Wicked Flame

by infernalpoppy

Summary

After years of war and death, humans and the supernatural creatures below finally reached a truce. The Shadow Council was formed as the ruling body of power and an accord was struck:
"Should anyone, upon their 21st birthday, show a predilection for magic, they shall be given to the Below:
To learn;
To Serve;
To Live;
Never again to step foot on the Earth's soil,
to be with their kind, always.
So it is written.
So it shall be."

Waverly was a normal girl. She attended classes at her university, flirted with the girl who took her coffee order every day, and binged documentaries on Netflix just like everyone else. There was never a single instance in her life that made her question that. Sure, she had blackouts. And, sure, sometimes she woke up in the forest outside her tiny apartment, covered in dirt, and soaked through to the bone with filthy water.
But it's finals week, and who doesn't get a bit stressed with all the studying? Who doesn't wake up in the middle of the night, palms burned to crisp, only to find that they've completely healed themselves by morning? Everyone has breakdowns in college. Right?
She's a normal girl!
Until she kills someone.

Notes

Okay so this is my first crack at fanfiction.

Trigger warnings first:
BRIEF mentions of implied attempted assault. It lasts about 2-3 sentence and is not graphic. There is only the implication of it.
Also, non-graphic mentions of someone being set on fire. There's no gore, but I realize that could still be upsetting for some people so read with caution.

Anyway, this story definitely an AU so I hope you guys like those! I want a really luxurious, gothic feel for this, and I'm aiming for a bit of an ~otherworldly~ vibe, so please let me know how you guys like it!

See the end of the work for more notes.
Chapter One: Fire and Brimstone

An urgent knock sounded at the door, rattling, echoing through the vast chamber.

"Enter."

The command was silent, heard only in the mind of the nervous man at the door. His hand trembled as he turned the ornate, gold knob, worn smooth from years of use.

"Sir, they've found one," he whispered, hands clutching his velvet waistcoat, "a girl. Only just turned 21. She's killed someone...a man. They're holding her. Awaiting trial, I believe, sir."

"Why should we care about a murderous adolescent? Have you nothing better to do than disturb me, Robin?"

This time the voice rang through the chamber, alive, slithering in and out of crevices, latching itself between the boy's ears. He winced.

"She burned him alive, sir. Charred him from the inside out without so much as laying a finger on him. There was nothing left..."

The man at the far end of the room spun quickly in his chair, leaning forward. Candlelight shifted against his dark skin, glittering, and he smiled.

"Go and retrieve her."

Robin nodded, eager to leave his suffocating presence.

"Oh, and Robin?"

"Yes, Councilor Dolls, sir?"

The man's eyes glinted in the light.

"Try not to piss her off."

The boy swallowed thickly, nodding his head, and closed the door behind him with a soft, metallic click.

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Waverly had never been in jail. She'd been inside the jailhouse many times to collect her sister over the years, but never like this. Never as the one behind the bars. Never as the one desperately hoping her one phone call would go through. That Wynonna, for once, would pick up the goddamned phone.

Her eyes flicked anxiously to officers at her left. They watched her cautiously, hands resting poised and ready against their gun holsters, as if she were a wild animal. Her mind flashed back to the man in the park and she forced the images away, pushing them far back into her mind. Maybe she was an animal.

The line stopped ringing, clicking over to Wynonna's sad excuse of a voicemail.
"If I'm not answering, stop calling," came her sister's voice, barely cutting through the sound of whatever bar she'd recorded it in.

Waverly slammed the phone down, garnering the attention of her new guards. She held her hands up silently, allowing herself to be ushered back into her holding cell, heart dropping when the bars clanged shut behind her. Her back hit the wall with a thud, nearly knocking the breath out of her, as she slid down to the floor.

She should've known Wynonna wouldn't answer. She hadn't seen or heard from her sister in four years. Last she saw of her, Wynonna was going out to a club to celebrate her 21st birthday and she never came back. Waverly had received a shitty excuse of letter in the mail a week later.

"Waves,

I'm going north. I'm sorry to leave you like this, but I had to get away. There's got to be more out there for me than just a life bartending in Purgatory. Don't worry about me. I'll be home once I find what I'm looking for.

Be good, babygirl."

She hadn't even bothered to sign it.

Waverly pushed her back further into the concrete wall, head dipping to rest in the space between her knees. How had this happened? One minute she was at the top of her class, giggling along with Chrissy over their daily lunch dates, and the next her face was plastered across every newspaper in town.

Murder, they'd called it. Cold-blooded murder. Town sweetheart turned killer. Even Chrissy had distanced herself; she'd been in this cell awaiting trial for two weeks and hadn't heard so much as a peep from her best friend. Nothing. Not even on her birthday. Not even on CHRISSEY'S birthday, and Chrissy never missed an opportunity to make sure everyone knew it was her day.

They were supposed to have a huge birthday bash, Waverly remembered miserably. They were going to celebrate their 21st's together. They'd even saved up and sprung for the good champagne, the kind the local grocery kept locked in a glass case behind the registers.

A terrible, aching loneliness squeezed Waverly's heart. She was alone. Wynonna was gone, maybe even dead, and Chrissy had abandoned her. Tears pricked against her eyes as she buried her face deeper between her knees, folding her arms over the back of her head.

The tears were flowing hot and free, dripping heavily to the floor, when Waverly's attention was drawn by raised voices. The officers beyond her cell were coming closer, arguing with someone.

"-you can't just take every freak in town! She needs to stand trial-"

Waverly shuffled closer, pressing the side of her face to the bars, listening intently. A voice she didn't recognize cut through the air, but was partially drowned out by the ringing phones in the office.

"-uncontrolled abilities-" "-she belongs with her kind-" "-the accord is clear-"

Waverly huffed, dropping away from the bars. What the fuck was that guy talking about? "Belongs with her kind." What the hell did that mean? Pumpkin spice lovers? Brunettes? Her heart sank.
...Murderers?

A sudden, searing panic gripped her. They were going to put her away. They thought she was a murderer. It didn't matter that she hadn't actually hurt anyone; that she'd never even touched that man. One minute she was walking through the park trails, listening to music and watching the birds flit overheard, and the next a man was grabbing her, pulling her behind a tree with his hand clamped over her mouth.

She'd screamed and kicked, using all the strength in her tiny body to break free but he was bigger and stronger and angrier, and she'd been trapped. She'd given up, eyes clamped shut, hoping that it would be over soon. And then...he was gone. He released her so abruptly it was if he had been burned.

Then the screams came. Piercing, blood wrenching screams. A horrid stench had filled the air, heat radiating behind her, nearly scorching her back. When she'd turned, the man was on the ground, engulfed in flames and writhing in agony. She froze. She'd always thought fight or flight were the only options; but just then, seeing the man who'd attacked her - who'd planned to do worse - completely drowned in flames...she'd frozen.

By the time she'd been able to move, to even breathe again, he was gone. Nothing but a pile of ash, carried gently away by the wind. She'd learned later that a jogger had come upon them only after the man had released her. All they'd seen was a burning man, and Waverly, stock still and emotionless, as she watched the flames take him. They'd assumed she'd set the fire, assumed she was his jilted lover, and called the police.

The bars of the cell clanked open, banging against the wall harshly, pulling Waverly from her memories. A gray-haired officer stood in the opening, face twisted in an angry scowl.

"Get up."

Waverly stumbled to her feet.

"Where are you taking me? Did my sister finally come? Did she post my bail?"

The officer merely grunted, turning to the side as he motioned toward the boy behind him. He was young, probably around her age, and looked incredibly nervous.

"You're going with him."

The officer motioned her out of the cell, slamming the door closed behind her. She looked at the boy and withdrew, backing away toward the officer.

"I don't know him," she said, voice shaking.

The officer shrugged and pushed a plastic bag into Waverly's arms. A quick peek inside showed her jewelry, phone (now cracked from having been dropped during the attack), car keys, wallet, and her headphones. When she looked up, he was already walking away, joining a small cluster of officers who were watching her intently.

The boy spoke up then, fingers reaching forward to lightly tap Waverly's elbow.

"I'm so sorry," he whispered.

Waverly turned to him, mouth opening to ask why he was apologizing, but was unexpectedly thrown sideways. Her stomach jammed itself straight up into her throat as she swayed, seemingly
weightless, in the air around her. Vision tunneling, dark red light ebbing at the corners of her eyes, Waverly felt her consciousness slip away. The last thing she remembered was a strong hand, coming out of nowhere to grip her arm. Then...darkness.
Chapter Summary

Waverly wakes up in her new home and gets some answers.

