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# PROMISED

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*The Wolves of Kercull Book One*

**S. CINDERS**



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This book contains fantasy themes appropriate for mature readers only. Nothing in this book should be interpreted as Blushing Books' or the author's advocating any non-consensual sexual activity.

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## PROLOGUE

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### TRIX

The darkness of night settled over my village like a thick blanket luring all of its inhabitants to sleep. No one would be stupid enough to go outside once the sun has set. The monsters that live in the shadows—they can prick your heels in the daytime. A nuisance to be sure, however, the world is covered in shadow when the sun finally retreats. The moon reigns supreme—and the monsters walk freely in the streets. No one is safe.

I grew up with stories about children who disobeyed the decree to stay inside when darkness came. It never ended well, usually, they were gobbled up without a trace or a parent found a piece of clothing or a lock of hair.

There was the other tale that was rather popular... Let me think... It was told about someone's cousin or uncle who went out to the privy before dawn—never to be seen again.

I never used the necessary at night—ever. I was a good girl who listened to my elders and did what I was told.

My village was a small one, just shy of five hundred people. Quite a few of those happen to share my same last name. The Aber-

nathies, they called us: Josiah, Joshua, Jolene, Jessica, Juliana, James and me—Beatrix.

I must have asked my momma a hundred times why I was named with a B when all the rest were Js. She would smile—that tired smile of hers that I loved so dearly. Then she would lean forward until her forehead touched my own.

I remember her breath smelled of mint and tea, another familiarity that I would come to always associate with her.

“Beatrix,” she would say, “The moon goddess blessed us with a seventh child when the doctors told me that I couldn’t carry another baby to term. Your name means blessed, and we are truly blessed to have you in our midst. The moon goddess has great plans for you. I cannot wait to see the woman you become.”

But Mother would never see who I am today.

She fell ill with nightshade fever when I was three and ten. There is a plant that blooms by the light of the moon, night-blooming jasmine. It is said to have incredible healing properties and I knew in my heart that if I were to make a tea with this root, she would be healed. But no matter how much I begged and pleaded my father would not allow me to go.

My mother passed seven days later.

Two years following, in my fifteenth year, my father caught the fever. It was my older brothers that restrained me from going out and getting the night-blooming jasmine.

And again, seven days later my father passed.

I am now nine and ten years. The twins, Jessica and Juliana are the only ones left to share our small cottage. The village had separated from us, no longer willing to interact with those that had been so cursed by death’s hand. Black magic, they would say, and spit at our feet when we went to trade for supplies.

Jess and Julie feared they would never find a husband. According to our culture, at three and twenty they were rapidly approaching old maid status. I never cared to have a husband. I had seen too many of my family die to want one of my own.

And now my two sisters had fallen ill with the fever. It had been three days, and I will not wait until the seventh day and bury the last of my kin. Mama always said that the moon goddess had great plans for me.

It was time to see if that was a lie or if I truly had a better purpose in this world.

I strapped a blade to my ankle and shoved another into my belt. Not bothering with skirts, I wore a pair of James's old clothes and my scuffed leather boots. Winding my thick brown hair into a tight bun I secured it firmly before grabbing a hat that would hide my face.

Let the monsters come—I was ready for them.

I opened the door and felt the wind caress my cheeks. It teased at the tendrils on the back of my neck and soothed my heated skin. The wind had always been my friend. I hoped that it proved true this night.

I prayed to the Moon Goddess to grant me safe passage. May the monsters that lurk in the shadows leave me be so that I could return and save my sisters. And if I died trying, at least we could all be together again in the stars.

The first step over was the hardest. And when my life was not ripped from my body, I breathed a sigh of relief. The wind urged me onward. The first step became ten and then fifty as I was swallowed up by the darkness.

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## TOBIAS AND THE WOLVES OF KENCULL

My pack brothers and I sat around the fire laughing and joking with one another, the high from our recent victory still racing through our veins. Our minor injuries had already begun to heal themselves—a handy benefit of being a werewolf.

Our pack was a small one, but we were the most feared in all of

Kencull. Some said that we were cursed, others that we were the devil's right hand. It was folly to go against us, after all, all werewolves are monsters.

