**Chapter 1**

The day before my life changed, felt like any other day. No warning bells. No shift in the winds. No forewarning. That would have been too easy. And I was anything but simple.

I’m a witch. Not just any witch, a clàr silte, whatever that means. I’m still unsure. What I do know is that it’s ancient and powerful magic—and of course deadly. I had almost killed the guy I loved above all else, the guy I would have died for.

Twisted.

I had almost killed the guy I was willing to die for.

Ironic.

The ocean breeze played with the ends of my auburn hair, lifting it off my face as I stared at the moon’s glow reflecting onto to the clear blue waters. What a magical night. It was chilly outside, but not enough to keep you locked indoors. Sweater weather, the kind of nights I loved. There was something absolutely peaceful about being at the beach during twilight, the moon washing over my skin, the sea salt air tickling my nose, and the cool sand between my toes.

Nothing called to me more than the shore. I felt some kind affinity with nature, more precisely with water. Maybe it went hand in hand with the whole weathercasting. The gentle winds seemed to caress my cheek in caring, the moon wrapped around me like a cloak of warmth, and the soothing waves sung me a lullaby.

If only I felt as calm and serene as the star-strewn night looked above me.

Lying on the sand, I stared at the sky. The twinkling dots formed pictures for my distraction, which I desperately needed to take away the gnawing feeling in my stomach. Inside, I was a bundle of raw emotion, turning in chaotic loops.

Whenever I was troubled or feeling lost and alone, I retreated to the water’s edge. The sights, sounds, and smells all offered me a comfort I could find nowhere else—the sloshing waters, the cries of birds on the hunt, and the undeniable scent of salt. Well, recently, Gavin’s arms had offered that same kind of security, but I couldn’t find it inside myself to run to him. Not when he was the root of my turmoil. Or more specifically, what I had done to him was.

A week might have come and gone since I had found out what kind of witch I was—since I had committed that unthinkable act to Gavin. God, what a week it had been. My face hurt from pretending not to be torn into pieces inside, like I wasn’t scared of what I was or what was happening to me; the last thing I wanted was to alarm my aunt or my friends that something was wrong with me.

It was so much more difficult than it sounded. They were like PI’s, picking up little clues or catching me staring into space with a sad frown. My appetite had vanished along with my sense of humor. So yeah, I was doing a pretty shitty job trying to keep my sorrows under wraps.

Oh, and I hadn’t practiced any magic at all since that night.

Honestly, I didn’t know if I wanted to again. I felt tainted and ashamed. And the messed up part was that I was mostly ashamed of the fact that there was this huge part of me that had liked it. The power I had felt was Utopian. The power I had gained was still with me. I could feel the small amount of magic I had stolen from Gavin swirling in me. His essence merged with mine in a way that was both exhilarating…and hot.

And I didn’t mean like warm; I meant sexy, in a hot, turned-on kind of way.

*Ugh*.

What was wrong with me?

Before, I’d always felt this unexplainable connection to Gavin, as if fate were pushing us together. Now, having his magic in my blood created a pull that was greater. *Titanic* greater. When I wasn’t feeling down in the dumps, I was imagining doing all kinds of wicked and sinful with that boy and his mouth.

It was one extreme to the other. One minute I was on the verge of tears, and then the next, I was gazing at his lips like they were the most edible things on the menu. Gavin and his damn lip ring. He could have a least made it easier for me to resist and not look so drool-worthy all the time. It was maddening how much hotness he oozed.

My fingers dug into the grainy sand. Just thinking about him made me long to see him. And do a whole lot more than just look. I bit my lip, contemplating whether it would be wise to call him. Everything in my body screamed, *Yes. Yes. Yes.* But in my head, I thought that maybe it was something darker beckoning me to him, and for completely different reasons.

Magic.

My cheeks flushed against a chilly breeze as it passed over my skin. He had a way of heating my blood with just a fluttering thought. My phone vibrated in my back pocket, pulling me back down to Earth. Speak of the devil. It was Gavin.

His name alone caused fireflies to flit in my belly, but as my finger hovered over the answer key, I bit my lip, contemplating. What was I going to say? Sorry? How many times could I apologize before I felt better? Before the shame stopped? I had broken a rule I had vowed never to cross: I hurt someone I loved.