Chapter Notes

Okay so, I know we haven't met Nicole yet but she's coming in the next chapter, I promise!! I just had to give poor Waverly a reunion with her idiot sister first.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter Two: Below

Cold. Blistering, unyielding cold. It seeped, endlessly, into the skin at her back, freezing her. Waverly's eyes slowly opened, peeling apart as if she'd been asleep for days.

Somewhere behind her, the gentle scratching of pen on paper was drifting through the air, floating over the sound of a crackling fireplace. No. Not pen, she realized, quill. Who uses a quill anymore?

She turned her head to the side, peering around the room. She was on the floor -that explained the cold, then- in an enormous study. It was absolutely overflowing with books- shelves upon shelves, lining every wall, stretching high up into the rafters; dusty tomes stacked on the floor reaching several feet above her head; thousands of manuscripts pouring over desks and chairs as far as the eye could see.

Her eyes widened as she reached forward, fingertips brushing an alchemy manual dating back to Greco-Roman times.

"It's splendid, isn't it?"

Waverly whipped around, eyes meeting the shadowed figure of a man. He stood, back turned to her, in front of a massive, roaring fireplace.

"Who are you? Where am I? Where is that boy? He drugged me!"

The man laughed softly, turning around to face Waverly. He gestured silently toward a plush velvet chair near the fireplace, turning to drop himself into the chair behind him. Waverly hesitated. She didn't feel threatened by him, and she was generally good at detecting danger, but she also had no idea where she was or if this man was the one who had ordered her to be brought here. Or what he even wanted, for that matter.

"The boy didn't drug you," he said suddenly, "and I am the one who had you brought here."

Waverly jerked backward. Had he heard her?

"Who are you?"
"My name is Councilor Dolls. But you may call me Xavier, if you wish. Come sit."

When Waverly hesitated again, he added, "I mean you no harm, Waverly. Come sit with me, and I'll tell you everything you want to know."

Her feet carried her across the room, and she planted herself stiffly in the chair across from him. The fire was roaring before them and she basked in the warm heat of the flames, stretching her hands out to warm her fingertips.

"How do you know my name?" she whispered.

The man stared off into the fire, lacing his fingers together in his lap.

"I brought you here, as I previously stated. I don't make a habit of bringing strangers into our realm."

Waverly's brow furrowed, her attention leaving the fire.

"Realm? What are you talking about? What do you want with me?"

His gaze shifted, settling on her, as he turned in his chair to face her.

"You were brought here because you are not like them," he pointed a long finger toward the ceiling, "and because of that, you do not belong in their realm, but in your own. With us."

Waverly's gut twisted in on itself; he's crazy, she thought suddenly. Oh my god. I've been kidnapped by a crazy pers-

"I am no more crazy than you are a killer," he stated, voice matter of fact, if a bit bored.

She blinked.

"How do you know about that? I didn't kill that man. I never even touched him, I don't know what happened!"

The words left her in a panicked rush. She didn't know why she cared if a lunatic believed that she was innocent, but she couldn't stand to have even one more person look at her like she was a killer.

"I know you didn't, that's why you're here. You're not like them. You never touched that man, and yet, he died because of your will."

Waverly opened her mouth to argue but he held up his hand, silencing her. His face softened as he looked at her, making her squirm uncomfortably in her chair.

"It was self defense. I know this, and hold nothing against you. He would have killed you had you not defended yourself, but that isn't the point. The point is: you have abilities, Waverly. Like me. Like your sister. You are here because the Accords demand it, and we will teach you everything you need to know. Keep you safe. Offer you a new beginning. But in return, you must never touch Earthen soil again."

Waverly thought she might faint. It was all too much. Never see her home again? What about the Homestead? What about her classes, and her friends? What about Wynonna?

Her mind began to spin. 'Like your sister,' he'd said. She sat up in her chair, suddenly excited.

"My sister is here?"
She couldn't help the eagerness in her voice. She'd missed Wynonna so much over the years. Missed having the movie nights Wynonna swore her to secrecy over. Missed waking up to find her sister passed out downstairs surrounded by various, strange take out containers. She even missed having to drag herself out of bed at three in the morning to haul Wynonna out of Shorty's because she was too drunk to drive home.

Xavier smiled at her kindly, and nodded.

"She is. She was brought here on her 21st birthday, four years ago. Put up quite the fight. She broke poor Robin's nose. He was terrified when I sent him up to fetch another Earp." A dry laugh broke past his lips and Waverly gave him a small smile.

"That does sound like her," she paused, gazing into the fire for a moment before asking, "So..this is hell then? The Accords said that people with...abilities...would be taken 'Below.' I always thought they were fake. The Accords, I mean. A story you tell your kids when they're young."

The man shook his head, eyes reaching toward the ceiling.

"It's true that our realm is located below Earth, but it's certainly not Hell. In fact, you're no longer on the same plane as Earth at all."

Waverly gave him a confused look, urging him to explain with her eyes. The man grabbed two sheets of paper, seemingly from thin air, and held them up to face her. Taking a quill, he drew two circles, one in the middle of each page, both exactly the same size.

"Geographically speaking, we are in the same place, same location exactly, as Earth. But we exist on a separate plane, a different thread in time."

He brought the two papers together, stacking over the other, and turned them on their side to face Waverly.

"Oh!" She held a finger up to the pages. "So each page is a plane. Like an alternate universe? Same location, different universe?"

This time when Xavier smiled, it was blinding. He nodded his head and put the papers away, leaning closer to Waverly.

"But...if we're in a different reality, how did we get here? Is there like a portal or something?"

"Ah. There's where Robin comes in, the boy who brought you here. He can open doors between realities, a bit like portals actually. That's his power. He brought himself here by accident when he was 13. He'd gotten tangled up with some bullies at school, panicked and next thing I know there's a terrified kid knocking over all the first editions in my study."

"So he works for you then?"

"He works for the realm, as we all do. As all humans work for their own realm. It's no different than Earth, Waverly. We have jobs. We have homes, and cities and parks just like everywhere else. But we celebrate our differences here, allow them to bring us together, rather than tear us apart."

Waverly sat quietly for a moment, taking it all in. Her ears twitched as voices wafted under the study door, one of them decidedly angry. She faced Xavier.

"What if I don't want to stay?"
"No one will make you stay. But you should know that, should you choose to leave, you will be stripped of your abilities...and you will never see your sister again."

Waverly considered this carefully, turning her options over and over in her head as she looked around the room.

"I want to stay. I don't want to be without my sister forever. When can I see her?"

Xavier smiled brightly and leaned back in his chair.

"Soon, I expect."

The voices outside had grown much louder, and Waverly was able to catch snippets of the angry conversation that was edging closer and closer to the large mahogany doors.

"-hands off, pretty boy! Or I'll bust your nose a second time-"

Waverly shot out of her chair at the exact moment her sister busted through the doors, eyes searching the room wildly.

"'Nonna!!"

She launched herself into her sister's arms, tears pressing against the edges of her eyes.

"Hi, baby girl."

Waverly sniffed, rubbing her face against her sister's jacket.

"Gross! Don't wipe your boogers on me. Let's get out of here. This place smells like books and it's giving me hives."

Waverly laughed and pulled away to smile up at her sister. It was only after looking away from her face that she finally took in what Wynonna was wearing, and her laughter went from a small chuckle to full blown cackling.

"What are you wearing?!"

She looked Wynonna up and down, taking in her purple velvet suit jacket and emerald satin trousers. She was still wearing her massive boots, and had finished the ensemble off with a battered black "Pink Floyd" t-shirt that was tucked haphazardly into her pants. Waverly could see mismatched socks peeking out of her old boots. She flicked the edge of Wynonna's jacket, throwing her head back as she laughed.

"You look like Barney the Dinosaur!!"

Wynonna scowled, pointing an angry finger to Xavier who waved smartly from across the room, a wide grin plastered across his face.

"Ask that asshole and his fuckhole buddies. They're the ones who set the dress code."

"You follow a DRESS CODE?"

Waverly descended into another fit of giggles, hands clutching her stomach painfully. Wynonna scoffed.

"Hardly. Just enough to keep them off my back. Now come on."
Wynonna pushed her out of the room, slamming the study door behind them.

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Waverly sobered immediately.

She was in the most beautiful hall she'd ever seen. They were high up, she realized, standing in a circular hallway, across from the most extravagant golden balconies she'd ever laid eyes on. The golden bars seemed to undulate and shift, each shaped like a slim, coiling snake.

The floors below her feet were even more extravagant. Deep red, swirling marbled floor stretched out as far as the eye could see. Gold peeked out of the marble, appearing every few feet as gorgeous, sparkling constellations. Waverly almost felt bad about walking on such a masterpiece.

All around her, the hall glittered. There were ornate candelabras mounted on walls, each shaped like a delicate hand, each holding a glimmering candle. Even the flames danced as they walked past, shifted from deep orange to pale white to a dusky, sunset pink.

