

Witch Hazel and Wolfsbane

By Emily Michel

Deleted Scene from Chapter 19

I deleted this scene for two reasons. First, I decided to tell the chapter from a male character's point of view, so he'd have no idea what was going on in the women's room without it being creepy. Second, it felt out of character for Annie to be so judgmental, so into the "discard" pile it went.

Brittney spent the entire time in the bathroom primping in front of the mirror. She had a purse-full of beauty products arranged on the counter. Annie merely washed up and pretended to fix her hair.

"Oh, honey, these lights just wash you out," Brittney said in mock kindness. "Here, want to borrow anything?"

Annie snorted. Their coloring was entirely different, so of course none of Brittney's proffered make-up would do anything for her.

"Thanks, but no. I'm not really a make-up person."

"I know Rhys mentioned it, but your name has slipped my mind?"

"Annie," she replied curtly. "My name is Annie."

"Oh, Annie. How... nice." Brit had obviously already had a drink or three and was particularly poor at hiding the condescension in her voice.

"So, Brit, how do you know Rhys?" Annie asked, already knowing the answer. She was just trying to buy Rhys some time away from this shallow excuse for a human being.

“Oh, well, we’re an item,” she proclaimed. “We started dating in high school and we’ve been on and off since. This time, I want it to be on for good. What about you? I haven’t seen you around. Are you Owen’s new girlfriend?”

Funny she thought I’d be Owen’s girlfriend.

Out loud, Annie said, “No, I’m a business partner. We’re here discussing plans for a test facility to look into disease transmission from animals to humans.”

Brit’s eyes glassed over after *business*. “Well, you should keep it professional. I don’t need any floozies trying to put the moves on my guy.”

Oh, holy crap. She was one of those women. Annie had mostly convinced herself this type of jealous, territorial woman was a misogynistic myth, but now, like a Greek goddess, one had finally raised her head. If she stayed true to form, they’d be cat fighting by the end of the evening if she didn’t take herself off Brit’s radar.

“A. I’m not a floozy. And B. It’s a *business* relationship. Rhys is free to see whomever he’d like.”

“Good,” she appeared mollified. “Good. You know, you’re really pretty. You should try to take home Owen! I mean, he is the bastard, but he’s cute.”

"Bus-iness, Brittney. It's a business relationship," Annie said as she finally pushed open the door to the bathroom. She wondered how much time Rhys might have before he was once again fighting off the handsy brunette. A wicked little grin twitched up the corners of her mouth. Sometimes, you reaped what you sowed.