

Chapter 3 Ritual of the Hunt

It took a concentrated effort to pry themselves apart after consummating Tabby's apprenticeship and membership in to the Coven of Samhain. They took turns reminding each other of the impending doom on the world which helped keep them focused. Nea and Conach magicked back on their clothes while Tabby got a new set of her own, nearly identical to Nea's except for orange stripes on her stockings and lime green for her top. She made a compelling argument for walking around naked, but Nea thought they still might run into something nasty in one of the rooms. If they did, she figured having something on over her nipples would be better than not.

Returning to the hallway, they felt like they'd walked out into a different house. The plain plaster walls and plywood doors had vanished. The walls had become old, polished wood with a vibrant wallpaper of fall colored leaves on its upper half. The doors looked different from one to the next. The one leading to their new master bedroom was heavy oak carved with small figures in various sexual positions which made Conach grin.

Directly across from them was a door of live honeycomb sealed inside of glass. Bees moved around inside, working diligently. At the center of the honeycomb, they'd formed the word "Kitchen". Conach took charge, leading the trio into a massive room lined with cupboards and shelves. Four stoves lined the far wall, each seemingly from a different century. "Oh, there should be servants," Conach said.

"Like, we have to hire a staff?" Nea asked.

"No. They exist within the house," he said. "Mother used to talk about the cook, Edgar. It was another thing she missed about the mortal realm, or maybe she missed not having to cook."

On the far side of the room, one of the cupboards opened. A massive blob of white dough rolled out, pouring itself onto the floor. Legs took shape, then arms, and finally a blobish head. Spots in the dough hollowed out, forming eyes and a mouth. "Master Croghan? You look younger." As it spoke puffs of dry flour rose out of the gape in its face like breath on a cold morning. It's freakish head turned slightly as it crawled, slug-like, over to them. "No, cannot be. Eyes are different. You're new. Forgive me, I have been asleep for a long time." The thing bent at its waist, doubling over. "I am Edgar. I oversee the kitchens." Instead of rising up, the dough simply reformed again with the top half of his body reemerging from the bend. His hollow eyes turned to Nea. "My new mistress, I presume."

Nea didn't know whether to be horrified or amused. "Yes, I'm Nea. This is Tabby and Conach."

"Conach son of Croghan," he added. "Never thought sentient dough would recognize me."

Edgar's eyeholes widened. "So you're the bun. The last I saw your mother, she was gravely pregnant. Wanted all sorts of things from the kitchen, blamed it on being pregnant with a fae. Stewed snakes and goblin livers. Good to see you grown and strong. Good to see at all." For emphasis a flabby finger jutted out of his loaf like hands to point at his eyes. He turned away from them to survey the kitchen. "Hrmph, things have changed. Things always change. Mistress Nea, how long did we sleep?"

She didn't know how much she enjoyed being called mistress, but she answered, "Five hundred years, maybe more. Is the kitchen not as you remember?"

He puffed out a slow plume of flour. "No, but a kitchen is a kitchen. I will have things in shape in no time, rest assured. What meal? Supper, I think. We'll need some supplies. Pip, Shep, Kap?" At their names three small blobs popped out of his side, forming into miniature men on the ground beside him. "You three know what to do. Old doors might lead somewhere useless, but I expect you back in an hour to report." The three tiny figures gave strange salutes, turned to balls of dough, and rolled out of sight. Edgar turned his attention back to the bewildered trio, "Short notice, but I can have some mutton and beer if you're hungry."

Conach's eyes lit up, "I'm famished. Sounds love—"

"Edgar, do you know how to navigate the house?" Tabby asked. "We're looking for the room with a tablet in it."

Edgar frowned, "No, not any more than I need to. Kitchen's my business. You'll want the steward, Grimbough."

"And how do we find him?"

"Same way you found me, I suppose. He has a room somewhere. Went to it once, I think. Dusty place, hardly any crockery at all." The cook turned his hollow eyes to the various cupboards around the kitchen.

Nea figured they'd gotten all they needed from the dough monster, or at least all they could expect. "Thank you, Edgar. No rush on food. We won't be eating until we find the tablet room."

"Yes, Mistress," he said with another uncanny bow.