"Come on, I'll show you where your room is."

Wynonna was far ahead in the hall, evidently unimpressed or simply used to the grandeur around her. Waverly carefully made her way over to one of the balconies at her left, peering over the side to see an enormous foyer below. She hadn't realized they were THAT far up; the people on the ground floor looked like glittering ants from where she stood. She craned her neck to look at the ceiling above her.

Swirling galaxies lit up behind her eyes as the painting on the rafters above swayed and shifted. Stars floating over the ceiling, moons orbiting their planets silently as suns expanded, exploded, and dimmed. She was sure her jaw was on the floor by the time Wynonna realized she hadn't followed her and came back.

"Let's go. You'll have time to stare later. I want to take a nap."

She allowed herself to be led down a twisting hallway that branched off from the balconies. This one was different. Lighter. The marble here slowly faded from blood red to a shadowy pink and ended in a gorgeous creamy white. The gold filigree had changed too. With each step down the hallway, the constellations faded, slowly replaced by swirling plants and flowers, each outlined in the same sparkling gold as before.

"Wow," Waverly breathed.

Wynonna suddenly stopped at small, rounded door. It was a muted green -more of a sage, Waverly thought- and was decorated, like the rest of the hallway, with photorealistic flowers. Wynonna pulled a small brass key from her pocket and unlocked the door, holding it open.

Waverly took one last, lingering look around the hall, taking in the green walls, covered from floor to ceiling in live plants. She looked around her, toeing a golden chrysanthemum in the marble at her feet. Above her, massive chandeliers hung from the ceiling, their crystals lighting the hallway with a warm pink glow.

Wynonna cleared her throat, drawing Waverly's attention, and gestured into the room.

Waverly smiled and crossed the threshold, closing the door gently behind her.
I hope you liked this chapter! I decided to make different parts of the castle look and feel different. So parts of it (aka where Nicole lives) are going to be very goth, very Vampire-esque because it would look amazing with her hair lol. But I thought the light and the plants would suit Waverly very well so I hope you guys agree.

Please let me know what you think! I'm a bit worried the descriptions were too wordy but oh well.

Nicole comes in next chapter! I'll update again soon (hopefully tomorrow!)
Waverly experiences some magic, then experiences some Gay Panic when she bumps into a certain red-haired stranger.

Chapter 3: Little Birds

"You gonna tell me about your power or what?"

Wynonna was lounging on Waverly's mattress, dirty boots kicked up on the lavender comforter. Waverly averted her gaze, picking absentmindedly at the golden, gossamer curtains that surrounded her four poster bed.

"I'm still not sure I even have any powers, Nonna. And get your nasty feet off my bed! Seriously, they smell, where have they been??"

"No palce I wanna know," Wynnona shrugged.

Waverly pursed her lips.

"What do you mean you aren't sure if you have powers? Obviously you do or you wouldn't be here."

"They might have made a mistake..."

Wynonna snorted behind her, rolling herself into a seated position.

"Baby girl, when I say that you wouldn't be here, I mean that you wouldn't be here. This place has protections, and your run of the mill Betty Sue wouldn't survive the trip down. There are easier ways in and out, ways much more pleasant than the portals, but they bring all the newbies in that way as a precaution. Just to make sure no normies get in by mistake."

Waverly gaped at her sister, eyes blowing wide like an owl.

"Th-that's awful! How could they do that?? They can't mess with people's lives like that!"

Waverly watched as Wynonna stood up, shrugging her jacket off and flinging it to the floor.

"It is what it is. And it doesn't happen often; only once since I've been here."

'Since I've been here.' Waverly suddenly felt a wash of anger sweep over her. Wynonna had been alive this entire time; had clearly known the ins and outs of this place well enough to know its security measures and still hadn't thought to even TRY to get a message to her.

"Why didn't you write to me?? Why did you leave me that fricking ridiculous note? I thought you were DEAD, Wynonna!"
Wynonna at least had the good sense to look sheepish and turned to face her sister, guilt written plainly across her face.

"I couldn't, Waverly. I wanted to so badly, believe me, I did. But I wasn't sure if you had any abilities - I mean, I'd hoped, but I couldn't really be sure - and I knew that if I told you the truth, you'd come looking. I couldn't risk you getting hurt, Waves..."

Waverly softened.

"I really missed you, Nonna."

Wynonna pulled her into a warm hug, squeezing Waverly's smaller frame tightly.

"I missed you too, baby girl," she said gently, "but you're here now and all that is behind us. And you'd better change; Dolls has a stick up his ass about his precious dress code."

"Yeah, what's the deal with that by the way?"

Waverly released her sister, stepping away to wander quietly around the room, taking in her surroundings as Wynonna sighed loudly. The walls were painted a dusky, muted gold and they shimmered like butterfly wings as she moved around the room. Her bed was massive; it was the first thing she'd noticed when she walked in. It was a sturdy, dark brown wood, with four posters twisting up toward the ceiling like vines.

"-wants everyone to 'look nice.'"

Waverly jerked her head away from the bed, glancing over at Wynonna.

"Sorry, what?"

Wynonna rolled her eyes, groaning in annoyance.

"Dolls. He makes everyone wear these ridiculous Count Dracula outfits because he thinks it makes us more civilized. Apparently, people are less likely to fight when they're dressed like squares. Sounds like fuckin' bullshit if you ask me."

Waverly ran her fingers over the enormous, vaulted windows by her bed, sunlight dappling across her fingertips pleasantly.

"I think it's nice," she breathed, "I always wanted to wear those big ball gowns that women wore way back when."

Wynonna scoffed.

"Fuck that. Can't fight for shit in those things."

Waverly glanced at her sister, suddenly curious about what Wynonna's powers were.

"What can you do Nonna?"

Wynonna smiled and held out her arms.

"You wanna see?"

Waverly nodded quickly, settling herself onto the bed in anticipation.
She watched as Wynonna's eyes slowly shut, squeezing tightly in concentration. Nothing seemed to happen for a few moments, and then in an instant Wynonna was gleaming, skin silver like liquid metal. Waverly's breath caught in her throat.

"What is that??"

"Dolls says it's called 'bio-metal.'" Wynonna's voice came out in a gurgle, as if she were underwater.

"I can exist in a liquid state, like this," she reached out, hands passing through a candle stick on Waverly's night stand, leaving behind a shiny silver film, "or I can solidify, and make myself virtually impenetrable to bullets and other shit."

Waverly watched as Wynonna's form solidified, waves of liquid suddenly calmed to look like a thin, Wynonna shaped sheet of metal. She walked normally around the room, striking ridiculous superhero poses occasionally to make Waverly laugh.

Waverly reached out to touch Wynonna's hand, expecting to feel cool metal under her fingers, but was surprised when warm skin greeted her instead.

"Cool, right? And check this out."

Wynonna reached out a silver hand, opening it wide, as she concentrated on the metal candlestick she'd touched earlier. Waverly nearly screamed when it shot across the room, landing gently in her sister's outstretched palm.

"It only works on metal, and I have to have touched it in my liquid state for it to work properly. Otherwise it just flops around like a limp dick. Dunno why."

They stared at each other for a moment in silence before Waverly lost it.

"THAT IS THE COOLEST THING I'VE EVER SEEN!!!!!! DO IT AGAIN!!"

Wynonna performed her trick a few more times, each time resulting in a giddy screech from Waverly, before sighing and transforming back to her normal form.

"Well, I'd love to stay Waves, but I'm exhausted and painfully sober...so if you don't mind..."

Waverly smiled at her sister, waving happily as Wynonna marched out of the room, boots swinging by their shoelaces over her shoulder.

A tired sigh left Waverly's lips as she flopped back onto her bed, staring up at the ceiling. The curtains around her bed seemed to sway above her, the glitter embedded in the fabric taking on the appearance of a sky filled with stars.

She lay like that for hours, contemplating how quickly her life had changed, until eventually she drifted away into a dreamless sleep.

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Waverly woke up hours - or what she guess was hours, she'd never actually seen a clock anywhere - later. Her body felt warm and pliable, like putty, as she scooted off the bed. Glancing out the window, she realized the scenery hadn't changed at all, except for the fact that the sky was now a hazy red. Dozens of dark, fluffy clouds floated across the sky, moving to cover two massive blood orange moons.
She blinked quickly and rubbed at her eyes. Two moons. A massive smile spread across her face as she stared out the window, face pressing ever closer against the window.

She was certain her face might meld with the glass when a small knock sounded at her bedroom door. When she turned, Waverly saw a crisp black envelope slide quickly beneath the door. Waverly quietly eased her door open, peering outside into the hallway, before shutting it again. She'd known no one would be there. That's how it always went in the movies.

