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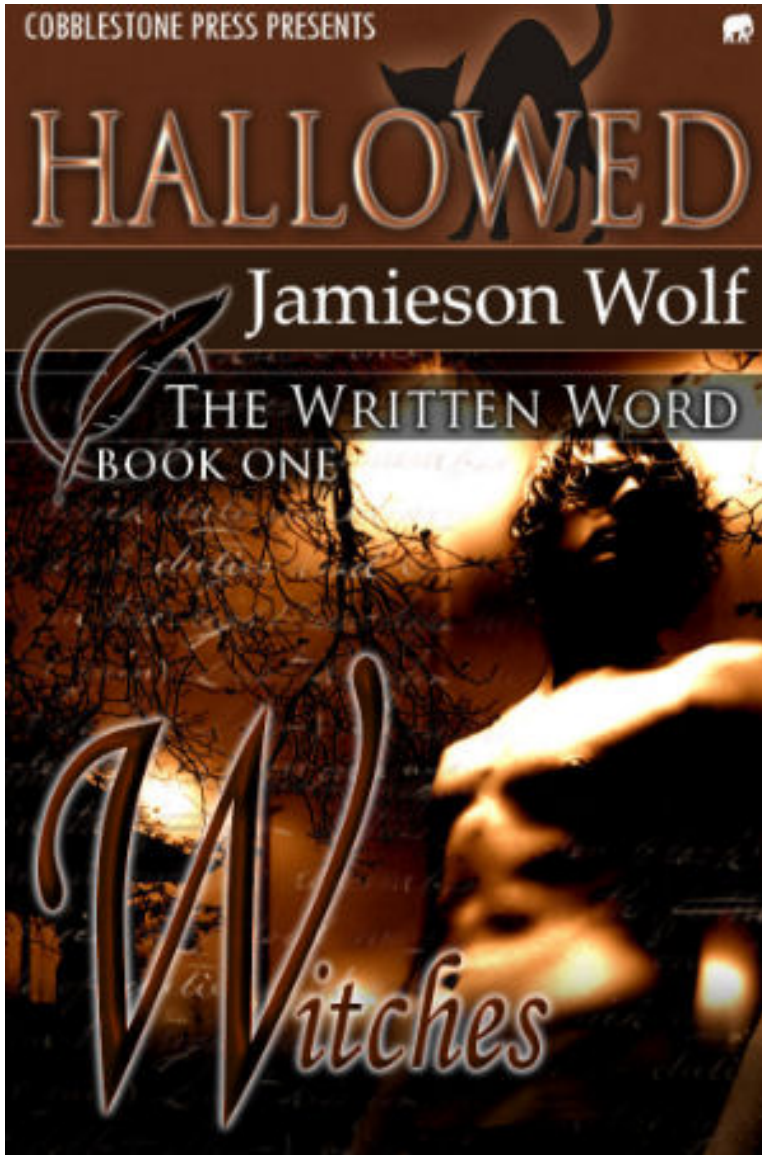


Jamieson Wolf



THE WRITTEN WORD  
BOOK ONE

# Witches



Witches by Jamieson Wolf

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*The Written Word: Book One*

**WITCHES**

*By*

*Jamieson Wolf*

## Witches by Jamieson Wolf

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### **Witches**

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**Dedication**

For my Husband  
Who fills my life with Magic...

## Acknowledgements

No writer lives alone.

There are a great many people who have helped keep me sane during the writing of this novel, and I wanted to take a moment to thank them.

First and foremost, my husband, Robert. He is a constant source of love and support for me. Though he doesn't understand what drives me to write, he constantly encourages me to explore and develop my craft and loves me unconditionally. I couldn't ask for a more supportive, more loving husband. I can't thank him enough for being in my life and for blessing me with his presence. Thank you for being the love of my life and for being my husband.

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I'd also like to thank *You*.

Yes, You!

I want to thank you for taking the time to read my work, and I sincerely hope you enjoy it. Whenever I hear from a reader about how

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much they enjoyed one of my stories, how they had to keep reading until they finished, it brightens even the gloomiest day. Thank you so much for reading what I write. It means the world to me.

Last but not least, I want to thank my cat, Mave. Part confidant, part Witches familiar, I love you to bits; even if you are a princess and do take up half the bed at night.

To all of you, I am thankful.

Jamieson Wolf

## Prologue

Owen Wolfe felt them before he saw them.

The street around him was dark; it was the moment between dusk and night when the streetlamps had yet to come on to welcome the night with their constant buzzing. He flicked his lighter, the momentary flash of light hurting his eyes.

Putting the flame to the end of a cigarette, he inhaled and blew out a puff of smoke that glided briefly on the air before disappearing. He inhaled again and waited, knowing they would show themselves soon.

He wasn't disappointed. He saw a flicker of blackness out of the corner of his eye and watched as that flicker became a foot, a leg, and a torso. A pale-skinned person stood where there had been darkness only moments before.

She had long hair that fell past her shoulders. It was the same black as her dress and seemed to drink in all the light and shine with a brightness that only night could bring. Her pale skin glowed in the darkness of the street and her eyes shone like jewels.

She turned to face him and smiled in greeting. It was a smile of knowing, a smile of wisdom. Owen shivered slightly even though he knew she meant him no harm. Returning the smile, he bowed his head.

When he raised it again, she was gone.

With a muffled curse, Owen dropped his cigarette to the ground, sparks flaring briefly when the cherry hit the pavement. He lit another one and sighed.

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He inhaled a mouthful of smoke and started walking towards his apartment as more shadows stepped out of the darkness around him.  
The Witches had returned.



## Chapter One

It was the same every year, Owen thought.

Two days before Halloween, the Witches would come. They would materialize out of the darkness, and they would roam the city, black specters that no one but him could see. Then, after All Hallows Eve, after they performed their magic, they would be gone.

He had seen the Witches each year since he had turned thirteen. At first he'd been frightened of them, terrified. He'd had nightmares about the Witches every night for months before they appeared. Gradually, however, his fear subsided into acceptance.

The Witches had never harmed him and treated him with respect when they passed him in the streets. The pale-skinned women had never spoken to him, but he didn't expect them to. Something freed them for three days every year, and he wasn't about to take up their time.

For Owen, it had become a normal occurrence. He watched for them on the morning of the 29th of October. One moment they weren't there and the next, they were, but only to him, slowly moving out of the shadows.

At first, he thought they were vampires or beings that existed on the energy created by others. But that didn't seem to be the case. He watched the Witches as they followed certain people, eyeing them with a soft kind of sadness. Owen wondered if they came back to this plain to watch after their loved ones.

It filled him with despair to see the Witches glide noiselessly

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through the streets for those three days and three nights. They seemed like such sad creatures. He wondered what they had seen in their lives to fill them with such sorrow.

He sighed and fished his keys out of his pocket. He opened his apartment door, stepped inside and closed the door behind him.

\* \* \* \* \*

Owen took a beer out of the fridge and lit another cigarette.

He felt drained and tired. He'd waited for the Witches to show all day, and they had only showed themselves as dusk turned into night. Waiting for them to show again, to prove they weren't a figment of his imagination was always tiring. However, if he was going to be honest with himself, Owen had to admit he looked forward to seeing them each year.

They were a part of him for some reason. He was the only one who could see them in all of Garden City, he was sure of that. But why him? And what could he do for them? What did he have inside him that others didn't?

He fell onto the couch in his living room and closed his eyes. He could hear the city life outside of his apartment window: the irritated sound of horns, the pleasant murmur of people talking, the soft sound of classical music coming from someone's apartment. It never failed to amaze him that even when the lights went out, when the darkness took over the day, life continued to thrive.

He should be writing.

He had a new short story to finish and a novel to work on. His publisher was patiently waiting for his next masterpiece. Owen was always more comfortable when he was writing, when he was creating worlds to play in. He had an article due for the Garden City Tribune as well. But all that could wait.

For now, his concentration was elsewhere. His head was full of Witches.

He opened his eyes and took a sip of beer. It felt cool in his throat,

and he sat up to get a cigarette off of his coffee table when he stopped.

Sitting in front of him, in his armchair, was a Witch.

Only that wasn't quite true. This Witch had the same dark hair, the same piercing eyes and pale skin. But this Witch was a man. All of the other Witches he'd seen had been women. He'd never seen a male Witch before.

Owen looked into the Witch's eyes, felt those eyes looking right into him, right into his soul, and felt a flush begin to flame in his cheeks. He felt hot and short of breath. His heart beat faster.

