**Chapter 1**

THE DAY BEFORE YOUR LIFE changes forever feels like any other day.

My life just went from unbelievable, to completely messed up. How does this kind of stuff even happen to me? Wasn’t it enough that I accepted that there was such thing as witches? Or that I accepted my fate as a witch? Now the universe had to go and throw me a curve ball like this.

Un-freaking-believable.

Lately, I was a magnet for disaster, which appeared to not have changed. My life was exhausting. Not to mention, I was still recovering from a psychotic dream with a very old and very dead witch.

*Lucky me*.

See, I said I was glue for trouble.

And to think I thought Gavin was the bad boy. He doesn’t have shit on me. Which brought me to my current predicament, or maybe that was an understatement. My eyes still couldn’t acknowledge what was right in front of me, smiling with those heart sinking dimples.

This had to be some kind of after effect or symptom from dreamscaping. I still wasn’t certain what the heck that was. What other logical explanation could there be?

“Lukas?” I heard the incredibility in my own voice, just as perplexed as the rest of me. Who wouldn’t be more than a little freaked out at seeing a figment of your imagination come to life? I mean this wasn’t fiction, this was my real life.

Maybe leaving my house for some fresh air at the farmers market hadn’t been the smartest move. I was known to have my ideas backfire on me. Hell who knows, maybe I was still sick. I could always black out again.

His breathtaking smile captured me from across the tomatoes, and he was not in the least bit shocked to see me. Whereas my jaw had literally dropped to the ground, and I had yet to pick it up. Sandy hair lazily flopped on his forehead.

*Seriously*. It couldn’t possibly be. I pinched myself, squeezed my eyes shut, and demanded that I wake up. How had I fallen asleep? It was the only rationalization I could deduce, even though I swore if felt so real. The only time I ever saw Lukas was when I was dreaming… In conclusion, I must be dreaming.

He walked in front of me, and my eyes ate up his easy strides. It felt like a slow motion film. His carefree smile bloomed on his tan face when he reached me, deep dimples and all. He stroked a hand alongside my cheek, while I stood there frozen in place—dumbfounded.

The feeling was exactly how I dreamed, soft and tender.

“You’re real,” his honey silk voice caressed my ears as easily as his hand on my face.

I leaned into his palm. The spicy warmth of his scent rocked my senses. *I’m real*, I thought. He was the one in *my* dreams. “Lukas…”

I couldn’t seem to get past his name. Or past the fact that he stood in front of me for my eyes to feast upon. He was my best friend of another dimension, another realm – the realm of dreams. I literally poured my heart out to him on numerous occasions. He was the closest I’d ever been to anyone because he wasn’t real.

He laughed nodding, emerald eyes shining in the sunlight. “Yep. In the flesh. I always wondered if we’d meet somewhere other than your dreams. Not that I mind being in your dreams. It’s the highlight of my night.”

My head was spinning so fast I was afraid it was going to fall off. I could imagine it rolling down the Riverfront market next to a runaway apple.

Okay, I was game. If we were going to pretend that this was in fact real and not a product of my dreams, then game on. “How is this possible?” I asked, unable to tear my eyes away. Who knew, he might vanish. Poof. Gone. And I was back to wondering if I was losing my sanity.

His hand took mine in his, idly playing with our fingers. “Well I am a freshman at University of North Carolina in Wilmington. I guess fate decided we should meet,” he said, completely dodging what I really wanted to know.

I wanted to know how he was even *here,* flesh and blood. How he was alive?

Fate wouldn’t be so cruel as to have him practically under my nose all these years. I had even toured the campus last year. That was the University I had chosen to attend next year.

Should I be angry? Should I be overjoyed? Or just awestruck?

If we were still playing the *he is real game*, then I felt all of the above and a gazillion other emotions I couldn’t identify. Well, until my brain started functioning again.

“Umm, that’s not exactly what I meant. How are you even alive?”

He looked at me liked I’d grown a third eye. “Don’t you know?”

Duh. If I knew would I be asking? “Know what?”

“I just assumed that you knew. You’re a witch,” he whispered, moving in closer to me, avoiding anyone overhearing our conversation. His breath tickled my ear.

I rolled my eyes. “I know I’m a witch. What does that have to do with this?” I asked, gesturing to the two of us standing in the middle of the farmers market.

The look he sent me was like I’d lost my mind. Maybe he wasn’t that far off, because right now nothing in my world made sense. “You dreamscape Brianna,” he said calmly.

“Dreamscape,” I repeated. “Yeah I know. Am I dreamscaping now?”

His darker brows furrowed together. “No. This is real.”

I shook my head. “It can’t be.” Thinking he was feeding me a line of BS, teasing me. But I knew Lukas and the expression on his face was stonily serious. This wasn’t a game.

He looked around the farmer’s market. “I think right now isn’t the best place to have this discussion. Maybe we should meet tomorrow and talk. It sounds like we have a lot of catching up.”

I was so aggravated by my ignorance that I wanted to scream. Why did everyone around me know what was going on but me? “I can’t tomorrow, I have school.”

He ran a hand through his highlighted hair. “Right, I forgot. How about this weekend? Saturday?” He smiled warmly.

I nodded my head. “Yeah I can meet you Saturday.”

“How about on campus? I could show you around and we could get something to eat.”

“Sure,” I agreed. “That sounds fine.” At this point, I would have met him on the moon if he’d asked. My mind was so jumbled and lightheaded from it all.

Lukas put a hand on my shoulder. “Hey, are you going to be okay?” he asked, having seen my face stripped of color.

I straightened my shoulders and met his concerned gaze. “Yeah, I’ll be fine. It’s just been an overwhelming week. I—I can’t believe you’re real,” I stuttered.