The envelope was thick and heavy when she picked it up and when she turned it over in her hands, she saw the back of the letter was sealed with red wax; a twisting, thorned rose stamped in the middle. Hands shaking with excitement, she peeled open the letter, taking extra care not to ruin the beautiful seal. A gorgeous, iridescent card fell out, swaying gently to the floor as if caught in a breeze.

Waverly bent down to pick it up, but never got the chance as it suddenly twisted, shooting up into the air before her hand could reach it. She watched as the card exploded, eyes widening as hundreds of gold and purple butterflies burst forth, flitting around the room. Sparks of every color of the rainbow, and some she wasn't sure were even part of the rainbow, lit up the room as the butterflies synchronized, weaving around her in a languid circle.

She watched, entranced, as the butterflies above her head began to mold together, turning themselves into a beautiful, floating water lily. The flower floated down toward the ground in front of her gently, massive petals opening wide to reveal a message written in gold:

"Please join us for an enchanting night of music, dancing, and revelry, as we celebrate the year's first Blood Moons with our annual Masquerade Ball. The ceremony will be held in The Grand Ballroom, Friday night, October 14th, from 8pm to Midnight. Black Tie attire, mandatory."

Waverly's breath hitched as the remaining butterflies dove gracefully, piling themselves into the open flower. The lily's petals slowly began to turn inward and Waverly watched, enraptured, as the flower appeared to fold in on itself, getting smaller and smaller until eventually all that remained was a tiny, fragrant purple flower.

Bending down, she picked it up, and tucked it softly into her hair. Waverly stood in silence for a few moments, glancing around her new bedroom, as she processed the beautiful work of magic she'd just witnessed. She made an effort to lock the memory away in her mind, so she could remember it forever.

As her eyes roved around the room, mind lost in thought, Waverly was drawn to an enormous green wardrobe off to her left. It was beautiful, but significantly less opulent than everything else in the room. The wardrobe was tall, nearly reaching the ceiling, and appeared to be vintage; the green paint worn away in some places, allowing creamy wood to peak through.

Waverly smiled. It reminded her of the furniture she'd seen in those quaint, french cottages she was always looking at on the internet. She'd dreamed of living in a place like that; of looking out her bedroom window to see rows upon rows of lavender stretching out before her.

Waverly drifted absentmindedly across the room, fingers toying with the golden handles of the
wardrobe, before pulling the doors open. Dozens of splendid gowns and suits hung inside - each more luxurious than the last - and she could hardly contain the excitement building in her chest.

The garments were color coordinated, beginning in the lightest shades she'd ever seen, some nearly see through, and getting progressively darker the farther they went. She reached forward, running her hands across the fabric of a pink dress before catching her eye on an elegant blue day dress.

It was robin's egg blue, her favorite, and she couldn't help the smile that stretched across her face as she pulled it from the wardrobe. The fabric itself was light, airy, and Waverly knew in an instant that this dress would fan out magnificently if she were to twirl in it.

Laying the dress across her bed, she began the quick process of removing her old clothes, placing them neatly in her new dresser. The dress slid over her shoulders like silk, stopping mid calf, the bottom of the gown trimmed with lace. She turned from side to side, examining the embroidery that ran up and down the three-quarter sleeves: soaring, peach colored birds flew up and over her arms, moving over her shoulder to meet behind her neck, small white flowers dotted among their feathers.

After quite a few minutes of looking herself over in the mirror, Waverly slid her feet back into her nude flats and padded across the room toward the door. She was more than a little hungry at this point and was intent on finding the kitchens, or at least on getting some exploring done. Wynonna definitely hadn't been up to par as a tour guide.

The hallway was just as beautiful as she remembered, and she floated through it in a daze. She tried to take in as much as she could as she strolled along, not bothering to keep track of the many hallways she was weaving in and out of. It was only when the halls began to darken - marbled floors changing yet again, this time to a deep, shining black - that she realized she was lost.

Waverly paused. This was not good. The hallway she was in was dark, much different that the ones she'd passed through before, and she repressed a shiver. The ceiling was vaulted above her and painted an intense mulberry purple. Golden branches stretched across the ceiling, ends thatching together to give the illusion of being under a glistening forest canopy. Imposing chandeliers towered over her, lit with hundreds of wine red candles. Shadows danced across the walls and Waverly stiffened, panic building in her chest.

She was close to tears when she heard hushed voices and laughter up ahead. Two shadowy figures came into view, holding hands and laughing, before disappearing into a covered alcove, out of sight. Waverly bounced on her feet and walked quickly toward the strangers, heart positively flooding with relief.

"Excuse me," she called out.

"I'm so sorry to bother you, but I just got here today and I think I've gotten myself lost..."

She whipped around the corner, hand outstretched to introduce herself, but stopped abruptly. Just off to her left, a tall redhead was pinning a woman against the wall, her leg hitched up their body, mouth open in a silent moan.

"Balls!"

The two figures - the two women, Waverly noticed - jumped apart suddenly, spinning around to find Waverly with her mouth hanging open.

"What the fuck!!" the redhead shouted, hands scrambling to cover her partner's exposed skin.
"Oh my god. I'm so SORRY! I'm so sorry!! I'm lost, I was just looking for help-"

"Fuck! Just go back down that way and take a right!! Get out of here, you creep!"

This time it was the dark-haired woman who spoke, and Waverly wrinkled her nose in disdain at being treated so gruffly by a stranger.

Not wanting to spend one more second with them, Waverly spun on her heel and ran down the hall. It took a few minutes of panicked running, but eventually she saw the familiar green walls of her own corridor and slowed to a brisk walk.

When she reached her door, Waverly practically flung herself into her bedroom, her hunger from before completely forgotten as she flopped onto her bed. She knew it was ridiculous to be so worked up over accidentally walking in on two people making out. Hell, she'd walked in on way worse than that at her dorm back when was an RA. She shuddered at the memories that flooded her brain.

It wasn't so much the making out -though that was still embarrassing- but the sudden wave of desire she'd felt when she'd met the redhead's eyes. Shame boiled in Waverly's chest. She'd had plenty of crushes on girls before, that wasn't news, but she'd never felt such an ache for someone. Especially not a stranger and ESPECIALLY not a stranger that made out with women in public places and cussed at her.

Waverly's lips pursed, forehead set in resolve, and she promised herself that, should she ever see that woman again, she'd keep her distance. She had more pressing matters to worry about -like figuring out her powers, for example- and she had no intention of getting herself tangled up with a woman like that.

No, she was just going to ignore her. She could do that, she'd ignored guys all the time on campus and this was no different really. Waverly nodded her head silently, internally patting herself on the back for her wise decision, and tried to ignore the slithering doubt in her stomach; the doubt that whispered, so insistently, that she was about to eat her fucking words.

Chapter End Notes

I'm sorry Nicole was in this so briefly. Turns out I suck at staying on topic and I just couldn't make this chapter any longer. The next chapter will be mainly Nicole and Waverly though so get ready for some pining, flirting and a whole lot of angst on Waverly's part.

Also, sorry if this chapter isn't great or if there's typos. I double checked but I'm exhausted and I don't have a beta reader
Waverly finds out what Wynonna does, and meets a very wet, very naked Nicole

So I drew some inspiration for the bathing rooms from the fourth Harry Potter movie when Harry was taking a bath with the golden egg. Also, I hope I don't offend anyone with my descriptions of the goddesses in the bathhouse. I tried to depict them in a way that's respectful and does them justice but if a specific goddess is part of your culture and I've described them in a way that is disrespectful or incorrect please let me know so I can fix it!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"Where'd you get that dress?"

Wynonna was lounging across Waverly's bed, dripping sauce onto her blankets. She'd come by about half an hour after "the incident", as Waverly was now calling it, with two massive plates of food.

Waverly pointed in the direction of the wardrobe with her fork, ignoring Wynonna's raised eyebrows as she speared a grilled asparagus from her plate.

"There's bunch of clothes in there. They were already there when I opened it," she said around a mouthful of food.

"Those fuckers! I didn't have wardrobe of clothes waiting for me when I got here."

Wynonna shoved an enormous forkful of mashed potatoes into her mouth, jaw working angrily.

"Didn't you just complain, what, 6 hours ago about having to wear those clothes at all?"

Wynonna huffed.

"It's the principle of the thing. I've worked with that ass for four years now and do I get any special treats? I think the fuck not! Not even a 'Hey, nice job Wynonna. Thanks for saving the realm. AGAIN.'"

That peaked Waverly's attention, and she turned to look at her sister.

"What exactly do you do here, Nonna?"