The Witch stood, his pale skin glowing with its own soft light. He smiled at Owen, and Owen found himself smiling back. It was a predator's smile, a smile of want. And right at that moment, Owen had never wanted another man more.

Owen stood, taking in all of the Witch. His robes were made of what looked like thin layers of black gauze, and Owen could see the Witch's cock beneath the fabric. He felt his own cock grow harder in his jeans. Not trusting himself to speak louder than a whisper he asked, "What are you doing here?"

The Witch smiled at him, showing blinding white teeth. He had gorgeous blue eyes, and there was a dimple in his chin that Owen hadn't noticed before. "I came to see you." The Witch's voice sounded like water bubbling over rocks, like the sweetest music Owen had ever heard. His cock jerked in his pants.

"Why did you come to see me?" Owen could barely get the words out. He watched as the front of the Witch's robes twitched, as its cock grew harder.

"To find out if you were real," it said.

"And now that you know I am?"

It looked at Owen, smiling. Owen felt his cock grow firmer and grimaced slightly as it strained against the denim of his pants. "Now that I know you are real, I will have sweeter dreams."

Owen watched as the Witch faded, as its body began to meld back into the darkness. It all seemed like a dream; one moment the Witch was there and then he was nothing but a soft glow. Then, as the glow gave

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itself to blackness, the Witch was no more and Owen was left with only his thoughts for company.

## Chapter Two

When the morning came, Owen was pretty sure he'd imagined the entire thing. After the Witch had left, he'd slept poorly, dreaming the entire night through. He'd had the most erotic dreams, so erotic that he woke to find he had come in his sleep.

He dreamed of the Witch, of his lips all over his body, of his mouth working his cock, his tongue licking his balls. He dreamed of the Witch's hot breath on his neck, of his teeth biting softly at Owen's nipples; dreamed of taking the Witch's cock in his hands and feeling it throb.

Shaking his head, Owen headed for the bathroom. He already had a raging hard on and needed a cold shower to calm himself down. Naked, he stepped under the cold spray of water, letting it run over his skin and wash away the sexual tension that made his muscles tight.

While the water ran, he thought about what the Witch had said. *"I came to see you...to find out if you were real."* What did that mean? What did any of this mean?

With a grunt of frustration, he turned off the water and grabbed a towel. He was drying himself when he heard a noise coming from his bedroom. Wrapping the towel around his waist, he grabbed the first thing he could find for a weapon: his hair dryer. Sighing, he shook his head. What was he going to do? Offer to cut and dry the intruder's hair?

He made his way quietly to the bedroom and stopped when he reached the bedroom door, his mouth hanging open.

There, lying on his bed, was the male Witch.

He still wore his flowing black robe, but it was open. Owen could see the powerful muscles of the Witch's chest, its nipples hard and pink like two sumptuous candies. A scattering of hair ran down his chest and abdomen, leading to the most beautiful cock Owen had ever seen. It had to be over seven inches long and was deliciously thick. Owen had a flash from his dream, of holding the Witch's cock in his hands, and he wondered what it would feel like.

His own cock betrayed him. It had gone hard as a rock and raised the front of his towel like a tent. He cursed himself for not putting on a robe. He could feel the droplets of water still clinging to his body as they ran down his skin. Finally, he met the Witch's gaze.

The blue eyes regarded him with open curiosity. The Witch raised a hand and waved it with a flick of his wrist. Owen's towel fell to the floor, and he was left standing naked in front of the Witch, his cock hard and his breathing ragged.

"That's better," the Witch said. "Now we can see each other completely. The view is so much nicer, don't you think?"

Owen could barely get his voice out past his lips. "What are you doing here? I thought you could only come out at night?"

"A misconception. We only choose to come out at night. Did you enjoy your dreams?"

Owen blinked. He had trouble concentrating. He watched the Witch's dick as it jerked and moved, growing hard. He tore his eyes away from it, looked at the Witch's eyes, though that didn't help as much as he thought it would. "My dreams? What do you mean?"

The Witch stood and walked slowly towards him. "When a Witch dreams, they share their dreams with the person they are dreaming about. I dreamt about you last night."

Owen blinked. "Do you mean that...you put your dreams inside my head?"

The Witch smiled. "In a sense, yes, that's exactly what happened."

"Why are you here now?" Owen asked.

"Because I dreamt of you. Because I can't get you out of my head."

He came closer to Owen, so close that Owen could smell his scent: a

mix between sage and sandalwood. Owen drank in the smell, letting it intoxicate his senses. Owen could feel the heat coming from the Witch's skin and wanted nothing more than to lean closer and feel his lips against the Witch's skin. "I—I don't even know your name," Owen stammered.

The Witch smiled. "I wondered when you were going to ask. You can call me Jace."

Owen swallowed, which he found difficult. His heart felt as if it were lodged in his throat. "Jace it is then."

"And I already know your name. Owen." The way Jace said his name felt like a caress. "I thought I would never lay eyes on you; I thought you were just a myth, a story to be told to youngsters."

"And what story would that be?" Owen nearly fell backwards when Jace came closer, pressing his cock against Owen's. It felt hard and hot. Owen resisted the urge to reach out and touch him, to lower his lips to Jace's.

"There is time for that later," Jace said. He reached out and ran a finger along Owen's jaw line. "Though we don't have much of it. I am only here for two more days. I want to spend the majority of that getting acquainted."

"What did you have in mind?"

Jace smiled. "This," he said and crushed his mouth to Owen's.

### Chapter Three

Owen had never experienced anything like this moment.

Jace's lips felt like heaven on his and soon, Jace's tongue explored Owen's mouth with a passion he'd never felt. There was a heat to his kiss, to his skin, that only made Owen want more of him. He explored Jace's mouth with his own tongue, probing and tasting him, taking him in. Owen felt as if the floor would fall away any second, as if the world around him had ceased to exist.

For him, there was only Jace.

Owen wrapped his arms around him, pulled him closer. He could feel his cock rubbing up against Jace's and the sensation was incredible. He ran his fingers over the hair on Jace's chest, rubbing against his skin, and his head swam. When Jace cupped his balls in his hands and ran his hand along the length of his penis, Owen had to stop himself from coming right then and there.

Jace pulled away from the kiss, leaving Owen gasping. "Don't come yet. I don't want you to come yet. I haven't been with anyone for so long, so incredibly long."

Owen nodded and nearly fainted when Jace began to kiss his neck, biting softly and running his tongue along his shoulder blades. Owen closed his eyes to keep the world from spinning and sighed with pleasure when Jace took one of his nipples into his mouth.

His lips felt hot and wet against his chest, and Owen gasped when Jace bit softly at his left nipple, groaned when he switched to the right. He



tangled his fingers in Jace's hair, his breathing labored, his skin hot.

"You're so gorgeous," Jace said. "More than anything I could have hoped for, anything I could have dreamed of."

Jace continued kissing his body, his chest, moving down to his stomach. He kneeled in front of Owen's cock and started playing with his balls, licking them, taking them into his mouth. Owen was panting now and nearly came again when Jace took the shaft of Owen's cock in his hand and squeezed softly.

"You're so hard. Look how hard you are." Jace looked up at Owen and smiled, his blue eyes flashing. His tongue leapt out and licked the head of Owen's cock in fast, quick flicks, making Owen groan. Before Owen could utter a word, Jace took the whole of Owen's cock into his mouth.

Owen had to hold on to Jace's hair for support because his legs felt as if they would give out from underneath him. Jace worked the shaft of his cock with practiced ease, and Owen felt as if he were floating.

When Jace stood and faced him, he smiled. "You taste as good as I thought you would. Better." Jace kissed him, letting his tongue flash into Owen's mouth. Owen could taste his own pre-cum and something wanton bloomed inside of him.

He pushed Jace onto his bed so that Jace was on his back, and held his arms down while he kissed him, while he ravished Jace's lips, his neck. He bit at the skin, love bites that were part pain, part pleasure. He straddled Jace and let Jace's cock rub up against the crack of his ass, making Jace moan softly.

Owen kissed Jace again and let his kisses move down Jace's body. He got off of Jace and lay beside him so that he could touch all of him, see all of him.

He found Jace's nipples and bit softly at one while he twisted the other. Jace cried out, and Owen twisted and bit a little harder. He could feel a heat growing inside him and knew it would intensify until he emptied himself inside of Jace.

Owen kissed Jace again hard, crushing his lips to Jace's. When he broke the kiss, he looked at Jace, at his gorgeous blue eyes. "You're the

one who is beautiful," he whispered.