The three left him to his work and returned to the hallway. Tabby went to the next door down, one made of tightly bound bundles of straw. "I'll bet my ass virginity that this is Grimbough's room. — Hang on, did I say ass virginity?"

Nea giggled, "Never done anal?"

Tabby blushed, “No, but that’s not my point. I’ve never said ‘bet my ass virginity’ before. I’m not sure anyone’s ever said that before.”

Conach sidled up to her, letting his hand grope her ass. “That’ll be my fault. Have either of you gone a minute without thinking about sex since we met? No? Of course not. Nymphomancy is one thing, being close to a Faebind is another. Sex will infiltrate every thought you have from now on. You get better at controlling it, but not much. The way you move, the way you talk, the way you think — all of it will have sex in the equation.” He squeezed Tabby’s ass. “Really? With this you never tried anal?”

“Believe it or not, the opportunity never presented itself.”

Nea brushed through them, resisting the urge to get distracted for another hour. She opened the door to reveal a small reading room. An old high backed chair sat in the center surrounded by shelves of books and a small table which bore an oil lamp. As Nea stepped inside, the lamp flickered to life. Her heart jumped to her throat as she saw a figure standing on the far wall.

A scarecrow, or something akin to one. The body formed from old oak branches bound together with hair. A long white nightshirt covered the sticks and a rotten gourd sat on top as the head. As Nea looked at it, the gourd’s rot faded away. It rapidly returned to life as eyes, and a grim smile formed across the front. The thing came to life, bending forward with a hacking cough, spluttering up cobwebs and chunks of pulp. When the coughing passed, it stood up straight. From within the gourd, two massive eyeballs rolled down and into the sunken sockets. “Mistress Neacandrax Othelshem, I presume,” the creature said in a croaking voice.

“Grimbough?” Nea asked.

“The one and only,” he answered, bowing with one arm stuck out to the side. “I have been dreaming of you. All of you. Tabatha Longnight, Conach of Fae.”

“Nice to meet you,” Conach said. Tabby smiled while casting worried eyes at Nea.

Grimbough noticed their unease. “I apologize for my appearance and the state of the house. As you know, we’ve been asleep for a long time. I stayed awake as long as I could, putting things in order, but in the end without a mistress, even I had to sleep. The magic is flowing freely again, and the house will be up in shape in no time. If you would allow me a moment to dress, I will be happy to see to all your needs.” With a flick of his stick fingered hand, he gestured to the door.

They stepped out to the hallway, closing the door behind them. Nea adjusted the strap on her tank top to keep her hands occupied. “Everything is a little more...horrifying than I expected. Animated scarecrow that vomits gourd innards isn’t my idea of a good housekeeper.”

“What the fuck were the three little things that came out of Edgar?” Tabby asked in a

hushed whisper. She kept her eyes on the corners of the hallway, making certain no little doughballs overheard them.

Conach's tail inched its way up Nea's inner thigh casually as he spoke, "Are these things uncommon to you?"

She nudged his tail away, "They're not common, no. And they're usually cute instead of grotesque."

The door opened behind them. Grimbough emerged wearing a shabby set of livery. His gourd head had sprouted a small leaf, and he appeared much more congenial. He held a trident candelabra in his hand, "You'll want to see the ritual room. Follow me." With a smooth, if long, gait he led them to the end of the hall, took one turn and stopped in front of a stone door. "Things will sort themselves out to be a bit more logical in a few hours," he said. "In the meantime, perhaps limit yourself to this door as your boundary. With the bedroom, kitchen, and sitting room at the front of the house you should be comfortable. If you need anything else, simply call out my name, and I will appear promptly."

"Wait," Nea said. "You seem to know what's going on. Could you stick around and help us figure out some stuff?"

Grimbough wore an expression of mild shock, "Customs must have changed greatly, Mistress Nea. My last mistress forbade me from the ritual room altogether. For that matter, I do not recall her once asking for my assistance. I would love to be of help, but I'm afraid in regards to the duties behind the door, I remain clueless except in the broadest strokes. I would even venture to remain and offer what help I could if the house were...more stable. As it is, I would beg leave to attend to it."