Waverly watched as her sister's eyes shifted around the room, slowly lowering her fork, before
clearing her throat.

"Uh. This and that. Boring stuff, you wouldn't want to hear about it."

"Oh. I didn't realize 'saving the realm' fell under the umbrella of boring stuff."

Waverly's eyes bore into Wynonna's, daring her to lie again. Her sister sighed heavily, clearly annoyed.

"Look. I can't talk that much about it. I work with Dolls and a few others on a task force. I can't tell you anything else."

"What kind of task force?" Waverly quizzed.

Wynonna groaned loudly, running her hand through her hair.

"Listen. This place isn't what it seems, okay?" Wynonna leaned forward, lowering her voice, "there are creatures out there, beyond the city limits, with the same abilities as you or I. In terms of powers, we're all on the same playing field; but what we don't have, that they do, is a burning, endless hatred for humans. The task force is there to make sure they don't get up to anything that could fuck with the safety of everyone here. Don't ask me anything else about it, Waves. And don't go snooping."

Waverly pulled a face, rolling her eyes dramatically before her sister grabbed her urgently by the wrist.

"I mean it, Waverly. I know you. I know you won't stop until you get whatever it is that you want, and I'm telling you: Stay out of it."

Wynonna's eyes were pleading, bordering on terrified, and Waverly nodded her head, suddenly feeling scared herself.

"Okay. I promise."

"Good."

They sat in silence for a few moments, the air hanging heavy between them, when Waverly suddenly had a thought.

"Do you know a redhead around here? Tall. Brown eyes. Short hair?"

Wynonna's head snapped around, eyes swiftly meeting Waverly's.

"Stay away from her, Waves, she's bad news."

Waverly rolled her eyes again. Wynonna ought to know better than anyone that telling a person to stay away from something (or someone), was a surefire way to get them to run straight to it.

"So you do know her then."

"Her name is Nicole. She's on the task force too. And she'll break your heart, Waverly."

Waverly gaped at her sister in shock.

"Wh-How did you know?? I never told anyone!"
Wynonna waved her hand dismissively, a wide smile stretching across her face.

"I'm your sister. I know everything. Besides, did you really think you were fooling anyone? I saw the way you looked at the girls on the soccer team in high school. I can only imagine how long it took you to roll your tongue up off the ground and back into your mouth."

Wynonna let out a barked laugh, smiling over at her sister and Waverly couldn't help the giggle that escaped her.

"Shut up!! I was just...admiring their skill!"

"Oh. Is that what they're calling it these days?" Wynonna teased.

Waverly smacked her sister over the arm playfully.

They spent the next two hours like that; joking and laughing, lounging on Waverly's bed just like they used to years ago, before Wynonna let out a massive yawn.

"I should get going. I'm beat. I'll come back in the morning and take you down to the dining rooms for breakfast okay? 8 am."

"Since when do you get up at 8 am?"

"Don't get used to it. It's only my love for my dear baby sister that's getting me up at such an ungodly hour to show you around. After that it's back to my regularly scheduled 2pm breakfasts."

Waverly looked at her sister with a bemused expression as she followed her to the door, piling her arms high with their emptied plates and used napkins. Wynonna was just heading out the door when Waverly suddenly remembered something she'd meant to ask earlier.

"Wait! Are there any bathtubs around here?? I know there's a small shower in my room but...just...you know how much I love taking baths."

"The closest to your room is that way," Wynonna pointed a finger down the hall, "head all the way to the end then take a left. The floors will change color once you get close, they'll be black. Then there'll be a big golden arch on your right, just go through and the tubs will be inside. Can't miss 'em. There's a pool in there too. But maybe wait til morning. That hallway is creepy as fuck at night."

Wynonna gave a small shrug, grinning at her sister one last time before turning on her heel and clomping back down the hall, boots ringing loudly. Waverly's heart was racing. She already knew that hallway.

"Balls," she whispered. Her body was absolutely aching, and she knew without a doubt that there was no way she was getting to bed any time soon unless she did something to soothe her tense muscles. She thought about just taking a hot shower, but felt no pleasure in it. She'd never really been a fan of showers - standing on the cold, slick floor; freezing while she waited for the water to heat up; feeling her hair get heavy, pulling at her scalp, as it weighed down with water. No thanks.

She headed back into her room quietly, walking over to her dresser to see if there were any pajamas waiting inside. Upon opening the top drawer, Waverly was shocked to find her own pajamas folded neatly inside. She glanced around the room, heart catching in her throat as she saw more of her personal belongings filling up the empty spaces of her room. Her picture frames were dusted and resting neatly on her nightstand, the people in the photos smiling up at her. Her old books were nestled snugly in the ornate bookshelf to her left, and even her old pink bunny slippers were placed
smartly at the foot of her bed.

She must have been so caught up with thoughts of Nicole, and then her time with Wynonna, that she hadn't even noticed her room had been changed while she was gone. Waverly smiled softly, pulling her favorite pajama set - a worn cotton button up, covered in tiny multi-colored lizards, and complete with matching pants- from the drawer. She padded across the room to the bathroom and grabbed a towel from the rack by the door. It was remarkably soft, certainly softer than any towel she'd ever owned, and was a beautiful sunset pink. When she lifted it to her nose, it smelled faintly of peonies.

As Waverly left her room, feet clad in her bunny slippers, she found herself suddenly wondering if this was a good idea. The closer she got to the dark hallway, the more nervous she became.

'Don't be ridiculous,' she thought to herself, 'she probably doesn't even live down this hall. If she did, she wouldn't have been making out with that girl right out in the open. And anyway, who cares. You're never gonna talk to her again.'

Waverly set her shoulders, marching through the hallway -which she was now secretly referring to as the Hallway of Doom- as quickly as possible. As she looked for the golden arch her sister had mentioned, she tried hard to ignore the way her heart sank at the thought of never speaking, or even seeing, Nicole again.

She was just about to mentally reprimand herself for being so caught up on a girl she didn't even know, when the archway came into view. It was massive, and looked to weigh at least a ton.

Dozens of tiny, golden women danced over the frame, combing each other's hair, wielding swords, reading books, planting flowers, shooting targets with bows...Waverly couldn't take her eyes off of them. It was the most beautiful thing she'd ever seen, and that was saying something considering she'd seen more beauty today than she had in her entire life.

Her hands reached out, fingertips brushing over the minuscule golden face of a frolicking woman, before she started moving again, slipping through the massive cherry doors and into the room.

Wynonna had been right when she said Waverly couldn't miss the baths. They sprawled out in front of her, gleaming under the soft light of hundreds of candles, each bath set deep into the ground like a swimming pool. Waverly pulled off her slippers, happily noting that the floor beneath her feet was heated, and drifted through the room.

The floors here weren't marble, which was quite the change from the rest of the estate, but were instead a smooth, natural stone. She had no idea how they had figured out a way to heat stone, but she certainly wasn't about to complain. Pausing in the middle of the room, Waverly looked up, taking in the largest, most detailed stained glass windows she'd ever seen.

There were five of them total, and they took up the entire wall ahead of her. Each window depicted a different goddess, some of which she knew, some she didn't. There was Menhit, who Waverly remembered from her ancient African studies course, the goddess of War. She was standing proud, with a shimmering golden lioness at her side, face set with determination. She held a brilliant, flaming sun between her palms, and as Waverly moved about the room, it changed slowly from red, then to orange before finally turning a cool onyx. Fiery orange glass surrounded her, and her eyes glinted in the candlelight, as if she were alive, watching the world below her.

Then came Magu, a deity of Chinese origin, said to be a protector of women, associated with the elixir of life, and the cultivation of hemp. She looked kindly down upon the baths, lips red, face pale as the moon, as small birds fluttered around the jade background behind her. Pale, pink flowers bloomed at her feet, and she carried a large bouquet of hemp behind her back. Beside her
was a goddess Waverly didn't recognize. She was a green skinned woman, tall and lithe with flowing black hair. Enormous black and orange snakes twisted up her legs, eyes set with glowing rubies. A silvery half moon hung above her head, standing out against an intense purple background.

The next goddess was a woman Waverly knew very well. She stood, poised, before a deep red background, dark eyes kind but firm. Persephone, the Greek goddess of Spring. Queen of the Underworld. She stood clutching a bleeding pomegranate in her right hand, left hand filled with brilliant wildflowers, overflowing between her fingers. Orange and red poppies adorned her dark, curling hair, dripping from the strands like water. Below her, a deep, dark chasm opened between her feet, through which Waverly could see just a glimpse of two black horses pulling a golden chariot.

