

Provenance

Epilogue

After a quick trip to the nearest hospital to get Thom patched up and my stitches put back in, I got a ride back to Augusta from one of Geneva's former pack.

There had been some very serious talks after the challenges. The person who had technically won had been killed by a human. Me. But according to bloody werewolf tradition, a human cannot be a pack leader. Some of the pack were all for giving me a chance in the hopes that I was infected after all. But when the full moon came and went and I didn't sprout fur, they gave up on me. Not that I was unhappy. I was beyond relieved. Two lucky strikes didn't make me any kind of a fighter and I had more than enough weirdness of my own to deal with. If I never had to deal with werewolves again I would be happy to the end of my days.

In the end, the pack decided to have a series of challenges—thankfully not fights to the death—where anyone who qualified and was interested would have a shot. Thom was too injured to participate in the ritual round robin matches, but I don't think he was all that disappointed. I wasn't even sure that they'd let him throw his hat into the ring, the cheater. The last I heard, Thom was moving into Bellingham and leaving the pack. If I ever stopped being mad at him, I might wish him luck.

Jeannie won the challenges, surprisingly. Well, you'd only be surprised if you didn't know her. Jeannie was the toughest woman I had ever met.

In case you're curious, I did not attend. I had had my fill of blood sports.

The university library reopened just a week after Dr. Jasper's murder. So much had happened since then that it felt like I had been away from my desk for months. I found out that Jasper had donated his entire collection to the library. Jan and Audrey were planning to take a trip out to his house soon, to start evaluating what they would take and what would go into the annual book sale. They had no idea that I had made my own trip out to Jasper's house and picked up a few choice volumes about the supernatural. I had carefully packed my newly repaired car full of crumbly leather-bound books, tattered homespun jobs like the Neeson book, rebound old books with no titles, and other odds and ends.

I had taken anything that looked like something that I could learn from. I had also taken every book that had mentioned people like me—ordinary humans with special talents. I had already learned some interesting things. I was still working on being able to touch things without seeing their histories,

and was making progress on that front. But I was also learning what else I could do with my gift. What I had been able to do with Nikki's hair was not a fluke. I could do more than learn where something had been. I was still experimenting, but I could already do some pretty amazing things.

The werewolf revelation was a sharp lesson that taught me that there was more out there than I could possibly imagine. More than I had ever dreamt of in my philosophy, as the Bard would have said. If nothing else, library school had taught me that knowledge was power. The books I had liberated from Jasper's little ranch house would be the tools that I needed to protect myself from whatever other mythical beasts and legendary creatures turned out to be real.

The things I learned just from skimming through Jasper's books taught me that what I had gone through with the pack wars could be the least of my worries now that I was on the supernatural radar. I wondered if anyone else knew what Jasper had been collecting, and if they knew that the lion's share of those books were shortly going to be on sale as the Augusta University library tried to get rid of the eccentric collection. If only someone had thought to make up a preternatural *Who's Who* so that I could spot the extras from the Grimm brothers' stories. Unfortunately, Neeson was about as close as I could come to being forewarned.

Nuts.