Owen kneeled in front of Jace and lowered his mouth to Jace's cock. It was thick and long, and there was already pre-cum dripping from its tip. He licked at it, tasting him and then took Jace's cock into his mouth. He wrapped one hand around the shaft while his other played and twisted Jace's nipples. Jace was moaning freely now, his groans matching his thrusts as he pushed his cock into Owen's mouth.

Owen took his hand away from Jace's nipples and started fondling Jace's balls, massaging them as he slid his mouth up and down his shaft. His own cock was throbbing, and he could feel pre-cum dripping from its tip onto the floor. He had never wanted anyone as badly as this, had never wanted to lose himself in the skin of another.

He pulled his mouth off of Jace's cock and licked one of his fingers. Jace looked at him, then smiled when he realized what he was going to do. He spread his legs wider and raised himself up on the bed. Owen looked at Jace's asshole, waiting for him, and slowly, so as not to hurt him, pushed his finger inside. He moved his finger in more and then out, in again farther and then out. Jace was moaning louder now, his breathing fast and furious.

"I can't wait any longer," Jace said. "I need you inside of me. I need you inside."

Owen spit into his hand and rubbed the shaft of his cock so that it was slick with his saliva. Then he kneeled on the edge of the bed and positioned himself in front of Jace. Jace lifted himself up but it wasn't necessary. Owen lifted him, holding his ass cheeks in his hands and pressing his cock against the entrance to Jace's asshole. Jace reached down and gripped Owen's cock, helping to guide him. Owen pushed a little harder and soon Jace's asshole had swallowed the head of his cock. Jace groaned with pleasure, and his hands moved to clutch at Owen's wrists.

With aching slowness, Owen slid his cock farther into Jace until Jace's asshole had taken it in completely. He let his cock sit there for a moment, throbbing, and then started to rock gently back and forth. His cock slid in and out slowly, and Owen could feel his cock, hard and ready.

"You're so tight," Owen said. "You feel incredible." He felt as

though his skin were on fire.

"You're the one who feels incredible." Jace said, breathing hard.

Owen started to move faster, moving his cock in and out of Jace's ass and relishing the slap of skin against skin each time he pushed forward. Soon, he was moving with a fierce speed, ramming himself into Jace harder with each thrust. He took Jace's cock in his hands and started pumping it, the speed matching that of his thrusts. He could feel Jace's cock pulse and throb in his hand and each of Jace's moans pushed him onward.

"I'm going to..."

"Come for me," Owen said. "I want all of you."

With a loud moan, Jace came, spurting thick cum all over Owen's hands. Some shot onto his face and he licked at it, tasting Jace on his tongue. He continued to thrust harder and harder into Jace and, at last, was unable to hold back any longer.

"Come inside me," Jace said. "I want to feel you inside me."

Owen let loose a loud cry as he came; he could feel his hot cum spurting again and again into Jace, could feel cum sliding down the shaft of his cock.

When they were both spent, Owen pulled gently out of Jace, more cum dripping from his dick, and fell onto the bed in exhaustion.

Jace turned to him and smiled. "Was it good for you?" he asked.

## Chapter Four

Owen took another drag off his cigarette.

The smoke rose lazily in the air, forming patterns that reminded Owen of clouds of the smoke of dreams.

Lying beside him, Jace had his eyes closed. Owen watched as Jace's chest rose and fell with each breath he took. His pale skin looked beautiful in the half-light of morning. He reached out and traced a finger down Jace's chest, making Jace shiver.

"Why can I see you and no one else can?" Owen asked, breaking the silence.

Jace opened his eyes and smiled at him. "Because, there is always one that can see us. One every hundred years."

"But why? Why can I see you?"

Jace shook his head. "I do not know. It is the way. It has always been the way." He reached over and traced his fingers down Owen's chest. "I think you are the one to save us."

Owen sat up, careful not to burn Jace with the cherry of his cigarette. "Save you? From what? Are you in trouble?"

Jace nodded. "You could say that. We are in trouble, the Witches."

There was a sadness in his voice that made Owen want to take him into his arms and comfort him. "What do you mean? How are you in trouble?"

"There is someone that is slaughtering us. Surely you've noticed that there are not as many of us as there used to be. You've been able to

see us for years now. Our numbers used to be greater than they are now. We are a dying breed.”

“Is someone hurting you?”

“Someone is hunting us.”

“But I thought you said I was the only one who could see you?”

“Ah, the only mortal who can see us. Think, Owen. If we exist, surely there are others like us, others that are not of this world.”

“So someone is tracking down and killing off the Witches?”

Jace nodded again. “It would seem so.” He paused as if unsure of how to continue. “The Witches say that you will be our salvation.”

“How can I be your salvation if I don’t know what you are?”

Jace took Owen’s cigarette and butted it out. He then took his hand and placed it on his chest. Owen felt Jace’s heartbeat thrumming underneath the skin. “I am the same as you, only different. I have a heart like you do. I bleed when I am hurt. I fear things I cannot see. We are not so different, you and I. Do you feel it?”

Owen nodded, unable to speak.

“Your heart was broken once,” Jace said, looking deep into his eyes. “I can see it inside of you, something begging to be mended. My heart beats for you...”

Owen said nothing, not trusting himself to speak. He wasn’t sure what he would say even if he could. He was falling for someone who only appeared for three days, one of which was already gone. He could not let his heart be broken again, could not let it happen.

So instead of taking Jace into his arms, instead of kissing him again and letting his heart feel something other than fear, he turned away from him and reached for his clothes.

“What do we do now?” he asked. “How do we stop the slaughter of the Witches? Do you have any idea of who is hunting your kind?”

Jace watched Owen as he put on his shirt and then a clean pair of underwear. How could one mortal hold so much hurt inside him? How could one mortal feel so much all at one time? Jace marveled at Owen’s strength and knew, deep in his heart, that Owen would save his people.

Jace wondered what he could do to ease the pain that Owen carried

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with him. He vowed to do everything in his power to protect him against the dark forces that were most likely already on their way.

## Chapter Five

“You wanted to see me, my lord?”

Harold Crushing looked up from his newspaper to see his servant, a young man by the name of William Willowby, standing in the doorway to his den. The room was dark and the walls were painted in a deep chocolate brown. Crushing loved the dark, loved the feeling of night when the skies darkened to a deep, lovely blackness. The night stars were cold and unfeeling as he was. He felt at home in the darkness.

Willowby was a new acquisition. A half-demon, he was older than he looked and very loyal. Though he appeared to be mild mannered and proper, Crushing had seen Willowby in a rage before and knew there was a part of his servant that loved to cause pain; like most demons, he derived pleasure from pain and chaos. This made him a fabulous ally.

Where Willowby was pale with light watery blue eyes, pasty skin and limp blond hair, Crushing was tall, broad shouldered and dark skinned. His black hair hung straight past his shoulders. His dark eyes regarded Willowby with pleasure. “Yes, Willowby.” He smiled kindly at his servant. “I am hungry. I would like you to bring me some dinner.”

Willowby smiled. “Young or old?”

“Surprise me.”

Crushing looked back to his paper. He knew that he would not have long to wait. Willowby was quick when it came to responding to his requests. Willowby was back in minutes, dragging a young female Witch by her long black hair.

The Witch made no sound, though she must have been in great pain. Crushing saw bruises on her skin and her lip was cut and bloody. Willowby had evidently enjoyed himself and employed his own brand of persuasion. Crushing smiled; he could smell her fear. He took a deep breath, drinking it in and her fear made him want more.

Crushing smiled when Willowby dropped the Witch at his feet. His smile was not comforting. "You know why you were brought here?" he asked.

The Witch said nothing, only nodded. She looked at him head on. Crushing had to give credit where credit was due; the woman had guts.

"I wish to know a few things, to ask you a few questions. You will answer them for me and, hopefully, you will not suffer. Do you understand?"

The Witch nodded again.

"What do they call you?"

The Witch tried to speak, tried to find her voice. Crushing knew it was difficult to talk when afraid; that fear, the greatest of all aphrodisiacs, could prevent you from doing a lot of things. "I am Yolana."

"And you are a Witch from the other Realms?"

The Witch nodded.

"I want to know how to get to the Realms. You will tell me how to do this."

The Witch shook her head. "It is not possible to tell you. Even we do not know how the magic works."

"But you control the magic; you use the magic. How can you not know how to get to the Realms? Surely there must be a way?"

The Witch shook her head. "Every year, we begin to fade from our Realm and when we reappear, we are here in this one. We come here for three days a year, to celebrate All Hallows Eve. Then, once the magic is invoked, we can return."