Before my father passed the pack to me he explained the truth behind our strength and abilities. A century ago, in exchange for this blessing, my father promised the Moon Goddess that his heir would wed the seventh child of the high priestess.

It infuriated me that my father would so willingly bargain away my future. But then he explained: the other wolf packs were growing feral, killing their own, and ravaging the humans. My father knew that in order to save us he needed to align himself with the Moon Goddess.

There was a time when all wolves worshiped her. As time passed, another God had risen, and many of the wolves pledged allegiance to him. Abaddon was as old as the earth, a spirit, a fiend, an imp that delighted in wickedness and destruction.

As the years went forward many of our pack were lost. If my father hadn't forged the bond with the Moon Goddess the wolves of Kencull would be no more. I have waited for lifetimes for the seventh daughter of the high priestess to make herself known unto me.

But until then, my three wolf brothers and I will rejoice in the knowledge that we are blessed by the Goddess. I know there will come a time when I will have to sacrifice myself and mate with the witch but until then...

I looked over to see Cal and Silas had started wrestling. The wolves were anxious and I knew that they hated being without a mate. Our pack was an unusual one, and we thought ourselves to be the last of our kind.

I gave Jonah a curt nod when he whimpered that he wanted to play too. A good fight was almost as good as a good fucking or at least that is what we told ourselves. It wasn't often that I participated. Often the three of them would wrestle together. As the alpha, I had many worries and it was difficult for me to separate that

from idle time. But my need to be inside of my mate had been fierce lately. I couldn't help but wonder if my time for meeting her was close.

I was worried how her presence would affect the pack. Would they accept her? And more importantly would she accept them?

“Go play with Silas and Cal, I must run.”

Jonah immediately obeyed my command and in an instant I was transformed into my wolf, the ground pounding beneath my massive paws.

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## CHAPTER ONE

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### TOBIAS

Women had come and gone over the years, never staying long with our pack. I knew our physical appearance was pleasing to the gentler sex, and they liked our long thick cocks. But it was difficult to keep a human when living as a wolf.

My pack brothers had never even been tempted to take a mate. I supposed that they were content as we were, but I knew that in order to increase our pack we would need a Luna. My heart pounded as I ran, the wind pushing me to go further, run harder. My mind finally clearing of all the worries that plagued me.

Our wolf forms were critical to keeping our sanity. In this form, we could release the intense energy and magic that built up in our human bodies. It was freeing, better than any drug or drink that could be concocted.

There were moments in my wolf form when I had the uncontrollable urge to go and find her. In recent years, I had been better about suppressing that desire. For decades I ran and ran until I could barely move and still couldn't find the girl.

I began to run even faster, the trees blurring, my superhuman



senses anticipating every rock, tree and plant so that I could run through the forest unheeded. Werewolf blood causes one to be incredibly strong, highly intelligent and inhumanly fast.

I understood being a wolf. Everything was based on need—to protect, to provide and to dominate. These things weren't merely priorities they were the ways of life for us. I darted in a new direction and let the breeze dance through my fur as I raced across the ground at breakneck speed. I have always loved the wind; it brought promises of food, seasons changing, and showed when there was danger present.

I had come to within a mile of a village and began to slow. A new scent hit my nose. Forcing me to come to an abrupt stop. It was familiar and intriguing, sexy and innocent.

Mine! My wolf screamed in my mind.

There, not a hundred feet away from where I stood panting was a lad in baggy trousers and a hat that was two sizes too big. He hadn't noticed me yet as I blended in with the shadows. But I could hear his heart beating at a rapid rate and smelt the fear in the air.

What kind of sick joke was this? How could the Moon Goddess grant me a boy as a mate? We needed a Luna, I had no desire to take on a boy.

My jaw clenched as I watched him. I focused on the smell coming from the human. I could make out tones of citrus and flowers as well as the rich heady scent of womanhood. My mouth began to water.