He grinned at me with the sun shining at his back. “I’ve waited a long time to see you.” His hand lifted my chin until I looked into his dark green eyes.

I gulped. A memory of us sharing a kiss in one my dreams had my cheeks staining red. I guess best friends don’t kiss, maybe he was more. I didn’t know anything anymore.

“Here take my number.” He grabbed an old receipt from his pocket, scribbling on the back of it before handing it to me. “Text me Saturday when you’re on your way.”

I took the wrinkly slip from his hand and felt the tiniest surge. Perhaps it was all my own doing, but something told me that Lukas wasn’t at all what I thought. He wasn’t just a college student who I happened to dream of.

“Okay,” I replied on autopilot. My voice sounded drained and tired.

“See you soon,” he said. “You could always dream of me.” The grin on his face was playful as he turned and left.

I watched him walk away, weaving around the booths of the market. “I don’t even know how,” I mumbled to myself.

I stared into thin air long after he was gone. A little elder lady with a bag of veggies and fruits bumped into me, startling me from my trance. Like a rush, the sounds of the noisy market came back at full speed.

“Pardon me,” said the fragile grandma-like little lady. “I can’t seem to see over this bag.”

“It’s okay,” I assured. “Do you need help to your car? I was just leaving.” I asked.

“Aren’t you the sweetheart, but I got it.” She waddled ahead of me.

Following much slower, I headed to the parking lot with a few purchases under my arm and drove home. When I walked through the front door, I heard the faintest meow from upstairs.

“Lunar,” I muttered, immediately thinking of Gavin. How was I going to explain Lukas? Where did that leave us? I wasn’t sure I wanted anything to change, yet I knew this was the kind of *thing* that changed everything—that scared me shitless.

Setting the bags down, I jogged upstairs to my room. Jarring the door open, Lunar nudge out his little moist pink nose. I scooped him up and snuggled against his downy fur, scratching his head. Lunar, who was just as happy to see me, starting purring a melody.

“Common on stinker, let’s go make dinner,” I murmured to him. His ears perked up at my voice.

In the kitchen, I started washing and cutting the fresh vegetables I’d bought. Lunar wove in between my legs, making a nuisance of himself and attacked my shoelaces. I couldn’t stop thinking about Lukas. I thought about the kiss we’d shared and all of the intimate details I poured out to him. At least Lukas already knew about Gavin thanks to one of my blubbering moments and my crazy subconscious.

How had I gone from having not a single guy look my way, to two possible boyfriends? That was something I was sure I couldn’t handle. No way was I doing a juggling act. But right now I didn’t know what else to do.

Distracted by Lunar’s antics and my mixed-up thoughts, I was being careless. In my absent mindedness, my finger slipped right as I brought the blade down. With a curse, I stuck my bleeding finger in my mouth trying to alleviatethe sting. I know it wasn’t the most sanitary action, but that was the least of concerns on my building mountain of problems.

Luckily, it was just a nick, and I ran the wound under the faucet. Throwing on a Band-Aid, I finished dinner just as my Aunt Clara walked in.

“Hey how are you feeling?” she asked, pushing the hair from my face. I think she needed to make sure I hadn’t broken out in a fever.

“I’m fine,” I insisted, shaking off her hand.

Lunar meowed at her feet. She bent down and picked up the little black fur ball, saving me from any more scrutiny. “And who is this little guy?” she asked in a baby voice. Lunar just looked at her with his sad blue eyes.

“That…is trouble. I named him Lunar.”

“Well Lunar, you are too cute.” She rubbed his belly, and he closed his eyes in appreciation.

“Are you really okay with this?” I asked. I didn’t want to burden her with any more stress or responsibility.

She nodded her head. “Yes, I thought it was a great idea.” Her expression turned serious as she eyed me. “He cares for you.”

I swallowed. Guilt, there it was, swarming into my belly. “I know,” I added quietly keeping my eyes on the floor.

“Hmm, something smells good.” She set Lunar on his feet, and he padded under the table batting at a loose tie from one of the chair cushions.

Dishing up dinner, we sat down at the table. It wasn’t long before she picked up on my distractedness. I was unusually quiet and kept pushing my rice around my plate in aimless patterns. So much for trying to keep my cool.

Setting her food aside, she asked, “Brianna what’s going on? You have been pretending to eat for the last five minutes.”

I stopped spinning circles with my rice and intentionally shoveled a fork full in my mouth. She lifted a brow completely unimpressed by my grand gesture.

Sighing, I tried to find a reasonable explanation for my spacey-ness. “I’m just tired.” What a lame excuse, but it was all I had. I forced myself to swallow. “I’ve got so much catching up to do at school tomorrow. I probably should get to bed early.”

That she agreed on and it got me out of the limelight. “You go on up to bed, I’ll take care of the dishes.”

I nodded and scooped up a yawning Lunar. Looks like we both had exhausting days. Safely behind closed doors, I dropped the façade at being okay. Nothing could compare to the anxiety I was feeling. Tomorrow was my first day back since my dream incident with Morgana. The loony witch had tried to flatten Gavin with a spell and I ended up throwing myself in its path, taking the full force of her wrath. It knocked unconscious and battered my body pretty good. Lily, Gavin’s mom, had given me a potion that had healed most of the aches.

Seeing him at school tomorrow, I knew I would have to be an exceptional actress to pull off the kind of act I would need. I knew he would be able to pick up on my scattered emotions. To make matters worse, his sister, who was also my friend, could read auras. I didn’t even think there was a way to fake those.

Now with my impending return to school and the newest development with Lukas, I was shit up a creek. There was no way this situation had a positive ending, no matter how I looked at it. Either way I knew I was going to lose someone.

I was royally screwed.