Crushing narrowed his eyes. This was a new piece of information. "You invoke the magic so you can return? Your ceremony on All Hallows Eve?" He saw her face alight with shock. "Yes, I have seen it. I have witnessed your rituals. Do you mean to tell me that unless you do your



ritual on All Hallows Eve, you are unable to return?"

The Witch nodded again. "It has always been this way."

Crushing sat back in his chair and pondered for a moment. Just the thought of being able to go into the Realms, of being able to tap into all that magic; that was more than he had ever dreamed of. He shuddered in wanting, then controlled himself, and looked at the Witch once more.

"There are rumors of a male Witch. Is this true?"

The Witch nodded. "He is the first in a thousand years. He may be the last."

Crushing hoped that the male Witch would have more magic in his veins than the women. He was not a progressive man and figured that men would have more power than women. Aside from that, a male Witch had never been seen before. He'd heard rumors when the Witches had arrived this year that there was a boy among them.

Crushing had been hunting the Witches for hundreds of years. He wanted the boy Witch for himself. He wanted to possess him.

Looking down at the bruised Witch at his feet, Crushing smiled. "You have done well, my sweet."

The Witch smiled, hoping that she would be set free. He could see the desperation in her eyes. He bent down to kiss her and watched as her desperation was replaced by fear. She gasped, tried to pull away, but he grabbed her hair and pulled her head back. He heard her cry out then, a small sound like the dying cry of a bird, and it made him smile.

He closed his eyes and felt the magic flow out of her mouth, felt her magic entering him. He pulled away from her, and a blue mist of magic ran from her mouth to his. He breathed in deeply, felt her magic pouring into his bloodstream. It filled him up, sustained him. He could feel the hairs on the back of his neck standing up as more magic poured into him.

The lights in the room flared brightly for a moment, a brief flash of light in the large room, and then they darkened once more to their previous state. Crushing pushed the Witch away from him, and she fell to the floor. Her body was a stale husk now, the magic in her completely sucked dry. Crushing wiped his lips and eyed the dead Witch with contempt.

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“Put her body with the others,” he said.

“Yes, my lord.” Willowby smiled and gathered the Witch up in his arms, taking her out of the room.

Crushing smiled. Tales of the male Witch were true as he had known they would be. He got up from his chair and went to the window, throwing it open.

He opened his mouth and watched as darkness poured from it. The darkness formed itself into nightmares and shadows. Red eyes watched Crushing from inside the black mist and, when he closed his mouth, he grinned at them.

“Find him,” he said. “Bring him to me.”

He watched as the Shadows moved into the night to hunt down his prey. All he would have to do now was wait.

## Chapter Six

Owen followed Jace down a dark alleyway and wondered, not for the first time, what the hell he was doing. But every time he looked over at Jace, he felt a pang of lust in his stomach and felt strong again.

The darkness around them was almost total except for a few streetlamps buzzing above them. They flickered on and off, making the darkness look somehow more dangerous than before. Jace took Owen's hand and squeezed it, held on.

"We're going to see an old friend of mine. His name is Bartley. He always has his ears to the ground. He might know what's going on."

"Is Bartley...like you?"

"Is he a Witch you mean?" Owen could see Jace smile in the dark, his teeth white in the blackness of night. "No, he's a demi-god."

Owen had to shake his head. He wasn't sure he had heard correctly. "A what?"

"A demi-god."

"And what is that?"

"He's half-god, half-human."

"You don't really expect me to believe that, do you?"

"I told you before; there are all manner of things in this world. You just need to know where to look for them. If Witches and Demons exist, don't you think that there are others? Others like but not like me?"

"Sorry," Owen said sheepishly. "This is just a lot to take in."

"So says the only human being in a century to be able to see

mythical beings from another realm. Just open your eyes and your heart." He leaned closer. "I'll protect you." Jace smiled again and moved in to kiss Owen.

Owen welcomed the kiss, welcomed the heat that spread through his body. He felt his cock go hard in response and when Jace took hold of it, found it in the darkness, Owen moaned softly and intensified the kiss.

There was a noise behind them. Someone clearing their throat. Owen broke the kiss and turned behind them.

Standing before them was one of the most beautiful men Owen had ever seen. He was well over six feet tall and had long, light blue hair that fell past his shoulders in ringlets. The most startling thing about him, however, was his eyes and his skin. His eyes were all white with no pupil to be seen; they looked like lights in the night. The man's skin was pale blue and gave off a bright, translucent glow.

Jace smiled and stepped forward. "Bartley!"

Bartley grinned, his teeth bright in the dark. "Are you two finished kissing or do you want a few more minutes?"

Owen followed Jace and Bartley through a door in the alleyway wall. It closed behind him, and Owen expected to be plunged into darkness. But he wasn't. Bartley's skin seemed to glow brighter, more intensely, so the shimmer of his skin lit the way.

As they walked farther into the room, candles sprung to life, giving the room around them a soft, flickering pulse of light. When Owen could see more clearly in the candlelight, he gasped. Books were strewn all over every available surface, every table. They were sitting on shelves, propping up furniture. There were more books than he could possibly read in an entire lifetime. A soft breeze blew through the room and ruffled their pages; it sounded as if they were whispering to him, begging him to read them.

"What is this place?" Owen asked in an awed whisper.

"This is my domain," said Bartley. "It is here that I can tell the future of the world or what may come."

Bartley pushed some books off of two chairs by sweeping them onto the floor. Owen winced. He had a love of books; they were like air to

him. Whenever he felt the need to get away, he would open a book and let it speak to him, let the book take him away.

Smiling, Bartley shrugged. "Sorry about that. When there are so many books, they tend to take over a room."

"Have you read all of them?" Owen asked.

"No, not all of them. When I need them, they come to me, show me what I need to know."

Bartley made a wave of his hand and where there had been an empty tabletop, there now stood a decanter and three glasses. The decanter was filled with a deep golden liquid, and Bartley filled each of the glasses.

He handed a glass to Owen and then to Jace. "Cheers," he said. He took the liquid in one sip and Owen and Jace did the same.

When the liquid hit his tongue, Owen was filled with an incredible calmness. A warmth spread through his body.

"The finest mead, made by the world's first inhabitants. Dryad-made wine is hard to find nowadays. I keep a bottle or two for myself, however." He studied Owen in the candlelight. "You have questions. I can see them in your face. Give them words to give them power."

Owen cleared his throat, then looked at Jace who nodded. "It's okay," Jace said. "We can trust him. Bartley is one of my oldest friends. If anyone can help us, it is Bartley."

Owen wondered where to begin. Everything spun around in his head; he could barely form a question. Why was he the one to see the Witches? Why were they being prosecuted? Who was killing them? The wine was still warm in his stomach, and he had too many words.

He closed his eyes and tried not to give into his fears. Jace squeezed his hand and whispered. "It's okay. Don't be afraid."

Owen nodded and opened his eyes to find Bartley looking at him intently. "Who will save the Witches from death?" he asked.

Bartley looked at Jace and then at Owen again. "You will," he said.

## Chapter Seven

Owen felt his head swim again. "You don't understand. We need to know who can help the Witches, who is slaughtering them."

"I answered your first question. You will be the one to save the Witches from death. It is in your blood. The books do not lie..." He gestured to the books lining the shelves. One flew from its shelf and settled in front of Bartley before opening.

Owen watched its pages flutter until they stopped.

Bartley ran his fingers down the page and started reading: "When the new millennium comes, there will be one, a mortal, who will have a gift with ink. He will be the one to vanquish what hunts the Witches. He will be the salvation to all in the underworld and the salvation of magic itself."

He remembered what Jace had said after they lay there after sex. "*The Witches say that you will be our salvation.*"

Owen shook his head. "But I don't have a gift. I don't have anything."

"You do have a gift," Bartley said. "As a demi-god, I can sense magic in others. Yours runs in you, strong like your blood. Let me see your hand, the one you write with."

Owen gave Bartley his right hand. Bartley held it palm up and brought it to his mouth. He breathed upon it. Owen felt a moment of cold, then a heat strong and brilliant filled his palm. When the heat faded, he looked down.

On the palm of his hand was a small mark that looked like a feather. The stem of the feather followed his life line and the plumes of the feather followed the other lines of his palm. It looked as if it had always been there.

Owen brought his hand closer to his eyes and saw that it was not a feather but a feather quill. He rubbed his skin but the black ink did not fade.

"I can reveal what is already there," Bartley said. "It is one of my...talents." He grinned, and his teeth flashed white in the candlelight. "You are a writer?"