The final window depicted yet another goddess she didn't recognize, this time with stone grey skin. White hair piled atop her head in defined ringlets, a small crown of thorns resting over the curls. Her black eyes seemed to follow Waverly around the room, causing a shiver to go up her spine. And unlike the other goddesses, this woman had no animals in her frame. Instead, the window pane was filled with miles of billowing fabric, tumbling forth from her extravagant gown, colored a mysterious, iridescent blue. Each fold of fabric seemed to contain a different universe, planets and stars filling her skirts. In her hands she held a single opalescent sphere, neither planet nor pearl, that seemed to glow from something other than candlelight.

Waverly hadn't realized how long she'd been standing there, staring at the beautiful women before her, until her neck began to ache. Giving once last glance around the room to make sure she was alone, she descended the stairs toward the largest bath. It was enormous and oval-shaped, the sides of the stone tub etched with tiny golden stars. Faucets of every shape and size surrounded the back of the bath, each one inlaid with a different gemstone, and some covered in runes she didn't recognize.

As she drew near, the tub began to fill itself with hot water, causing steam to billow from the bath, clouding the room. Waverly undressed quickly, eager to get into the steaming water. She moaned deep in her throat as she descended the stairs into the bath, muscles relaxing immediately. She was just wading over to the faucets at the end of the pool when a voice spoke up behind her.

"If I'd known you moaned like that earlier, I might've invited you to join us."

Waverly nearly jumped out of her skin, whipping around so fast that water sloshed over the sides of the tub. Nicole stood at a bath to her right, smirk plastered across her face, deft fingers unbuttoning her shirt.

"What are you doing here?!!"

"Enjoying the view."

Waverly's arms moved to cover herself as she pressed against the wall of the bath, trying to hide as much of her body as possible. Her hands reached forward, fumbling with the closest faucets until thick, fragrant bubbles began to pour out of the tap and into the tub.

When she looked up again Nicole was nearly naked, hands reaching forward to pull off her black boy-shorts. A scarlet blush worked its way across Waverly's cheeks and she squeezed her eyes shut.

She heard a low laugh at her right and huffed, turning away from the sound.
"You can look now, you know. Or did you do enough staring earlier?"

Waverly's eyes popped open, narrowing into a heated glare. Nicole looked back at her, arms crossed over the side of the tub, mouth still twisted in an infuriatingly attractive smirk.

"I wasn't staring!"

"You were," Nicole insisted, "don't think I didn't catch your eyes on me in the hallway."

She winked smugly at Waverly, pushing away from the wall to wade through her bathwater. Waverly scoffed and turned her nose up, spinning away. She lowered herself further into the water, bending her knees so only her head and neck peaked out over the bubbles.

She felt Nicole's eyes on the back of her head as she made her way over to the faucets, examining them in hopes of finding a shampoo.

"It's the blue one, with the snake," came Nicole's voice behind her.

Waverly didn't respond, hoping Nicole would get the picture and leave her alone, but the other woman kept going anyway.

"You're looking for shampoo right? Shampoo is blue. Body wash is green. All the other colors are bubbles and shit."

Waverly glanced at Nicole from the corner of her eye before reaching a hand up to twist the handle of the blue faucet. A small orange pat of shampoo fell out into her hand, smelling of lilies. Waverly sighed happily, reaching up to massage the gel into her long hair.

"You're welcome," Nicole quipped.

Waverly sighed.

"Thank you."

"If you really want to thank me, you could start off with telling me your name."

When Waverly looked over, Nicole was grinning from ear to ear, rubbing soap across her neck and shoulders.

"My name is Waverly," she said curtly, before turning back to dispense body wash into her palm.

"Nicole."

"I know your name."

Waverly grimaced. She hadn't meant to tell her that, but it slipped out before she could stop it and she regretted it immediately. She could practically feel the smugness rolling off of Nicole.

"Do you, now. Have you been asking about me? I'm flattered."

Waverly groaned. All she'd wanted was a nice, hot bath. Maybe with a few (read: an absurd amount) of bubbles. Maybe with a bit of harmless daydreaming that most definitely did not feature the woman beside her.

"I'm leaving. Turn around."
Nicole lifted her hands in surrender before slowly turning to face the opposite wall. Waverly waited a few moments just to be sure that Nicole wasn't going to turn around in the hopes of catching a peek, before gingerly climbing out of the tub. She dried herself quickly, wrapping her hair in the towel, as she scrambled into her pajamas.

"Is it safe now?"

Nicole's voice lilted through the still air, teasing. Waverly grunted dismissively, refusing to look up from the ground as she gathered her dress and put on her slippers. She heard the water sway in Nicole's tub.

"Nice outfit."

"Shut up," Waverly snapped, but the other woman only smiled in response.

"No, really, you look cute! Lizards are a good look for you."

Waverly scoffed, turning her eyes toward the ceiling, as she made her way back up the stairs toward the doors.

"Good bye, Nicole."

"I'll see you around! Maybe next time we can share a tub."

Waverly lifted her hand in a short wave, back still turned. When she reached the heavy wooden doors she practically bolted through them, trying to ignoring the ringing laugh of the woman she left behind her.

Her heart pounded in her chest as she made her way back to her room, trying to forget what had just happened. To forget the image of Nicole slipping into the water, hands reaching forward to slick her hair back. To forget that, even though she'd been infuriating, Waverly had never been so attracted to someone in her life.

Fuck.

She was so screwed.

Chapter End Notes

Sorry Nicole wasn't in this more, but it felt weird to have this chapter only be about her when we still hadn't gotten to what Wynonna does for a living in this universe (AKA the same thing she did in the last universe basically lol.) I hope you guys liked it! Please r&r! I LOVE reading your comments and they really inspire me to keep this story updated often!
Priorities

Chapter Notes

I'm SO sorry for how long this update took. I wanted to post it ages ago but some stuff happened in my family that took me away from my writing. But everything is okay now so I'm back! This chapter is a bit short because I'm setting it up for the next chapter which will be longer and will finally reveal Waverly's and Nicole's powers. It'll be almost entirely Nicole and Waverly interacting for ch 6

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 5:

Waverly woke up to banging on her bedroom door, Wynonna's voice carrying through the air.

"Let me in! It's cold as shit in this hallway!"

Stumbling out of bed, Waverly trudged across the room and unlocked the door.

"Fuck, you're not even ready, Waves. Get dressed, I'm starving!"

Waverly grumbled, moving toward the wardrobe to pull out the first dress her fingers grazed; a creamy yellow day dress, same cut at yesterday's, this time with deep green tropical leaves and flowers embroidered across the lower hem and neckline.

"What's your deal? You look like someone chewed you up and spit you out," Wynonna questioned.

"Just tired. And I have no idea what time it is in this place. There's no clocks anywhere."

Wynonna pulled a face, pressing her lips together.

"Shit, I forgot. Sorry, baby girl. We use different clocks here to tell the time, like, these ridiculous sun-dial looking things...I'll have Dolls send one up."

Waverly nodded as she slipped the dress over her head, zipping up the back quickly before pulling her hair up into a high, messy ponytail. She let the stray hairs around her face free, hoping they'd frame her face and make her look more pleasant than she felt.

Slipping on her shoes, she nodded toward the door, grabbing the key to her bedroom as she went.

"They better have french toast."

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The dining halls were massive, like everything else, and Waverly wasn't surprised that everything in the room seemed to be straight out of a billionaire's wet dream. She was pretty sure the gold fork she was using on her french toast cost more that her college education.

Her mood had perked up almost immediately upon seeing an entire vegan section when they'd
walked in. She'd never had this many options before, and even a terrible night's sleep wasn't about
to dampen her mood. Not to mention that the entire room was freaking gorgeous.

It was darker in here than it was in her hallway, and much warmer. The room was filled with small
round tables, each laden with purple and gold china and extravagant embroidered cloth napkins.
Dark murals stretched across every wall, blending together in a smokey mix of blood, dripping
fruit and intertwined couples. A filigreed golden ceiling hung above them, aged and darker than
the rest of gold work she'd seen thus far. Five enormous chandeliers hung above them, hung with
hundreds of thousands of garnets, each throwing flickering red beams across the walls.

Waverly glanced over at her sister, who'd finished her plate, and by this point, was nearly asleep in
her chair. A small smile curved over her mouth; she'd really missed her sister, even if she was a
grouchy idiot. She was reaching out a hand to rouse Wynonna, when a flash of red caught her eye,
making her heart plummet so far into her stomach she was sure Wynonna had heard it.

Waverly felt like all the blood had left her face when Nicole looked over her shoulder, as she
walked across the room toward an empty table, to give her a lecherous wink.

"You look like you're gonna barf."

Wynonna was peeking over at her sister, eyes squinted.

"I do not!"

Waverly's voice came out strangled and she cringed, looking over to see Wynonna with her
eyebrows lifted in a silent question.