"Oh," Nea said. "Ok then."

He gave them a curt bow and drifted off down the hallway, carrying his aura of light with him. Conach grabbed the small iron loop in the door and pushed, moving the stone door with surprising ease. He gave the women a furtive glance, and they stepped inside.

Of all the things she'd seen in her time as a witch, the ritual room was the witchiest thing Nea had seen. The walls curved in a massive circle pock marked with little alcoves. Opposite the door, a fire bloomed in a small cut in the wall at the same time that sconces on the wall flickered alive with flame. The fires created a substantial amount of light, making the otherwise cold room feel slightly warm.

In the center, the stone floor curved up to create a large well about four feet high and six feet in diameter. Tabby moved to it and peered over the rim to see a swirling mass of quicksilver. Conach went to the far side of the well and placed his hands on one of the stones, "Here."

The others gathered around him and saw a tablet set into the lip of the well. Once they knew what to look for, they saw five others set equally apart around the rim. None of them understood the language on the tablets, but as they watched, the letters crawled around like worms until the first tablet read, "Ritual of the Hunt." The rest of the squiggles formed a small picture of feral eyes before reshaping into other script. "The racing heart in dark of wood followed close by tooth and claw. A flight from fate does no good as lust hunts on padded paw."

Nea walked around reading the others. "So, six rituals. The Hunt, Blood, Spirit, Fear, the Stranger, and Consumption."

"Consumption?" Tabby asked. "Like Tuberculosis."

"Being consumed," Conach said. "Not like eaten, necessarily, but...sort of absorbed, lost in a thing, losing the self. They're all modes of fear. Nothing gets the Morrigan's wheels turning like scaring the shit out of people. Wait till you see her. Big fucking bird thing most of the time."

"They're numbered, too," Nea said, pointing at the scratch marks at the top of the tablets. "I assume we have to go in order."

"Sure, but what do we do?" Tabby asked. "A picture and a bad rhyme don't really tell us. Conach?"

He pointed at the pool before them. "That's a Witcheye." When they looked back at him blankly, he made a small click of his tongue, put either hand on the rim of the basin, and said, "Show us how to complete the Ritual of the Hunt."

The quicksilver moved, straightening up into a pillar standing out from the center of the pool. After a few seconds it formed into a tiny person who walked in mid air over the basin. The figure stopped, clutched its stomach, and reared back changing into a werewolf. It dropped down to its paws and sniffed the ground as part of the quicksilver separated out and formed a small woman. The wolf figure chased the woman, running around the rim of the basin until the wolf caught her, pinned her to the ground, and — the puppets dissolved into one another. The strange liquid pooled back in the bottom of the basin and resumed its slow, pointless swirl.

Conach rapped his knuckles on the rim, "Werewolf. Simple as that. Find a werewolf, let it hunt, and one ritual down."

"Hang on," Nea said. "What happened at the end? When the wolf caught her?"

"The rituals are a blend of the sensual and the brutal, arousal and fear," Conach answered. "So, the wolf either eats her or fucks her. I think we'd prefer the latter, right?"

"Right," the witches said in unison.

“There’s a werewolf spell,” Tabby said. The others hadn’t adjusted to the size of Tabby’s improved breasts. As she leaned over the rim, they threatened to pop out of her top. “It’s a curse, I guess. Requires a few items, but with the three of us and all that sex power, it should be a breeze. Find someone in a park, hit them with it, and hope they fuck something?”

Nea frowned, “Let’s not be reckless. First, we can infuse the spell with nymphomancy. So, sex werewolf instead of rip out entrails werewolf. And...how does this Witcheye work?” She leaned over and spoke to the swirling mass in the basin, “Show me someone who wants to be a werewolf.”

She expected the pool to rise up again. Instead, it shimmered and flattened out, covering the whole basin. The silvery quality faded, and an image appeared. It focused on a young man sitting on a couch reading a comic book. He looked up as though he knew someone was watching him, but shook it off a moment later, flipping to the next page of his comic.

“Well, that was easy...sort of,” Nea said. “How do we know who he is? How do we cast a spell on him from here?”

“And he still needs someone to fuck,” Tabby added. “Hang on, can it be one of us?”