Owen blushed. "Yes, but it's just what I do. It's nothing special. They're just words."

"You are a writer, a storyteller. That is powerful magic."

Owen shook his head. "No, I only write jottings, stories."

"Where I come from, storytelling is looked upon with reverence. You have a gift that many would kill for and many have. Storytelling is a magic beyond all that the Gods can comprehend."

"But storytelling isn't a gift, it's just a hobby." Owen looked around the room, at the books littered there. "It's not a gift."

"Is it not?" Bartley smiled. "There is much you do not know. You are mortal, but more. You wish to know who will save the Witches. It is you. You wish to know how you will save the Witches. It will be with words. Words are magic. Whatever you write has magic inside of it. That is all I can tell you."

Owen shook his head, pulled out his pack of cigarettes. He lit one and took a drag. "This is all a bit much to take in."

"For those of us who have lived in the underworld, the world of the Realms, this has always been the way. Constant struggle for power, dominance. For a mortal, it is hard to understand. But you do not have time to contemplate. It is time for action."

"Who is coming?" Jace asked. His voice sounded hoarse, as if he already knew the answer.

"It is Crushing," Bartley said. "I know he is the one to hunt the Witches, but I do not know why. All I know is that he is the one you

seek.”

Jace made a sound deep in his throat. “I should have known it was him.”

Bartley nodded. “You know of him.”

“Yes, a demon who wants nothing but power.” He shook his head. “We do not know how long he has been alive, only that he brings evil with him wherever he goes. Harold Crushing used to be a Witch Hunter. He murdered thousands of our kind during the Salem Witch Trials. Now he walks the earth, his soul half dead with blackness.”

Bartley turned to Owen. “There are those in this world that would do anything for power. Crushing is one of them. I have listened to the whispers of my books; they tell me it is him that you need to vanquish.”

“How do we stop him?” Jace asked.

“That I do not know. I only know that Owen will have to stop him.”

“Do I at least get a say in this at all?” Owen asked.

“No,” Bartley said. “There is no time for that. You must save the Witches, Owen. Once they die, we will all cease to be.”

“Even the mortals? Even people like me?”

“No, just the other folk, gods and demi-gods, folks not of your Realm. The Witches hold the magic in this world. They are the anchors. Without them, magic is lost. Your world will go on living, but it will be a bleak, soulless place. You must save the Witches, Owen. It is what you were made for.”

Owen was about to ask another question but stopped. The air was filled with whispering. It was a moment before Owen realized that every book in the room was open now, and they were all ruffling their pages. Though the books could not talk, their intent was clear: it was a warning.

Something was coming for them.



## Chapter Eight

“What is it?” Jace asked. “Who is here?”

Bartley cocked his head to the right, listened to the ruffling of the pages. “Shadows,” he said.

The word sent shivers running down Owen’s spine. “What are we going to do?” he asked.

“I will hide you here,” Bartley said. “They won’t be able to get in. They know you are close, but they do not know where you are.”

He picked up a candle and led them deeper into his maze of books, the ruffling of the pages becoming louder with each step they took. “They cannot see inside my lair. The books protect me and all within my power. You will be safe here until they leave.”

He brought them to a door with an old brass door knob. Opening it, he ushered them inside a small room that held only a large four poster bed. There were no books in this room.

“Rest while you can,” Bartley said. “I will come for you when they are gone.” He took one look at Owen’s pale face. “Do not fret, Mortal. There are more frightening things than Shadows in the world. I will protect my lair and you. You have no need to worry.”

He closed the door behind them, plunging them into darkness. Jace snapped his fingers and a tongue of flame appeared. He went to the sconces that hung from the walls and lit the candles there, giving the room a soft amber glow.

Dazed, Owen went to the bed and sat down on the mattress,

finding it surprisingly firm. He stared at the mark of the quill on his right hand, rubbed his fingers over it and wondered how his life had gotten so odd in such a short time.

Only yesterday, he had been thinking of how weird it was that he could see something others could not and now he was involved in what was the most bizarre situation he had ever experienced.

When Jace sat next to him on the bed, he turned, ready to talk, ready to ask more questions. Jace shook his head. "There will be time for more questions later," he said. And leaned in to kiss him.

When Jace's lips touched his, he felt his whole body melt, as if he were no longer himself. When Jace pulled back, his body felt cold again.

"What's wrong?" Jace asked.

"You were right you know," Owen said.

"About what?"

"About my heart. About it being broken."

To his credit, Jace said nothing. Instead, he pulled Owen to him, wrapped his arms around him. "Tell me," he said softly.

Owen wasn't sure where to begin but the words flowed out of him as if they had been waiting to be told for years. "I was twenty. His name was Samuel. I loved him with all of my heart, every ounce of it. Then I found out he was cheating on me." He felt a stab of pain at the memory of walking in on his lover and some stranger in their bed. "I lost myself for a long time. I was like a walking corpse. I was there, but my heart wasn't. He still had my heart."

Owen felt tears slide down his face, hot and wet. Jace wiped them away softly with the cuff of his sleeve. "When I finally felt like me again, I swore that no one else could have my heart, that I would keep it locked up. But my heart was damaged."

Jace made a small sound and pulled Owen back so that they lay together on the bed. Jace played with Owen's hair, sending heat along his skin.

Owen fell quiet, and they lay there listening to the rustling of the pages outside their room.

Finally, Jace spoke. "Let me heal your heart," he said. "Let me give

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you my heart and make yours better.”

Owen sat up and looked at him, at this man who had captured him from the moment he'd laid eyes on him. He wanted Jace more than anybody that had come before him. He felt his heart mending, a warmth spreading all over his body.

And then there was only Jace.

## Chapter Nine

Owen leaned forward and pressed his lips to Jace's, felt the heat take over his body when Jace returned the kiss. Owen moaned when Jace's tongue dipped into his mouth, exploring and tasting as Owen did the same.

Owen pulled aside Jace's black robes so that he could feel Jace's skin, so that he could touch him, be closer to him. He ran his hands along Jace's chest, tweaking his nipple until it was hard like a small candy. Jace moaned softly and deepened the kiss, stopping only to pull off Owen's shirt and undo his pants.

Letting his hands explore Jace's body, Owen followed the treasure trail of hair that ran from his stomach to his groin. Jace's cock was already rock hard and ready for him; Owen pulled away from the kiss to lower his mouth to Jace's cock.

It pulsed in his hands, and he took first the head and then the rest of the shaft into his mouth. His mind was filled with nothing else except Jace, nothing except pleasuring him. Owen pulled back and traced his tongue along the shaft, licked softly at Jace's balls. He took one into his mouth gently and then the other.

Jace's moans deepened. Jace moved, trying to pull Owen closer, but Owen stopped him. "No," he said. "Let me." He kissed Jace softly. "Let me."

Jace lay back on the bed, and Owen ran his hand along the slick shaft of Jace's cock. He took Jace's dick back into his mouth as he

massaged his balls, feeling them tighten in his grasp. Again and again he slid his mouth along the shaft of Jace's dick but was careful not to bring him to the edge just yet.

He stood and stripped off his pants. His cock was already hard and ready but he wouldn't let Jace touch it. Not yet. He was so close, so incredibly close. He got up on the bed and straddled Jace so that Jace's cock was lined up with his asshole. Slowly, oh so slowly, he eased himself down on Jace's dick, letting first the head penetrate him and then the rest of the shaft.

"You feel so good..." Owen said. "So good. I want you. I want all of you."

He began to move up and down along the shaft of Jace's dick, his own penis slapping against Jace's stomach. Jace slicked his hand and began working Owen's cock slowly. Owen increased his speed, and Jace arched up into him with each thrust. He had never felt anything so wonderful, so incredible as this moment. He reached down and tweaked Jace's nipples, one after the other. He knew Jace was close when he heard his breath catch.

"You're going to make me come..." Jace whispered.

Owen smiled down at him. "That's the idea."

Owen increased speed, riding Jace with all his might. The only sounds he could hear were their deep, hoarse breathing and the satisfying sound of skin hitting skin. Jace started bucking beneath him and Owen took his own cock in his hands. He clenched his asshole around Jace's cock and rode him harder, working his own cock faster and faster.

"Come with me, Jace," Owen said. "Come inside me. I want all of you inside me."

Jace let out an earth shattering moan, and Owen felt him come. He felt the hot, thick spurts of cum fill him and at that moment, he let himself go over the edge, too.