I must have made a noise, which is unusual in the extreme. However, the youth tipped his face up and suddenly everything became clear. Smooth skin, flanked with high cheekbones, Cupid's bow lips and perfectly arched brows that reminded me of a raven's wing. The smell of Jasmine wafted from her, and it wasn't just the plant that she held in her hands.

This was no boy. Her dark eyes found me in the night and she inhaled sharply, but to the girl's credit, she didn't run.

I could see her swallow, the delicate skin of her neck so pale that

I could see as well as hear the blood pumping through her veins. And then to my greatest surprise, she raised her dainty chin in defiance.

“I am not afraid of you, wolf.”

I almost wished I could have responded. The girl was certainly afraid of me; the stench of fear was rolling off her in waves. And yet she stood her ground far braver than any warrior I had ever met.

I took a step nearer, wanting to rub my scent all over her, to mix my earthy tones with her Jasmine until we were interchangeable. It was a dizzying thought that hadn't struck me with anyone else before.

The girl clutched her flowers, the stems bending and breaking under her death grip.

I closed my mouth, uncertain if she had seen my fangs and took another step closer. When she didn't run away, I took another step and then another until her scent was wrapping around me like a vise. I wanted to sink my fangs into her delicate neck, mark her for my own.

“Are you the monster that lives in the night?” Only the faintest of tremors in her voice.

I nodded my wolf's head. I wouldn't lie to her. We were monsters, and yet my pack didn't attack humans. Only those that served Abaddon slaughtered the human.

She was shaking, her hand mangling the flowers in her grasp.

“I need to get these flowers to my family,” she explained urgently. “My sisters will die without it.”

Again, I nodded my head. I would follow the girl to her home and she could save her sisters. Then she was mine.

She took a tentative step away from me and I followed her like a pup. I felt a little of the tension leave her as she realized that I wasn't there to harm her.

She began to run, and I remained close on her heels. When the cottage at the edge of the village came into view I didn't hesitate to follow her inside the small structure. It smelled of sickness and

death. I wanted to leave immediately, but I wouldn't go without her.

She went straight to the fire and took the boiling water that had been left there and made a tea with the flowers in her hand. Then carefully she tested it to be sure that it wouldn't scald her sisters and went to the bed where they both lay still as death.

I wasn't sure if she would be able to lift their heads to give them the drink, but the girl was stronger than she looked. Carefully she nursed her sisters making sure they had taken every last drop.

She turned to me and I wondered if she was going to force me to leave. Standing she came closer to me and tentatively sank her fingers into my fur. I wanted to wag my tail like a mere dog. The sensations flowing through me were almost orgasmic.

Our mate! I nuzzled into her hand and after a short while she lay down next to the fire allowing me to cuddle with her as she fell into a deep sleep.

For two more nights I went with her as she traveled back out to gather the night-blooming jasmine and returned. I watched as she fed the drink to her sisters and bathed their heads. It was on that third night when the fever broke.

My mate called them Jessica and Juliana. There were tears as the sisters embraced each other and I felt the strongest impression that this girl would understand pack. The next morning the sisters were almost healed and it was time for me to reveal who I really was. I knew that she had gotten used to the large black wolf, but would she accept the man behind it?

I waited until night when her sisters slept and then pushed my wolf outside into the darkness.

"Silly wolf," her voice was music to my ears. "We don't need to go for flowers anymore."

In front of her eyes I shifted, the muscles stretching and breaking as my human form came into her sight. To the girl's credit, she didn't run away, but the fear from that first night was present in her eyes.

“You have come for me?” her voice had softened to a whisper. “My mother told me that there would be a time when someone would come for me. The Moon Goddess foretold it.”

I stepped closer, inhaling her scent of jasmine and faint traces of citrus.

“Mate,” I said gruffly, “you are mine.”

“My sisters...” she said weakly.

But I shook my head, I had no use for the other humans, only my mate. I could see the heartache in her eyes and didn’t want to hurt her. But she was mine, I had been waiting a century for her and I wasn’t about to let her slip through my fingers.

“Your name is Trix?” I had heard the sisters call her this.

She nodded. “Beatrix, it means blessed.”

I smiled. “You are a blessing, Beatrix, to me and my pack.”

She blinked. “Pack?”