Conach shook his head, “Not for this ritual, at least. Prey has to be hunted, one of us would just wait for him. Witcheye, show us someone near this guy who wants to be fucked by a werewolf.”

The image shimmered and refocused. The room didn’t change, only the angle. It showed a young woman curled up in a small chair, glasses pushed up on her nose, reading a romance novel.

“Huh, well that’s convenient,” Conach said. “I feel humans have changed a bit since Dear Old Da was here.”

“Yeah, everyone’s a lot hornier now,” Nea said. “Let’s hope they’re not brother and sister at least. Witcheye, who are these people?”

The silvery stuff reappeared near the bottom of the image. “Micah Goodall. Sasha Collins.” Before anyone could ask, the words changed to show an address.

“Well, that’s helpful,” Tabby admitted.

Nea waved her hand over the Witcheye. The image collapsed into swirling nothingness. “Alright, let’s get to work.”

Micah and Sasha spent the next two days with a peculiar feeling of things being slightly

wrong. Doors which should have been shut stood ajar. Their bed seemed a little further from the wall than it should have been. Their dreams came more vividly and with strangely explicit messages. All of which could be safely written off as a gusty old house, bumping the bed frame during the night, and eating some unusual cheese too close to bed time.

When Sasha left to go for a run at nine at night, she didn't know the decision came from little nudges in her thought process. She kissed Micah on the cheek before she left. For his part, Micah didn't know he'd been eating different parts of a potion in his meals over the past two days — a little slythian powder in his coffee, a twig of heartsfall in his salad, a drop of camborian dew in his midnight glass of water. The world seemed perfectly innocent and normal when someone knocked at the door shortly after Sasha left for her run.

Figuring it was his girlfriend having forgotten something and being without her keys, he trotted over and opened the door. Instead of Sasha he saw Nea. The witch smiled apologetically as she held up a blackened bone. "Sorry about this. It'll be fun in the end," she said. Before Micah could answer, she snapped the bone in half sending a plume of pink and purple dust into Micah's face. After he blinked, she'd vanished.

For a few moments, Micah thought he'd gone crazy. He'd seen a woman dressed like a slutty witch, but as he leaned out into the small yard, he saw no sign of her at all. A small residue of bizarre dust lingered on his door, though, and he felt strange. Suddenly unnerved, he closed the door and locked the deadbolt, intending to get dressed and go find Sasha.

He made it to the kitchen before the first twinge of pain shot through his gut. Micah's legs weakened. He grabbed the kitchen counter to steady himself. A flurry of smells clouded his head. He focused on one, *Sasha*. Looking down at his hands, he saw thick black hairs pushing out from the skin. His mouth hung open with shock as a dull ache settled in his jaw.

Micah didn't know what to do. He couldn't think straight between the sharp jabs of pain throughout his body and the clouding scent of his girlfriend in his head. *Not only Sasha... Sasha's pussy, wet and gushing against my tongue.* Black claws erupted from underneath his fingernails, shoving aside the bloody keratin with sharp, fleeting pain. Micah tried to scream, but only a high pitched whine came from his throat. *What the fuck is happening to me?*

Except he knew, it was a dream he'd had a thousand times, a scenario he'd played out over and over again. He grabbed a nearby steel pan and held it up to his face, not surprised to see black hair covering an elongated nose. Human teeth fell out in a bloody gush as canine fangs erupted from his gums. The muscles in his arms and hands seized. The pan clattered to the ground as he dropped to his knees. He tried again to scream, but only a choked growl came from his lips.

Sweat soaked through his shirt as his chest expanded, rippling with new, different muscles. His pants ripped down the seam as his quads bulged. Tendons snapped and reformed. The human Micah wanted to take back all his silent wishes, but a wolfish brain grew louder and louder. *Hunt. Find her. Take her. Mate her. Fuck her till she screams for it.* He yowled a

piercing, single note as his feet broke and reformed into clawed paws.

Drool oozed from his muzzle as a lump formed at the base of his spine. It writhed under his skin as his whole body twisted and bent, adjusting to its new shape. When his tail erupted forth, it came as a relief. Within seconds, it was two feet long and covered in the same thick, wiry hair as the rest of his body. It wagged slowly back and forth over his firm ass as he turned his attention to a sudden pleasure between his legs.