He spurt come all over Jace's chest, his face. His hand was wet with cum, and Jace brought Owen's hand to his lips and licked it off his fingers, kissed his palm with supple lips.

Spent, Owen fell on top of Jace, and Jace's arms wrapped around

him. They lay there, their breathing quiet after the sounds of their love making. Jace kissed him softly on the cheek.

“I love you,” he whispered. Owen stiffened only slightly. “I know it’s impossible to love someone so quickly, but I love you.”

Owen said nothing for quite some time.

Jace didn’t expect a response. He wondered if he had lost Owen completely or scared him away. Thus he was surprised when Owen responded.

“I can give you my heart, if you want it.”

Jace was about to reply but was cut short by three loud bangs on the door to their room.

Someone on the outside wanted in.

## Chapter Ten

Owen and Jace were getting dressed when the door opened. It was Bartley, looking harassed and worse for wear. "Can't leave you love birds alone for two minutes, can I?" He grinned and looked at Owen's half naked body. Owen felt himself blushing fiercely. "The Shadows are gone. But they'll be back. In the meantime, we have to prepare ourselves."

"Prepare ourselves?" He pulled on his shirt. "Against Crushing?"

"Oh, it's more than just him. I was able to detain one of the Shadows. I have him locked in my chambers. We should be able to learn something from him."

Owen and Jace dressed quickly. When they were suitably clad, they followed Bartley through the maze of books until they came to another door. When Bartley opened it, Owen gasped. Chained to the wall was one of the most beautiful beings Owen had ever seen.

The Shadow had black skin, blacker than night. It shone like black onyx in candle light. Its white hair hung past its shoulders. Other than that, it was naked. It had a muscled chest, and Owen looked at the sprinkling of white hair that graced its chest and stomach. Its cock was rock hard and pulsed when it saw them.

"You can't keep me here forever," it spat at Bartley. "I am a Shadow. I answer only to my master."

"You'll answer a few questions of mine, too," Bartley said. His white eyes flashed brightly and the Shadow cowered, backing into the wall. "Otherwise, I may have to dispose of you as you have the Witches."

The Shadow nodded, seeming to know that it was in the presence of someone with a lot of power. "I will tell you only what I know."

"What we want to know is quite simple." Bartley approached the demon. "Why is Crushing hunting the Witches now? What is he hoping to accomplish?"

The demon looked at Bartley, and his dick hardened further. "I could give you a good time," the demon said. "I haven't seen a man as beautiful as you in eons."

Bartley stiffened. "I am not a man. I am a demi-god. And, so help me, if you don't answer my questions I'll rip your cock clean off." He composed himself. "Now, what is Crushing planning?"

"It's pretty simple, ain't it?" The demon smiled. "He wants power. Who has more power than he does? The Witches."

Bartley nodded and motioned for the demon to continue.

"He knows the Witches must perform a ritual to return to the Realms on All Hallows Eve. He plans to stop the ritual, to take the power from each Witch there. Especially you." The demon leered at Jace. "He thinks a male Witch would have more power than the women. You will be the jewel in his crown. He doesn't know about you." He looked Owen up and down. "See anything you like, boy?"

Bartley reached out and slapped the demon's cock hard. The demon recoiled, unable to protect himself as his hands were chained. "Shit!" he swore. "Give a guy a break, would you?"

"Tell. Us. What. We. Need. To. Know." Bartley spat the words out one at a time.

The demon sighed. "By destroying the Witches and taking their power, he plans to open up the Realms so that there would no longer be any barrier. He wants to be the most powerful being alive. He plans to use the boy Witch as a blood sacrifice to open the doors."

Bartley nodded. "That will be all." They went to leave the room when the demon called after them.

"Wait! You can't just leave me here," he pleaded. "What are you going to do with me?"

Bartley turned around and smiled. "I'm sure I'll think of



something.”

They left the room and closed the door behind them, the demon inside screaming at them, begging them to let him go.

Bartley looked at Owen and Jace. “We haven’t much time. All Hallows Eve is almost here.”

“We’ve got a while yet,” Jace said.

“No, we do not. You’ve passed almost a full day here. It is almost dusk. All Hallows Eve is already upon us.”

## Chapter Eleven

“My lord?”

Crushing looked up from his paper. Another dead body lay at his feet. This Witch had been young and had just come into her power. She had tasted lovely, succulent. His taste for Witches had increased since the Shadows had come back empty handed.

And one Shadow less.

Crushing had been furious when the Shadows returned without news and one member short. One Shadow had told him of a blue-skinned man, and Crushing knew the man was Bartley. He’d wondered when his brother would be getting involved. Bartley had been trying to get in the way of his plans for years.

Since they shared the same mother, they were related, but that was where the similarities ended. Bartley had the good fortune of having a god for a father and thus was more powerful. Crushing had been trying to gain power all throughout his life in hopes of becoming more powerful than his brother. Tonight, he would succeed.

Crushing looked up at Willowby. “What is it?”

“The preparations are underway, my lord. All Hallows Eve is about to begin.”

“You have everything that we need?”

“Yes, my lord. It’s all been made ready for you.”

“And the male Witch? Does he suspect?”

“With Bartley’s involvement, I’m sure he suspects something. But I

don't think he has any idea of our true plans, no."

Crushing smiled. It looked as if things were going to work out after all. "Excellent. When will the Witches gather?"

"They will gather at Point Peak to start their rituals shortly, within the hour."

"Then we must meet them and make them welcome, should we not?"

"Yes, my lord."

"Put another Witch in the limo. I will want some sustenance before tonight's events."

"Yes, my lord."

Crushing smiled. Yes, it looked as if things would work out well indeed. And then the Realms would be his.

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"I can feel them," Jace said. "The Witches. They are gathering."

They zoomed along the roads in Bartley's car, a black BMW that blended with the darkness of the night. Owen had found it odd that a demi-god would use a car, but he supposed they would've had to adapt sometime.

He squeezed Jace's hand. They were in the back while Bartley drove to Point Peak, the highest point in Garden City. In his other hand, Owen held the small leather bound book and a sharp quill. The objects seemed to vibrate with the magic inside them.

Bartley had given them to him before they left his lair. "These are for you."

Owen had taken the book and quill with a touch of reverence. The leather on the book was cracked and old but otherwise undamaged. The point of the quill shone brightly in the half light of the street. "What are these?"

"They are the tools of a Storyteller. They will aid you in using your magic."

"I can't do any magic," Owen said.

“And I keep telling you that you can. Can’t you feel it? You write stories, but have you ever stopped to consider that whatever you write comes to life on the page? With your magic, whatever you write is given life. That is a powerful tool. I wish we had time so I could show you how to use it.”

“But what do I do with it? I don’t know anything about any of this.”

“You will have to learn quickly then. All Hallows Eve is here.”

Riding in the back of the car, Owen opened the book and felt a momentary pang of pain in his right hand. He looked down at the quill tattoo on his palm. It was glowing; a soft amber light came from the tattoo. When he closed the book, the light faded. He opened the book again and the light returned.

Not knowing what he was doing, he took the quill and put it to the paper. Even though there was no ink, the quill wrote easily. He supposed magic didn’t need ink. He wrote: *My name is Owen Wolfe.*

He let out a gasp when the book started to write back to him, words appearing along the page in a rough, spidery script: *Hello, Owen. I am Tahaliwit.*

Owen blinked in surprise before writing again: *You have a name?*

All Books have names, Tahaliwit wrote back. If you know how to listen to them.

Owen paused to think of what to write before putting the quill to the paper again: *Bartley says that you can help me harness my magic. How do I use you?*

Only a Storyteller can write in my pages, Tahaliwit wrote. Whatever the Storyteller writes comes to life. Your magic is simple but profound. You must use your magic wisely, Owen Wolfe.

Owen was about to write something else when Tahaliwit began to write some more: *Trust in yourself. The magic is in you.*

Closing the book, Owen wondered about what he had just read. He could feel his right hand tingling, throbbing. He could feel a tingling in his arms. Could feel tingling in his fingers. He felt this tingling every time he wrote, every time he put a pen to paper.

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Could it be that all this time he'd had this magic inside of him?  
Owen's reverie was cut short when the car stopped. "We're here,"  
Bartley said.

## Chapter Twelve

When they got out of the car, the first thing Owen noticed was the light.

It filled Point Peak with a bright glow, not unlike lights at a baseball field. It was a moment before Owen realized that the light came from the Witches. He could see them moving, their black cloaks and robes flowing in the wind. It looked as if they were dancing.

"They're beautiful," Owen said.