"I'm really fine, just didn't sleep well. At all. I think I should go back to my room and sleep it off.
We can do the tour another time, I wanna be feeling my best for it anyway."

Wynonna eyed her carefully for a moment and finally nodded, prompting Waverly to release a
breath she hadn't realized she'd been holding.

"Alright...if you say so. Let's get you back to bed before you yak on my favorite boots."

"Those are your only boots."

"Exactly."

Wynonna stood, heaving her heavy feet off the chair beside her, and waited for Waverly to right
herself. As the walked out of the dining hall, Waverly felt a piercing stare on the back of her head,
turning to see the brunette that Nicole had been...busy...with yesterday. The woman stared hateful
daggers at her, fingers gripping her fork so tightly her knuckles turned white.

Waverly skittered after Wynonna, wanting to leave the room (and everyone in it) as soon as
possible. Unfortunately, they'd no sooner passed through the dark wooden doors when Dolls
descended on Wynonna, pulling her aside quickly. They spoke in hushed voices for a few moments
before Wynonna turned, face drawn tight, and Waverly knew what she was going to say before the
words ever left her lips.

"It's okay, you can go. I know my way back to my room from here."
Wynonna gave her an apologetic shrug before turning away, walking briskly down the foyer with Dolls. Waverly sighed and began the exhausting trek up the massive grand staircase. She was really beginning to regret leaving her bed this morning.

Finally making it to the top, Waverly turned and began making her way down the long hallway that led to her room. Her heart flooded with relief as her door came into view, but it was short lived, the feeling dying the second she heard a familiar voice behind her.

"You're in hurry."

She turned, eyes meeting Nicole's, and sighed.

"Why are you following me?"

The redhead smirked, shoulder bumping the wall next to her as she leaned against it. Waverly tried not to stare. She'd always been a fan of that look; she'd called it the Badboy Stance in her head, much to her own embarrassment.

"This hallway leads to mine, babe. I was heading back to my room and saw you. Thought I might say hi."

"Hi," Waverly clipped, heart fluttering traitorously at the pet name.

A wide smile broke across Nicole's face.

"So, you know Wynonna?"

"She's my sister."

Waverly was edging closer to her door, eager to get away from the suffocating (intoxicating) woman beside her.

"Really? I guess that makes sense then. She's not really the type to have breakfast with friends."

"Mm."

Nicole smiled again, leaning close to Waverly, towering over her.

"So then it's safe to assume she's given you the full tour?" Nicole's arms splayed out dramatically, indicating toward the rooms around them.

Waverly's eyes flitted to the door and back.

"She's shown me enough."

"Has she shown you the training room?"

Waverly's eyes widened, and Nicole grinned down at her.

"I didn't think so."

Nicole suddenly pushed off from the wall, walking purposefully down the hallway before turning to face Waverly again.

"Are you coming or what?"
Waverly's heart skipped a beat as she slid the key to her bedroom -against her better judgement- back into the pocket of her dress, following Nicole down the corridor.

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They walked in silence for a few moments, Waverly purposefully trailing behind Nicole.

"Are you looking at my ass?"

Waverly blanched, eyes meeting Nicole's, as the redhead turned around and began walking backward, eyes never leaving her face.

"What?? No!"

Waverly felt a blush creeping up her cheeks.

"You should, I've been told it's a nice one."

Nicole grinned, eyes scrunching at the corners.

Waverly decided against responding, opting instead to look around the hallway, or really looking anywhere but at the other woman.

"It's just down here."

Nicole had turned around again and was waving Waverly forward to walk next to her.

"Slow down! Not everyone has legs up to their neck!" Waverly puffed, chasing Nicole down the hall.

She watched as the redhead rounded a corner, disappearing from sight without a second glance. Waverly rushed around, progressively more annoyed than she'd been when they started this excursion.

"You can't invite me to see something and then just leave me behi-"

She bolted around the corner, stopping mid-sentence when she collided face first into something solid, voice muffled in a silky black shirt. Strong hands reached out, wrapping gently around her biceps, to pull her away.

"We're here," Nicole looked down at her, hands still wrapped around her arms, "unless you'd like to stand out here like this for a while, in which case..."

Nicole trailed off, lifting her eyebrows suggestively. Waverly batted her hands away.

"Just let me inside, Nicole."

She tried to sound annoyed but it came out more breathy than she'd intended. Nicole shrugged, pushing down on the slithering, serpent shaped handle to open the door. She stepped aside, motioning Waverly in.

"After you."

Chapter End Notes
I know this one wasn't as fun, I'm sorry, but I'll make up for it with the next one! I just really wanted to get a chapter up for you guys tonight so I can start working in ch 6
Waverly circled the room, slack-jawed, and acutely aware of Nicole's eyes at her back. Enormous windows made up the entirety of the ceiling. Deep black and green vines snaked their way across the panes, nearly obscuring any view of the outside world. Dark clouds circled the sky, each thick and heavy as if they might burst at any second and send a monsoon down over them.

The room itself was large and circular, though less ornate than the rest of the estate. Plain stone walls rose up around them, heavy brass candlesticks jutting out at sharp angles overhead. Only the floor beneath her feet gave any indication that they were in the same building at all: luxurious, swirling purple and silver marble stretching out as far as the eye could see. Tiny daggers glinted at her as she made her way around the room, each inlaid deep into the marble and smoothed over with something akin to glass.

Waverly's brows furrowed as she finished her lap. The room was empty. No training equipment. No armor. Not even any swords to spar with, aside from the ones in the floor, and she doubted those would be of much use to anyone.

"Is this some kind of joke?"

She whirled around to meet Nicole's gaze, appraising the other woman through narrowed eyes.

"The room provides you with what you'll need to train. Some only get space to be alone, others an armory. It's different for everyone."

Waverly rolled her eyes, stretching her arms out to gesture around the empty room.

"There's nothing here! I swear if this was some kind of ploy to get me alone..."

"I've never needed to trick a woman into being alone with me, Waverly, and I don't intend to start now."

Nicole's voice was tight, disapproving, as she pushed off from her perch by the wall. She tipped her hand lazily toward a small bench -that hadn't been there before, Waverly realized- and walked into the center of the room.
Waverly made her way over to the bench, sitting on the edge of the seat, eyes never leaving Nicole's lithe form.

"What are you doing?"

Nicole's lips tipped upward, so slight Waverly nearly missed it from the distance, and squared her shoulders.

"Just watch."

Minutes ticked by in silence as Waverly's eyes drifted around the room. She'd opened her mouth to question exactly what she was supposed to be watching when a thundering crack echoed throughout the room. She jolted, eyes turning up toward the ceiling to see a flash of lightning streak across the sky. Fat blue raindrops flooded over the paned roof, sliding down the vines in droves.

"Did you do that?"

Nicole didn't answer. Waverly's eyes drifted down from the ceiling and settled over the other woman. Nicole's eyes were shut tight, eyebrows furrowed, lost in a trance. And then suddenly, something happened...

Water began to drip through the ceiling, hitting the ground with a resounding splat. Drop after drop poured through invisible cracks in the windows until the rain gushed down like a waterfall. Waverly jumped up from her seat, eyes widening as the water raced across the floor towards her.

"Nicole!"

She stepped up onto the bench, trying to keep dry as she glared daggers at the redhead.

"I get it!! You can control water! Now Stop!"

Nicole's eyes opened then and she gave Waverly what would have been a heart-stopping smile, if she wasn't actively trying to drown her. The fingers on her right hand twitched, so slightly it could have been a trick of the light, and the water stopped.

Waverly watched as it flooded back toward Nicole, taking the shape of long, thick whip. Her eyes widened in horror as Nicole's arm flung back, sending the stream of water directly at her. Her arms raised over her face automatically, back shrinking into the wall behind her, as she waited for impact.

But none came.

When she opened her eyes, she was surrounded by what appeared to be water, but felt like nothing more than air. She reached her hand out to touch the rippling liquid -could she even call it that?- but it cut straight through.

Nicole jerked backward, sending the water careening away from Waverly, before throwing it up into the air where it hung above her like a gelatinous cloud. Waverly stepped forward, eyes locked on the strange substance overhead.

She watched, enthralled, as it began to change. Colors began to leak into the cloud, as if someone were standing on the ceiling and dropping ink into it from above. They swirled together, purples, blues and pinks until the cloud had transformed entirely. Waverly stood, frozen in awe.

Above her, a mini galaxy swirled its way across the room. Stars emerged from the darkness,
flickering dimly, and entire solar systems floated aimlessly around each other. Planets she'd never seen before danced over her head, dipping so low she could make out entire ecosystems.

The cloud began to glow, the colors fading as it changed again, this time into something familiar. A large water lily took shape from the darkness, its petals opening gracefully, folding in on themselves.