Everything else hurt, but his cock felt good. Not good — amazing. He looked down to see a thick, long dick oozing precum from its tip. The pink shaft emerged from a dark sheath which sat over huge, haired balls. Micah stretched his full, monstrous body as he stood up to his full height. He kept human proportions if not a human physique. Canine ears twitched within a black mane. The thick pelt covered the top of his head down to his pecs where it lightened in color before thinning over his abs.

He sniffed, drawing in Sasha's scent. Prowling to the door, he nearly ripped it off its hinges as he yanked it open. He howled and set off at a run.

Sasha heard a howl not too far away. *That's strange*, she thought. *Didn't sound like a dog howling at all. Sounded almost like a wolf.* She made a note to herself to ask Micah if he'd heard it when she got back.

She liked running in the park near their house. It was safe, well lit in most parts, and usually completely empty by dark. Micah didn't always like for her to go running at night, but something about it thrilled her. The cool air, the dim shadows, and the near silence all got her blood going a little more. She took the stride easily, not wanting to tire herself out. For some reason, she had a twinge of horniness bugging her for the past two days. Micah had no idea she planned on jumping him right after her shower.

Sasha came to a slow stop to tie her shoe. Something moved in the brush behind her, and the hairs on the back of her neck stood on end. She pulled the knot tight and stood up, trying to seem calm. Usually, she'd have written it off as a raccoon, but she saw the shape move. It was big, bigger than a man. She took a few steps and broke into a run, not looking back. Whatever it was burst from the brush, bounding onto the path with terrible speed.

Claws raked on the stone. The beast's heavy breathing thundered in the otherwise silent night. Sasha wanted to scream, but at a full sprint, she had no air in her lungs to spare. She juke left. The beast skidded to a halt, claws raking into a nearby bench for traction. In a flash it was behind her again, bearing down. Sasha tried again, making a sudden right turn, but the thing was ready. Claws slammed into her back, ripping her shirt and sports bra, leaving two red gashes down her back. At the same time, teeth sank into her shoulder, clamping down and throwing her to the side as if she weighed nothing.

She hit wet grass and rolled. As she came to a stop, back and shoulder stinging with the

warm trickle of blood, she saw the creature for the first time. A wolf — a werewolf, massive and brooding. Yellow fangs dripped with her blood as its tongue licked its muzzle. The creature stood up to its full height and howled, an earsplitting noise of triumph.

Adrenaline pumping, Sasha got to her feet. She spotted her opportunity and moved quickly. She grabbed a nearby branch. It felt sturdy in her grip as she planted her feet near the monster. She shrugged out of the torn bra, letting her shirt hang on by tatters as the creature turned his attention to her, eyes hungry. She swung with all her strength, smashing the half rotted limb across the beast's face. It hit the snout, splitting a small portion of skin and sending the wolf into a yelping retreat.

Sasha turned and ran. Turned around from the chase, she had no idea where she was going, only away from the thing hunting her. Her lungs ached, and her muscles burned...until they didn't. Running felt good. She thought it might be shock or some euphoria due to blood loss. Not good, amazing. The trickle of blood stopped. The pain in her shoulder and back vanished. She didn't hear the beast following any longer, but wanted to keep running for the sheer joy of it. She didn't stop at all until she noticed the dark spots on her hands.

Stumbling to a sudden halt, she looked at the brown hairs growing rapidly out of her hands and arms. *Oh, no...no fucking way.* Standing still made her aware of a dull ache in her whole body. The blood pumping in her ears distracted her, but she still heard the other wolf approaching. It wasn't chasing her. It was following and waiting.

She whirled around to face the male as her fangs grew in. A snarl of blood and drool flung out of her mouth as she bared her new teeth at him. Bones snapped, and she yelped, slinking back from the bigger male. She could smell him, a pervading musk that made her pussy wet and her breasts ache. He crouched down on his haunches and watched, giving her plenty of room.