Jace nodded beside him. "When we are all together, the glow from our skin is intense. It still entrances even me whenever I see it."

Owen turned to face him. "I will do whatever I can to save your people," he said. "I will do whatever I can to save you." He took Jace's hands in his. "We've had only three days together, and I feel like I've known you all my life. After tonight..."

Jace put a finger to his lips. "Let's get through tonight, and we'll cross that bridge when we get to it." He leaned forward and kissed him.

Bartley cleared his throat behind them. "I don't mean to break up such a tender moment, but we've got trouble."

"What?" Owen asked. "What trouble?"

Bartley pointed to the sky. Dark shapes moved across the sky at a fast pace. "We've got company."

They ran to the other Witches who had noticed that something was wrong. Owen recognized the female Witch he'd seen when she first appeared on the 29th. She smiled at him. "Are you ready to go to war for

our people?" she asked.

Owen nodded. "I'll do whatever it takes."

She smiled, but still looked grim. "I don't know if that will be enough. But it will do." She reached out and touched him, took his right hand into hers. "You have been marked as a Storyteller. That is high magic. You are more involved in this than I thought." She kissed him softly on one cheek and then the other. "Thank you for helping my people. For helping my son."

Owen looked from the female Witch to Jace and blushed. "It is my pleasure."

Their conversation was cut short when a blood curdling scream slashed through the air. Owen watched as several Shadows landed around them, surrounding them. In the centre was the most frightening man Owen had ever seen.

The man was tall and broad shouldered. He had dark skin and his eyes looked black in the night. He wore a long white coat that flapped in the wind. Magic sparked off of his skin and crackled in the air. Owen knew without being told that this was Harold Crushing.

He gestured with his hands, and the Shadows moved with lightning speed. Every Witch in attendance was held in a Shadow's grasp, unable to move, unable to free themselves. Owen saw many of them straining against their captors but to no use. Crushing grinned at them. "So much magic, yet so weak. So very weak." His voice was like thick molasses, cloying and suffocating. "Did you really think that I'd let you harm me?"

Owen could see the blackness flashing in his eyes and knew there was no kindness there, no love. He knew this man's soul was as black as the night that surrounded them. Crushing smiled cruelly when he saw them standing among the Witches.

He pointed at Bartley. "I might have known I'd find you here, brother."

Bartley scoffed. "You are no brother of mine."

"Do we not share the same mother? Do we not come from the same womb?"

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“That does not make us brothers. What you are doing here tonight is wrong.”

“And what is it that you think I plan to do?”

“You plan to open the Realms, to take control of them.”

Crushing laughed. The sound was like glass breaking on concrete. “You think that my plans are so small minded? You think all I want is more power?” He gestured to the Witches around him. “I have already dined on many of these fine women. I have all the power I need. What I want...”

He came closer to them, so close that the sparks flying from his skin reached them. Owen could smell them burning in the air. “What I want,” he said, “is immortality.”



## Chapter Thirteen

It was Bartley's turn to laugh. "No one is immortal. All of us die and go back to the earth as we are supposed to. It has always been this way."

"Those are the old ways, I'm afraid," Crushing replied, his grin deepening. "And times are changing." He stepped closer, the black in his eyes shining malevolently. "But I wouldn't say no to a snack along the way."

He reached out his hands, and Owen yelled in protest when a bolt of lightning struck Jace in the chest. Jace was dragged along the ground and then lifted into the air, gliding towards Crushing. Jace's mother hissed and tried once more to free herself from the Shadow that held her in its grasp.

Crushing turned to face her. "You will want to watch this. You will enjoy this, I promise you." He looked Jace in the eyes and held his gaze. "The first male Witch in a century, perhaps the only one ever created. I shall enjoy your power most of all, your magic. With your magic, I will open the Realms and I shall rule. With the power of the Realms at my command, I shall live forever."

Crushing looked at Bartley. "You thought this was all about power. It is. But it's more than that. The Witches must invoke the magic to return to their Realms. I have seen their rituals inside my head. When all of you are gone, I will open the Realms myself and they will be mine."

With a malevolent smile, Crushing brought Jace closer and lowered

his mouth to Jace's. He took a deep breath in and Owen saw blue light flowing from Jace's mouth to Crushing's. Electricity sparked through the air and suddenly, shockingly, Owen knew what was happening. Jace was dying.

"No!" he screamed. "No!" He lunged forward and tried to pull Jace away but when he touched his lover, electricity spasmed through him and he was thrown to the ground. Bartley was there in moments, helping him up.

"Do something!" Owen shouted at him. "Why don't you do something! He's dying!"

"This isn't for me to do," Bartley said. "This isn't for any of us." He motioned to the Witches held by the Shadows. "Only you. The books have whispered to me of you for years. Do not let their prophecies be wrong."

"He's dying!" Owen screamed. "What can I do? How can I fight him?"

"Use your gift!" Bartley urged. "Use what is inside you. You are the Storyteller. Do what must be done and weave a tale!"

Owen spared no thought for what he did next. He grabbed the quill and leather bound book from his pocket. As soon as he opened the book, he felt the tingling in his hand, felt the magic of it spread up his arm and into the rest of his body.

He put the quill to the paper and wrote: Spiders have existed in myth, as guardians, as protectors. Spiders weave webs around their enemy, weave webs around the danger. Spiders wrap their dead in webs of fine gossamer thread to suffocate them.

The tingling in Owen's hand strengthened and grew. He looked down at the words he'd written on the paper and watched them disappear as his hand began to shake and vibrate. "What's happening?" Owen asked. "What's going on?"

"You are invoking magic," Bartley whispered.

The quill in Owen's hand disappeared and the glow in his hand intensified. Against his will, his hand shot out, the glow increasing to a blinding white flash. A loud bang filled the air and the light grew. Owen felt as if his hand would be ripped from his arm, as if his hand was on fire.

When the light cleared, and he could see again, Owen gasped. Standing in front of Crushing was a spider. It was no ordinary spider, however. It was huge, well over two stories tall. Its pincers moved menacingly and its many eyes glared at its enemy. Crushing laughed loudly. He let Jace fall to the ground. Owen feared that he was dead and felt his heart breaking.

"A spider?" he grinned at them. "You think a spider could take me down?"

"Where did that come from?" Owen whispered to Bartley.

"From you," Bartley said. "From your words. You must tell it what to do."

"I don't have the quill anymore."

"You never needed the quill. Tell the book what you want."

Owen opened the book and the quill on the palm of his right hand began to glow again. He closed his eyes and thought: *Take him, he is yours.*

A breeze ripped through the air, and Crushing's screams echoed around them. Owen opened his eyes and what he saw took his breath away: the spider had lunged for Crushing, taken him into its many legs. Crushing was trying to fire magic at the spider, great sparks leaving his hands and crackling in the air.

The spider, however, was immune. It began to wrap Crushing in white gossamer thread, again and again, until Crushing was covered from shoulder to toes. He looked at Bartley and Owen, sneered at them. "I will not be taken down so easily. I will not lose! The Realms will be mine!"

"They belong to the Witches," Owen said. He faced Crushing and felt the magic in him rush through his blood. "I am their protector and you will not harm them."

Crushing screamed as the spider wrapped his head in more gossamer thread, filling his mouth and covering his face. When Crushing was completely covered, the spider turned to look at Owen. Owen could swear it moved its head in some sort of a bow.

"Thank you," Owen whispered. "You have done well today."

The spider blinked at him and faded. Crushing faded with the spider, fading away as if he were a dream and nothing more.

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Then there was nothing in front of them. They heard another earth shattering cry and watched as the Shadows holding the Witches began to melt into nothingness. A harsh breeze ripped through the air and scattered the Shadows into the wind.

When they were gone, silence fell. The circle of Witches stood where they were, too shocked or too tired to move. Jace lay in the centre of the circle where Crushing had been. He lay very still. .

Owen watched as Jace's mother parted from the crowd of Witches and approached Jace. She kneeled by him and took his hand in hers. She looked up at Owen with tears streaming from her eyes.

"Jace is dead," she said.

"No!" Owen screamed, hardly aware that it was him. "No, please no!"

He ran into the circle and fell in front of Jace. He gathered him to his arms, Jace's skin cold and clammy. His lover was dead.

## Chapter Fourteen

Owen cried.

Thick sobs wracked his body as he clutched Jace to his chest. He rocked back and forth, the sorrow almost too much to bear. Bartley and Jace's mother stood behind him, not saying a word. Nothing needed to be said.