Consciously or not, the result was the same. My powers were controlling me, when I should be controlling them. That made me dangerous—to everyone.

My finger slid over, hitting the ignore button, and I shoved the phone back into my pocket. Now I felt guilt—hordes of it--because I wanted nothing more than to talk to him, unload these mixed up feelings I was having.

Under normal circumstances, he would be the person I ran to, until recently, that is. Before Gavin, I didn’t have problems—not like this—but when I did have a life crisis, there was Lukas.

Gavin wasn’t the only guy in my life I’d been avoiding.

Blowing off Lukas for a week hadn’t entirely been an easy feat either. Time was catching up to me, and I knew that I was going to have to face him sooner or, more preferably, later. I’d been flirting with the idea of telling him what had happened. For the past week, I’d done everything possible to forget the nightmarish thing I’d done. Working myself into exhaustion. Even tried casting a variety of memory spells just short of permanent memory loss. I was probably lucky that there hadn’t been any permanent damage to my self-induced *treatments* or that I hadn’t accidently turned myself into a toad.

It hadn’t worked.

Nothing worked.

Deep down, I knew that the only one person who might have been able to take away those feelings was the one I was running from.

*Gavin*.

It was like a double-edge sword.

*God hates me*.

On one hand, Gavin could offer me the solace I sought. On the other hand, he was part of what I didn’t want to face, couldn’t face.

So here I was alone, trying to work through what I was.

A clàr silte.

Man that was a mouthful. Magic so strong, it was both feared and coveted. How did a girl like me, someone so ordinary and naïve deserve that kind of power? What was I possibly to do with such supremacy at my fingertips? Every time I dipped into those powers, I lost a piece of my soul and my aura darkened. The more of my aura I lost, the greater the risk I would give myself into the darkness.

Black magic.

If that weren’t enough to be scared shitless, then I was a fool.

And Aunt Clara didn’t raise no fool… I think.

This whole thing felt unjust. Anger pumped through me at the unfairness of it all. Lately, anger and self-pity had been my best friends. I didn’t want to hurt other witches. I wasn’t a thief. But what if I couldn’t stop it? I had seen the shock and fear in Gavin’s eyes that night, even if it had just been a flicker. The pain that had radiated on his face was seared in my memory. It infuriated me that he had suffered at my hands.

I shot to my feet, open-armed with the waters turning in front of me, and I thought I should be struck with lightning. The sky opened up with a crack of angry light and ground-shaking thunder. The air and water around me were nurtured by my feelings and lashed out from them. It was just so.

All my anger and pain splashed across the dark sky and over the almost-black waters. Tingles ran through my veins, and I threw my head back. It felt amazing to let my anger flow into the elements around me. They took away the emotions that spread through every muscle, every bone, and every pore in my body.

I sensed the connection from within me, spreading out to the world around me. Wind. Water. Lightning—a different link for each piece of Mother Nature. I realized then that this energy I was extending to the elements could help heal the wounds breaking inside me.

Walking to the shoreline, I waded ankle-deep into the freezing water. It burned through me, cutting off my magic. As I stared down at my reflection in the water, I saw that I didn’t look like the girl I’d imagined I would have been when I grew up. Large, blazing, purple eyes stared back at me and my lip trembled. On the brink of eighteen, I had wanted to be a strong, independent woman who knew what she wanted in life, not a frightened girl unsure of her future, unsure of herself. That was not who my mom would have raised me to be, and it wasn’t the girl my aunt had taught me to be.

I was acting like a whiny child.

I wanted to be someone my aunt and my parents could be proud of. So why wasn’t I? Why was I sitting here feeling dejected and sorry for myself?

In the end, my hiding from the world, from my friends, and from myself wasn’t going to accomplish anything. It wasn’t going to make my life all peachy and rosy again. The only person who could change the path I was headed down was me.

This was who I was. Nothing I could do or say would change it. No amount of begging, pleading, or wishing otherwise would make me normal. Did I really want *normal* if I couldn’t have Gavin?

I knew what I was going to do, what I was born to do: wield magic.

I straightened my shoulders and lifted my chin. Waving my hand out in front of me, I felt the stirrings of magic pulse to life in my blood. The roaring waves stilled, the howling winds quieted, and the sky was once again clear and filled with stars, just as I commanded them.

I could almost hear Morgana laughing down at me. *That’s my girl. About damn time too*.