Waverly gasped as hundreds of butterflies burst forth. Deja vu swirled in her mind as she watched, for the second time, the same performance that had mesmerized her only days prior when she'd opened the mysterious envelope under her door.

She watched, unblinking, for so long that her eyes began to water but she couldn't bring herself to look away until the very last butterfly vanished, disappearing in a puff of smoke. The room was silent as Waverly's eyes made their way over to Nicole, who -for once- seemed bashful.

"What was that?"

Waverly's voice was so breathy it was nearly inaudible.

"Dolls calls it Ocular Manipulation. I just call it Misting."

"What is it?"

Nicole stepped forward, and Waverly noticed the shake in her step. She looked exhausted.

"It's controlling energies, manipulating them. But it's also a form of telepathy."

Waverly looked at her quizzically, urging her to elaborate.

"I can reach into someone's mind, make them see what I want them to see. I use the energies around us, and pull them from the air. Change them into something else, anything I want, and then I can project that image into someone's mind."

Waverly nodded, thinking.

"But why even bother changing the energies in the air at all? Why go through the trouble of making it appear tangible? Why not just project the image from your mind into theirs?"

Nicole smiled.

"That would be more convenient, and less tiring, but it wouldn't work. I need the image to appear tangible if I want it to be convincing. It's not enough to just project my thoughts into someone else's mind; the brain is an incredible thing and it would know the images were fake. Here, I'll show you."

Nicole lifted a shaking hand before Waverly could protest, pointing it in the air between them. A tiny blue dragonfly appeared, whizzing around them in lazy circles. At first, Waverly couldn't see the difference, and then, as if a switch had been flipped, an uneasy feeling settled in her chest. She stepped back. The dragonfly began to flicker, dropping from the air, then with a twitch, righted itself before repeating the process over and over again.

"Oh."

Nicole nodded, dropping her hand to her side.

"And you made the masquerade invitations?"
"I made yours."

Waverly blushed. Nicole gave her a fading smile, face going pale as small beads of sweat gathered over her temples.

"Are you alright?"

Waverly reached out, hand grasping at Nicole's arm gently.

"It takes a lot out of me," Nicole panted, "normally it's not this bad, but I've been lazy with my training and I haven't been taking my elixirs."

Waverly's head cocked to the side at that, mind bursting with questions over what the "elixirs" were and what they did, but upon looking over Nicole's face again, she decided to save it for another time.

"Your turn."

Nicole gently pulled herself away, letting Waverly's fingers slide down her arm before making her way over the bench.

"But I don't know what to do!"

"Just close your eyes. Concentrate. You'll feel it, and when you do, just let go."

Waverly let out a long breath, blowing her hair out of her face before closing her eyes. She focused on the air around her. The way her heart pumped rhythmically in her chest. She focused on the twitch of her fingers and the sound of the air leaving her lungs, and then, when she'd nearly run out of things to focus on, a warm pulsing light began to glow behind her eyes.

She focused all her energy on it, pulling it from the recesses of her mind until it was so close she feared she might go blind. Warmth spread over her palms, licking up her wrists.

Waverly's eyes opened cautiously and nearly bugged out of her head when she saw two small flames, one orange, one blue, nestled in her hands.

"Oh my god!"

She smiled so hard her cheeks ached. The flames shot up, dancing all the way up her arms before settling back down into her palms again.

"They're controlled by your emotions right now. With more training, you'll be able to control them with your will."

Waverly sucked in a breath. That explains why they appeared when that man attacked her. She was scared and her body reacted to her heightened emotions.

"See if you can produce another element. Think of something else. Think of the Earth."

Waverly's eyebrows knitted together in concentration as she conjured up an old memory. The image of a young Wynonna bloomed in her mind, the two of them, just kids, running through the garden on a hot summer day. Wynonna was filthy, covered head to toe in dirt, and chasing Waverly through the yard with her arms outstretched.

'I'm gonna get you, Wavie!!'
She smiled, watching as Wynonna grabbed young Waverly and rubbed her dirty little hands all over her face. The smell of the warm dirt wafted into her nose, and suddenly the warmth of the flames was replaced with something dry and crumbling.

Waverly opened her eyes, allowing the memory to fade away as she looked down as her palms. Sun-warmed dirt lay in each open hand. Her heart leapt with excitement, and she jumped up and down, eyes meeting Nicole's.

When she turned her gaze back down, the dirt had transformed itself into heavy, solid rocks. Her eyes widened as they began to multiply, spilling out of her palms and scattering across the marble floor.

"Keep going. Try another."

This time when Waverly closed her eyes, she brought forth the memory of her last sleepover with Wynonna. There'd been a tornado in the area -though it was more of a Dust Devil, according to Wynonna- and they'd holed up in Waverly's apartment watching old Westerns and eating popcorn. Well, Waverly was eating it. Wynonna was throwing it at the television every time a character "acted like he had a dick for brains," which apparently was often.

Waverly didn't need to open her eyes to feel that it was working. A gentle breeze swirled around her, picking up her hair and blowing it across her face. She smiled, tilting her head back to welcome the cool air.

"It's just water left, now."

Nicole's voice drifted across the room, pulling Waverly out of her memory. She was feeling the first signs of fatigue but pushed onward, determined to conjure the last element.

Rolling her neck, she refocused her mind, aiming to bring up the memory of her many excursions to the creek behind the Homestead. But instead, another image filled her mind. A young Waverly, so young she shouldn't even remember this, was trotting happily through the forest. She was so small, short hair pulled up in two uneven pigtails. It looked like she'd tried to cut her own bangs. Waverly's face scrunched in confusion. She didn't remember this. What was this?

Nicole's voice sounded from the distance, but Waverly shrugged her off, unable to understand her anyway.

Little Waverly was stepping forward, toes dipping gingerly into the creek. She was bending down to pick up a smooth stone to give to Gus when her foot slid, slipping over the mossy rocks, and she plunged into the water. She turned over and over beneath the rippling stream, water burning in her lungs as she choked. She was screaming for help, bubbles erupting from her mouth, she couldn't swim. She couldn't swim, she couldn't-

Waverly was wrenched from the memory suddenly, and she stumbled forward into a strong body. Nicole's hands were wrapped around her arms, presumably from shaking her, and her chin, neck and dress were soaked.

"Oh my god, Waverly..why didn't you listen to me?! I told you to stop! Something was wrong, your emotions were too high!"

Waverly rested her cheek on Nicole's shoulder, taking in deep, shuddering breaths.

"I couldn't...hear you," she gasped.
"Are you okay?"

Nicole pulled her forward into a warm hug, arms wrapping protectively around her small frame as Waverly nodded.

"I'm wet."

Waverly could feel the wry grin creeping up on Nicole's face and she jumped back, eyeing the redhead seriously.

"Don't!"

Nicole raised her hand in surrender, grin widening into a smirk.

"Tell me what happened. Why am I wet?"

Nicole's smirk faltered and she looked away, shifting uncomfortably.

"The water...it was coming from your mouth. It was like...well, it was like you were drowning. It just wouldn't stop."

Waverly's eyes burned and she blinked away the tears before Nicole could see them.

"What are my powers? I mean...yours have a name. So do Wynonna's. What am I?"

"You're a Complete Elemental, Waverly. It's rare. It means you can control all the elements. Most elementals only get one. I've never met one before you, only read about them..."

Waverly sucked in a breath, eyes squeezing shut.

"I think I'd like to go back to my room now."

Nicole nodded, stretching out a hand. Waverly placed her palm in Nicole's, ignoring the way her heart sped up at the contact, and followed her back out into the hall.

They walked in silence all the way back to Waverly's door. She was ready to disappear into her room when an arm at her waist stopped her.

"Wait. Will you be at the ball tomorrow?"

Nicole carefully slid her arm away from Waverly, resting it beside her waist against the wall.

"It's mandatory, Nicole," Waverly teased.

A smile twitched at the corners of Nicole's mouth as she leaned forward.

"I'll save you a dance then."

Waverly rolled her eyes, desperately fighting back her own smile.

"I bet you will."

She slid off the wall and through the open door, eyes meeting Nicole's one last time before the door clicked shut, the barrier doing nothing to stifle the tension between them.

Chapter End Notes
So basically.....Waverly is the Avatar lmao. Also the next chapter will be the masquerade ball baby!!!! I'm writing it now so it'll be up soon hopefully! Hope you guys enjoyed!!

End Notes

We're entering the underworld in the next chapter so buckle in for some freaking OPULENCE! Everyone is extra!!!! Everything is antique gothic and everyone is wearing awesome clothes!! I'll post another chapter tomorrow! Hopefully a bit earlier in the day this time.

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!