go help him.

ARLIE
(politely)
Um, excuse me?

The young man starts slightly and turns to face Arlie and Ian. Arlie's breath catches as she notices that his face looks strangely familiar. Her words fail her, so Ian continues for her.

IAN
We don't mean to bother you, sir, but we noticed that you looked lost, so we wanted to see if we could help.

YOUNG MAN
Oh, that's very kind of you, thank you. I've yet to meet a single soul around here that's not quite so...rough.

Ian smiles.

IAN
That's just Wileyville for you. Everyone is always focused on their own business. Is there anywhere specific you need us to point you to?

YOUNG MAN
I'm not quite sure, really. Everything has become a little disorienting since I've been gone.

He fidgets a little nervously.

ARLIE
Do you have any friends around here we could take you to?

YOUNG MAN
Ah, yes! Would you happen to know a Miss Juliette Stormwind?

Arlie and Ian share another glance. What are the chances?

ARLIE

Yeah, she's actually right in here.

Arlie moves to the door of the bakery. The custom-made sign on the window reads: JULIE'S CORNER.

ARLIE (CONT'D)

We were just about to go in if you wanted to come with us.

YOUNG MAN

If you don't mind?

ARLIE

Of course not! A friend of Juliette's is a friend of ours.

Arlie opens the door for the young man and he graciously walks in, folding up his map as he goes through the door. Ian then grabs the door like the gentleman he is so Arlie can go inside.

INT. JULIE'S CORNER - CONTINUOUS

The bakery is crowded as usual as the three step in, every table full. Three spots at the counter are already taken, but sitting in the stools are Peyton, Vanessa, and Will, waiting as usual for Ian and Arlie.

They happily converse with Juliette as she brings them their steaming drinks. Juliette is proudly donning one of her own LOGOED T-SHIRTS, her name tag clipped over her left breast.

Arlie and Ian greet their friends as they reach the counter. Will and Ian share a perfectly rehearsed handshake. Arlie plops herself next to Peyton and they share a side-hug.

Juliette pops over to Arlie, chipper as ever as leans her elbows on her side of the counter and wiggles her eyebrows.

JULIETTE

So? How's it going with Mr. Delarc?

Arlie giggles.

ARLIE

It's great! He certainly makes me feel very special.

She sends Ian, who's still conversing with Will and Vanessa, an affectionate glance before turning back to Juliette.

ARLIE (CONT'D)

Speaking of men...someone's actually here to see you.

Juliette furrows her brow.

JULIETTE

Really?

Before Arlie can point the young man out, one of Juliette's employees calls her from the back.

EMPLOYEE

Miss Julie? We need a hand back here!

JULIETTE

Shit, somebody probably messed with the oven's setting agains.

Juliette sighs then taps the counter.

JULIETTE (CONT'D)

I'll be right back.

Arlie nods, then turns her gaze over to the young man. He's waiting anxiously for his cue to come over, so Arlie waves him over.

ARLIE

She'll be back out in a second. They needed her in the back.

The young man nods. He nervously takes off his hat to fiddle with it in his hands. That's all Arlie needs.

ARLIE (CONT'D)

Holy shit.

The young man looks at her, surprised by her sudden outburst.

Steps are heard behind the counter. Ceramic suddenly SHATTERS all over the floor. The young man looks over. His beautiful eyes connect with Juliette's wide green ones. She's completely immobile.

JULIETTE

Robert?

FADE OUT.