

## Raven

*The sun cast emerald shadows across the dirt. A murky lagoon covered the middle of the area, littered with glimmering white and yellow lilypads, and the sound of dragonflies buzzed across the water. A fawn stood there in the middle of the clearing, gazing curiously as a little girl with shining white hair was holding out a small bushel of flowers towards the fawn.*

*"I know you're scared"*

*Said the girl, her silver eyes shining a brilliant green in the shade. But the fawn extended it's neck to sniff the air next to the little girl, and she had to hold her breath to stifle a gasp of excitement as the fawn slowly started to move to the girls hand, timidly licking the air inches from a flower she was holding.*

*She felt the breeze blow against her hand, and immediately afterward, heard it whisper. The fawn jerked it's head up and pricked it's ears.*

*"Oh don't mind them," she cooed, "the wind gets jealous sometimes."*

*Glaring in the direction of the forest, she could still here the echo of envious whispers and short-handed comments at her.*

*A shockingly cold, wet nose grazed her hand and caused her to jump in surprise as the fawn plucked the flowers out of her hand and bounded away through the brush in a blink of an eye. The little girl sat there, her hand now shaking, and her eyes wide with surprise.*

*"Mommy! I made a friend today!"*

*Her mother's shoulders tensed over the pentagram she had painted on the floor of their dining room. She turned to her daughter, who was munching happily on a chicken leg.*

*"You made a friend, sweetheart?"*

*"Yeah!"*

*"What's their name?"*

*The girl paused mid-chew,*

*"oh he didn't have one, he let me feed him a flower but he got too scared."*

*Somehow, that answer made her mother feel better. She smiled at her little girl, and tossed a pork thigh to Lune, her wolf who was napping at the mothers feet. She sat down on the chair next to the girl and started to comb her hands through her daughter's silvery white hair. "Is this the same friend—" her mother crooned—"that you were telling me about last week?"*

*Her daughter nodded her head vigorous with excitement.*

*"And this friend you were telling me about, he finally warmed up to you?"*

*She nodded again.*

*Her mother wrapped her arms around the little girl and tickled her, sending the girl into a wild frenzy of giggles and squeals, as her feet and hands flew up in the air and she squirmed out of her mothers grasp, gasping little breathy giggles. Her mother reached down and kissed her forehead.*

*"Then, my love, I believe you may have made a friend for life."*

*She turned around and nearly tripped over Lune who grunted in response of being nudged.*

Raven woke with a start. The rain pounding against the walls of her room matched her heartbeat. A knock at the door startled her, and she rubbed her cheeks to hide her tears from her dream and opened the door with a crack. From what she could see, a single electric-blue, lidded eye was staring at her through the crack. With a sigh, Raven opened the door wider to face the girl on the other side.

Her brown hair was slightly messy and her eyes held a sleepy, drunken gaze. Her breath smelled retched.

"Ah!" She giggled, "apothecary witch!" She took a step forward and slammed her shoulder into the edge of the doorway, wincing from the impact.

"I'm sorry, Minerva." Raven said, yawning.

"Sorry? For what? I'm really, really high—"

"drunk" Raven muttered,

"—and you're the only one who can give me more! So c'mon, gimme." She held her hands out, but she was teetering like she was going to fall over at any moment. Raven sighed and turned around.

“For the hundredth time, Minerva, it’s not my herbs that make you drunk, it’s the magic-enhancing tea you drink that does that.”

Minerva wasn’t listening.

Raven opened her apothecary drawer and pulled out a small pouch filled with Milk Thistle and handed it to Minerva. She squealed in delight and patted Raven on the head. “*Thaaaaank youuuu.*” She slurred, but before she could turn around, Raven grabbed her arm.

“Ingest a little bit of it before you go to sleep, it should help with the hangover.” Minerva glanced at her,

“wait, what?”

But before she could protest, Raven retreated back into her room and closed the door behind her. She let out a large sigh and walked to her small bed, regarding it with a sad gaze. *I’m sorry mom*, she thought to herself, *I’m doing the best I can.*