

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S + K + J'. The letters are connected and fluid, with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end of the signature.

KATHRYN

Gah! Quit it!!

HELENA

Ooo, she speaks. Now we're making progress.

KATHRYN

What the hell, lady? I'm a wild monster!

HELENA

You go to steal the most powerful book of spells in the eastern US, and you really think it's guarded by someone who hasn't dealt with the supernatural before?

KATHRYN

Not steal! Just use. Not even use, just take a picture of the spell I need and then go off and do it.

HELENA

Oh lord, just clever enough to be dangerous. And let me guess. Covered in fur but still able to talk, dust on your paw but you won't let yourself lick it clean in front of me-- you're still fighting the change, aren't you? You got bitten...let me guess...three months ago. One month to be in total denial, one month to be in a panic doing Google searches like 'werewolf but real and also cat?' and 'how to cure were-cat bite', one month to try and fail and try and fail. And now you're here for the spell that will cure you.

KATHRYN

Yes! Please! It's ruined my life, you can't even imagine!

HELENA

"Ruined your life". Young people, so dramatic! You're agile like a circus performer, you can't be hurt except by silver, what's so bad? I had a cousin who got bitten by a were-seal once. You try waking up naked on an iceberg, then you can complain. Tea? I had some brewing when you scuttled in.

KATHRYN

Yes please.

(HELENA busies herself at her desk with a pot and two mugs.)

But look, it does, it really sucks! All my clothes and furniture are ruined, because I, this

(gesturing at her fur)

sheds pounds per day. I've lost my fiance who thinks I'm totally psychotic--he hasn't spoken to me since the day after the first full moon, when he found that I'd killed a groundhog and brought it home as a gift for him and left it on his shoes. And in them. Half-eaten. It was disgusting.

(HELENA comes back with a mug and a saucer, and places them both on the table in front of KATHRYN.)

What are these?

HELENA

(points to the mug)

Tea.

(points to the saucer)

Cream. I try to be a good host.

KATHRYN

(staring at the cream and fighting her thirst for it)

Is this some sort of test? See yowww far gone I am, that sort of thing?

HELENA

Life's a test, girl. And sometimes it's just an old woman amusing herself.

KATHRYN

(pushing back from the table with an effort)

Not thirsty. I need the book. You sell books. So, can I buy it? Or rent it? Or just buy the spell that cures me?