"You weren't supposed to die," Owen whispered between sobs. "You weren't supposed to die. I was supposed to help protect you, all of you. You weren't supposed to die."

Owen's heart was torn in two and beyond repair. The love he carried for Jace was so huge it began to pour from his hands in a soft light that made his skin glow. "You weren't supposed to die just when I found you. You healed my heart. I wanted you to know that. You made my heart well again."

Owen had no idea that light was streaming from him and enveloping Jace and himself. He had no idea that the light was so bright, so intense, Bartley and Jace's mother had to block their eyes. Owen had no idea that the light emanating from him filled the entire surrounding area of Point Peak. All he knew was Jace, the man he loved, was dead.

"You can't die now," Owen pleaded. He did nothing to stem the flow of tears sliding down his face. "You can't die. You can't die now, not after I've found you." A sob left him, and he rocked faster.

"I love you," he whispered fiercely. "I never told you that I love you. I never had the chance. I love you, Jace. I love you."

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There was a loud crackling in the air and then the light began to fade.

Owen gasped as Jace's body moved in his arms. His sobs stopped as he watched Jace's chest begin to rise and fall with his breathing. When the light faded completely, Jace opened his eyes and looked up into Owen's.

"I love you, too," he said.

## Chapter Fifteen

Owen cried fresh tears, but these were happy ones. He crushed his lips to Jace's and held onto him tightly, kissing him again and again. He felt Jace reach up and wrap his arms around his neck and held him, pulled him closer. When Owen pulled away from the kiss, he looked down at Jace. "How is this possible?" he asked. "How can you be alive? Crushing killed you. He took your magic."

"Love is the greatest magic of all." Jace's mother stepped forward and put a hand on Owen's shoulder. "I am Quelen. I am the leader of the Witches and you have saved our people tonight. You have also invoked the magic we need to go back to the Realms."

"But I didn't do a ritual," Owen said. "You need a ritual to go back to the Realms, don't you?"

"Normally, yes. But as I said, love is the greatest magic of all."

Owen looked down at Jace. "I guess this is goodbye."

The thought of losing Jace filled Owen with pain. To say goodbye to the man he loved after such a short time, he didn't know if he could stand letting him go so soon after getting him back.

"Jace will stay with you if he wishes it so." She looked down at her son.

"More than anything in the world."

"But how is that possible?" Owen looked up at Quelen. "I thought you always had to return to the Realms after All Hallows Eve."

Quelen nodded. "We do, but only because we choose to. We are

safer there. But Jace will be safe with you to protect him. I have no doubt of that." She bent lower and kissed Owen on the forehead. "You have saved my people. Whenever you need my help, you have only to ask for it, and I will come. You have done our people a great service tonight, Storyteller."

"Crushing will be back, won't he?" Owen asked.

Quelen nodded. "Yes, something that evil will never truly die, I'm afraid. But when he comes again, we will be ready for him."

A musical sound filtered through the air. It was like a hundred wind chimes all sounding at once. All the Witches turned to see an opening forming in the rock wall behind them. The hole was filled with such pure light that it made Owen forget about all the hurt he had experienced. The light filtered out and filled Point Peak with brightness.

"We must leave now, before the door closes." She stood. "Take care of my son."

"I will."

Quelen nodded and smiled. She turned and walked towards the lit doorway, the other Witches following in her wake. One by one, they slipped through the entrance until no Witches were left. The light faded slowly until, at last, they were left in darkness.

Bartley, Owen and Jace were silent for a moment until Bartley spoke. "I don't know about you two, but I could really use a beer."

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"So what happens now?" Owen asked.

They watched children trick or treating along Owen's street. Each of them had a cold bottle of beer in hand, and they sipped and watched goblins frolic with vampires. Owen had always felt Halloween was pretend, that it was all in good fun. Now he knew better. Now he knew that the things that went bump in the night were real.

"We'll continue to stand guard," Bartley said. "Crushing will be back or worse."

"There's worse than him?"



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Bartley took a drink of his beer before answering. "There are all kinds of evil in the world. Some are darker than others. Either way, we must guard Garden City against whatever comes." He turned to face Owen. "I will need to train you."

"Train me?"

"Yes, train you to use your magic. You are a Guardian of the Realms now. There is much you need to learn, Storyteller. I have a feeling that you are more than mortal now." He took another slug of beer. "But there is time for that later. I have something else to worry about."

"The Shadow?" Jace asked.

Bartley nodded. "He will be awaiting my return. I hope that the chains have held him and that the wards I placed on my door kept him prisoner."

"What are you going to do with him?" Owen asked.

Bartley grinned, his white eyes and teeth flashing in the darkness. "I have a few ideas." He stood. "But now I will take my leave. I may go do some trick or treating of my own."

Bowing slightly to each of them, Bartley turned and walked down the street. He was soon lost amongst the crowds of children.

## Chapter Sixteen

Closing the apartment door behind them, Owen took Jace's hand in his.

Neither spoke as Owen led him into the bedroom. They stood in the darkness, close enough to each other to hear their hearts beating.

"I thought I lost you," Owen whispered.

"I thought I was lost to you," Jace said. "But you brought me back." He kissed Owen softly, and his lips were hot. "You gave me the greatest gift anyone has ever given me."

"What's that?"

"Your love."

A warmth filled Owen then, soft and wonderful. "I love you, Jace."

"I love you, too."

"You've given me a gift, too."

Jace kissed him softly again. "What gift is that?"

"You've given me back my heart. So now I can give it to you."

Owen lowered his lips to Jace's and kissed him then, hard and full. He let his tongue flit in and out of Jace's mouth, exploring it even as he slipped off Jace's robes. Jace pulled at Owen's shirt and pushed him on the bed so that he could pull Owen's shirt over his head and pull off Owen's pants. He stood naked in front of his lover, and he had never seen a more beautiful thing.

Jace pushed Owen's legs wider apart and then, slowly, pushed a finger inside Owen's asshole. He pushed it farther in and then pulled it

out, only to put two fingers into Owen.

Owen, lying on his back, bucked and moaned, clenching around Jace's fingers. "I want you inside me," Owen said. "I need you inside me. I can't wait. Don't make me wait."

Jace spit on his hand and slicked up his cock and Owen's ass. "As you wish," he said, grinning. He placed the head of his cock at Owen's asshole and pushed his dick inside Owen, who moaned loudly, clutching at the bedclothes.

"More," Owen said. "I want all of you. All of you in me." He hooked his legs around Jace so that he could pull Jace farther into him. With a loud groan, Jace slid his cock all the way inside Owen. They stayed that way for a moment so Owen could get used to the size of Jace's cock, his asshole clenching and unclenching around his hard cock.

Slowly at first, Jace began to slide in and out, in and out, taking care to make each thrust last as long as he could. Owen's hard cock hit his stomach each time he thrust into him and Owen's moans mingled with Jace's.

"You're so beautiful," Jace said. "So beautiful."

"And so are you, the most beautiful man I have ever seen."

Jace sped up his thrusts, moving in and out of Owen with more and more speed, each thrust now ending with the slap of skin against skin. He spit in his hand and then started rubbing it up and down along the shaft of Owen's thick cock.

"Oh god," Owen said. "If you keep that up..."

"I want you to come." Jace said. "I want us to come together."

"Come inside me. I want you to come inside me."

Jace thrust harder and harder into Owen and continued to run his hand along the shaft of Owen's dick. He felt it pulse and jerk in his hand and knew that Owen was close. He could feel Owen's ass clenching harder around his cock with each thrust.

"Oh god, Jace, I'm going to..."

"Come for me, Owen. Come for me. I want you to come all over me."

With a loud moan, Owen came, spurts of cum landing on Jace's

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face, his chest, Owen's stomach. When the hotness of Owen's cum hit his skin, it sent Jace over the edge. He came in hot, thick spurts that filled Owen's asshole.

"I love you," Owen whispered.

Jace leaned down to kiss him. "I love you, too." He kissed Owen again.

Neither noticed that the room had filled with bright, white light that came from the glow of their skin. Neither noticed the soft tinkling music that filled the air around them.

They had eyes only for each other.

The End

*Stay tuned for Demons: The Written Word Book Two*

### **Author's Bio**

Jamieson has been writing since a young age when he realized he could be writing instead of paying attention in school. Since then, he has created many worlds in which to live his fantasies and live out his dreams.

He is the author of several novels which include: Valentine, Finding Beauty, Hunted, Hope Falls, Eagle Valley and Dragons Cove.

He currently lives in Ottawa Ontario Canada with his husband Robert and his cat, Mave, who thinks she's people.

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