Another wave hit, and she collapsed. Her whole body twitched and jerked as muscle and bone moved and reshaped. Heat throbbed between her legs as hair grew to cover her back and chest. Her breasts ached and swelled as a lump of naked flesh pushed out above her running shorts. Her hands clawed at the ground, leaving gashes in the grass. As claws tipped her fingers, she reached back and tore at the confining clothes. With a loud rip, the shorts fell to the ground.

A few feet away, the male werewolf sniffed, inching closer to Sasha's changing form. As she gnashed her changing teeth, she felt a wet nose push against her ass followed by a long tongue slurping at her slit. She growled, shoving her ass back against the other wolf's muzzle, eager to feel him lap her pussy. His musk grew familiar. *Micah?* She looked over her shoulder, hoping to see some glimmer of familiarity in the monster's face. As she did, he moved back, showing her the throbbing dick between his legs.

Pure lust filled her. She needed to be mounted and bred. Her breasts ached for touch, her ass wiggled in the air to be grabbed, and her pussy dripped wanting to be fucked. The other

wolf moved behind her, eager for the same things. She growled as his dick pushed against her lower lips, but then he was inside of her, stretching her and filling her up. She growled quietly as Micah bent against her, tail pushed to the side to grope her ass with one hand while his other crawled around to squeeze her furred breasts.

He moved in and out of her with growing speed. His balls slapped forward as their hairy legs grabbed and tangled against each other. The male grunted and lowered his mouth to her shoulder, biting deep and drawing blood. Sasha reveled in the slight tinge of pain as her body thrummed with the thrill of blood and sex. The beast mounting her was pure power. Three hundred pounds of muscle, teeth, and claws — and cock, fucking her raw in the middle of the park.

Sasha's swollen breasts shook back and forth as her body slapped back against her mate. His teeth in her neck didn't hurt any longer. All she could feel was pure, wild heat. Her pussy clenched hard against his throbbing dick, milking him as he fucked her. He made small growls, almost purrs, as he kept thrusting. Her tail wriggled against his weight while his stood out stark still behind him. He pushed hard into her, knocking her forward such that her face pressed against the ground. She snarled until the first gush of cum flooded into her.

Her body exploded with pleasure. The wolf behind her became irrelevant, or at least a diminished fixture in the flurry of emotion. Her whole being thrummed with energy as she shook from head to toe. A gush of fluid flowed out of her as the other wolf pulled his wet, spurting dick out to cover her ass with cum. Sasha moaned into the grass and dirt, synapses firing with nothing but joy. She was free and gorgeous and mated. They could run and hunt and breed. The wolf behind her howled again, and she joined, filling the night with their song.

He moved up beside her and gave the bridge of her snout an affectionate lick as his tail wagged. Somewhere in the golden eyes, she saw Micah. Nuzzling into his neck, she bit him playfully. His ears perked up, and his head turned. On the other side of the park, she saw the movement which garnered his attention. She sniffed the air and smelled perfume. She growled, words failing her, but the intent was clear. *Hunt.*

The Coven of Samhain watched the two wolves bound away into the night. "Should we put them to sleep until morning or something?" Tabby asked.

"That's not very fun for them," Conach said. "They'll run for twenty minutes, work themselves up, and go right back to fucking one another. The spell worked perfectly."

Nea kept her attention on the tablet detailing the Ritual of the Hunt. The emblem at the bottom glowed bright orange, spreading out over the whole tablet until it became a single glowing stone. From the glow came the black outline of a wolf. "Guess that means it worked. One ritual down."

"Fantastic!" Conach said. "Let's celebrate." He snapped his fingers and everyone's

clothes disappeared.

Nea shrugged, letting herself be picked up by the fae. Tabby scurried ahead of them into the bedroom, hopping onto the bed and sticking her ass up in the air. Nea scooted onto the bed beside her. It had been a long two days. They'd made time for each other at night, but the spells and translocation and dream projection had been draining. She grinned beside the other witch, bumping her naked ass into Tabby's. It would be good to recharge.

Conach ran his hands over the two presented pussies, trying to decide which to fuck first. He put his cock against Nea's pussy and let his tail push into Tabby. The two girls kissed. Conach sliding into them pushed out any worries about the next ritual.

Miles away, the two werewolves pounced on one another again, silently thanking whoever changed them.