

Chapter One

“How cool is that? It’s Halloween eve and there’s a full moon.” Samantha looked up at the night sky as she stepped out of the rural Mississippi restaurant. The moon had always fascinated her, even as a young girl.

“Wow, that’s rare.” Her younger sister Jane stood next to her looking up.

“What do you mean?”

“That’s the second full moon in one month and tomorrow’s Halloween. In the old days, it was a powerful omen.” Jane’s brow furrowed.

Samantha chuckled. “You’re so full of it, sis. What do you know about the old days or omens?”

“I told you, Sam, I’m really getting into this Wicca stuff. And if you’d just accept your heritage, you’d be into it, too.” Jane pointed at her. “It’s in our blood.”

“Just because we had a crazy grandmother doesn’t mean we’re witches.” Sam rolled her eyes. If it wasn’t Wicca, it was something else. Jane had always been the one searching for something to believe in and Sam had been the reasonable, calm, steady one. As far as she was concerned, feelings and hunches about people were not supernatural.

Just good intuition.

“Sam. She had dreams that predicted the future.” Jane put her fists on her hips and glared at her sister. “You don’t get any more witchy than that.”

“She used her so-called powers to pick horses at the track, for God sake,” Sam shot back. All Sam’s gift ever did for her was give her a sense of who people were inside and even that had failed her monumentally. She had the unused wedding dress to prove it.

“Well, Grandma always won, didn’t she? Besides, who says witches can’t do that?” Jane laughed. “If I could, I’d dream the lotto numbers and win the big jackpot!”

They reached Jane’s car. Jane leaned over, gave Sam a kiss on the cheek and a quick hug goodbye. This was their halfway place between their homes, splitting the distance between Alabama and Louisiana, where she lived. Both had a long drive ahead of them. Jane would drive straight through, but Sam had gotten a motel room nearby.

“Same time, next month?” Sam asked.

“Same bat time, same bat channel,” Jane laughed, got into her car and gave a last wave as she pulled away.

Turning to her car in the deserted lot, Sam hit her remote and slid inside. As her lights came on, a man stood against the wall of the building, illuminated by her headlights. Her mouth went as dry as cotton and her chest tightened as she hit the door locks and fumbled to insert the key, afraid to take her eyes off him.

He gave her a jack-o-lantern smile, and her alarm bells clanged. In one long, heart-stopping glance, she took in long scraggly hair, old t-shirt, dirty blue jeans and the skull tattoo on his bare arm.

All he was missing was a chain saw and a hockey mask.

She half-expected the car to not start, but it fired up and relief flooded through her.

He raised his hand in a salute and her stomach dropped.

Throwing the car in reverse, she stomped on the gas, slinging gravel. The man shuffled over to a motorcycle as if he had all the time in the world, swung one leg over, and sat.

Shifting into drive, she whipped the car around, her head swiveling from side to side as she checked the highway for traffic. She pulled onto the quiet rural blacktop and accelerated towards her motel on the outskirts of Meridian, Mississippi, twenty miles away.

Glancing in her mirror, only darkness filled the rear window.

No motorcycle.

Exhaling, she took a deep calming breath, shook out the tension in her shoulders and punched in a CD selection. Soft classical music filled the cabin of the car, and Sam relaxed back into the seat, easing her foot off the gas pedal.

Really. The guy had just waved at her, not tried to kill her.

She'd over-reacted. Instead of being the calm, confident woman she'd once been, she'd felt vulnerable, unsure and on edge.

Damn Robert. It was all his fault. After two years of dating, he'd finally admitted right before their wedding that he'd had a vasectomy without her knowledge and that he never wanted to have children. He'd known how much she wanted kids. Her eyes burned with her fury and hurt. Betrayed by the one person she'd trusted most, she'd almost gone crazy wondering what else he'd lied to her about.

Where the hell had her powers been then?

As she drove down the dark two-lane highway, her teary gaze flicked to the mirror. As if she'd been injected with ice water, the blood in her veins went cold.

A single headlight followed her.