

# HAZE

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To be perfectly honest, she was scared – so much so that she could feel the faint signs of passing out any moment now as she waded through the seemingly endless swamp. She had no one but her faithful cat as her companion. It seemed a whole lot braver than her as it confidently navigated the way.

Something swam past her ankles and she almost gave their position away. It was a good thing that she was able to stop herself from screaming. She felt the cat give her a judgmental glance despite the haze that rendered her almost blind.

She wanted to talk, to voice out her fears. But doing so would only alert the evil that's been hunting them. Her magic was practically useless – she couldn't light the path; she couldn't clear the mist. She felt every ounce of her power slowly trickling away from the tips of her fingers. *Not a good sign*, she thought.

For now, she could only trust that the cat would lead them to the other side where it's safe.

Just as she thought they've been walking for what feels like forever, all of the hair on her body stood up. She felt the sudden onslaught of unbelievable dread as the trembling started from her toes and quickly moved up her spine.

To her left, she felt the cat move closer to her, fully alert and prepared for an attack.

*It's okay*, she tried to tell it. *The beast still doesn't know where we are exactly.*

The reassurance was no use. She's never felt so helpless in the centuries that she'd lived. Her powers were almost drained, and she needed to save what little she had left in case they were found.

She pushed the cat forward, trying to ignore the fact that she, for the first time in her life, was tremendously frightened.

She felt his energy before she even saw him.

"Found you," he whispered, so close to her ear.

That was when she snapped. Her screams were muffled when he flicked his long fingers and a blinding, bright wave of light covered her mouth. It hurt a lot. She could feel the part of her face burning at its touch.

"You think you can run away from me?" he sniggered. His impeccably handsome face was distorted. His piercing eyes glistened almost red, his smile wide and mocking, his long and sharp teeth bared. He touched her arm, and she felt a burning sensation against her skin. "You're mine."

Gone. She felt all her remaining magic sucked from her as she helplessly fought against his tight hold.

The cat tried to jump and scratch his eyes, but he effortlessly struck it and had it plummeting a few feet away, unconscious, and gradually sinking.

"Nooo!" she tried to scream, to no avail. She could only watch helplessly as her only companion slowly drown.

Her heart broke into a million pieces, and she felt herself lose hope. She was rapidly losing energy.

She almost surrendered when a blinding light struck the beast holding her captive.

"Let her go!" a deep voice exclaimed.

She could only catch a glimpse of her savior before she felt herself lose consciousness.

*This is how I die?* was her last thought before her eyes closed against her will.