

SHATTERED by Cassie Swindon

EXCERPT

Terrified of making any sudden movements, I crossed the room at a snail's pace. Kyra patted the floor beside her without taking those obsidian eyes off me. Haunting, unnatural eyes.

Another shudder threatened to rip through me, but I held it back, using all my energy not to spook her. One wrong move might push the thing possessing her to lash out. As a child, I had heard Gemm tell a story about spirits, but it was only supposed to be a fairytale.

I gulped down what felt like a pile of stones and carefully sat beside her. The healing spell was at the tip of my tongue, but I didn't want to scare her. Instead, I silently chanted Terra angakok. Terra angakok, again and again, praying to the Divinity above that it would save her from whatever monster bewitched her body. It didn't work. Kyra stared at me like an empty shell.

My heart rammed chaotically against my chest. I needed help. Reinforcements. Where was fuckin' Nilson when we actually needed him? Maybe if I distracted her, it'd break the stupor. Terror seized my soul, and I didn't move a single muscle. What the Flames was I supposed to do? If I touched her, would she snap out of the trance? Had someone cursed her? Why were her eyes the color of death? Sweat dripped down my back, and time ceased to exist.

"Hallie wants me to buy a puppy." She stroked my dog's head again and again. The sweetness of her voice had an actual scent; it was like ice cream dipped in poison and spider webs.

"Kyra, Hallie died. She's not here anymore. I think we should go to bed and —"

"No!" she bellowed. "I don't have to go to sleep. I don't have to choose one of you! I don't have to save anyone."

I clenched my fists into balls by my side, then released them. Clenched. Released. There was a fundamental wrongness in the air. Gemm had never taught me how to deal with dark Magik as a child. This wasn't something I had ever trained for. It was time for a new approach.

"Kyra, it's okay. I think you're sleepwalking," I pleaded, hearing the uncertainty in my voice.

She laughed, but the sound was foreign to my ears, veiled in jagged, harsh edges. “No, I’m awake, right, Hallie?”

If I knocked her unconscious and carried her inside, maybe Narelle or Caspian would have a solution. Or we could call Gemm. But there was no chance I’d leave her here alone to search for them.

“What if I die soon?” Kyra asked, her tone sweeter a scrumptious pie.

“What?”

Her gaze latched onto all my fears. That fraudulent smile returned, slithering up her face and claiming it. I had to stop this. Whatever controlled Kyra was taking another piece of her with every passing moment.