

Chapter 1

9th November 2017

“Amelia Elizabeth Taylor, I won’t tell you again, you need to pay attention!” Yelled Amelia’s father.

Amelia, known as Lia, was sat cross-legged, trying to listen attentively to the magic lesson being taught by her father; however the converted garage had lots of more interesting objects to focus on. The double garage was separated into a small kitchen area and an expansive living space, which had two walls covered in floor to ceiling bookcases, overflowing with books and other magical tools. The various beams and columns of the garage had a collection of dream-catchers, decorative moons, compasses and acorn pendants strategically positioned throughout. There were also a few gimmicky items like a witch’s hat and a broom used to decorate in one small part of the garage. On one of the bookcases was a framed photo of the four siblings on their birthday in which Lia was sat on Ben’s lap posing in the hat while Sam and Charlie laughed. The magic lessons had started two months ago on Amelia and her brothers’, Ben, Charlie and Sam’s 17th birthday when they had discovered their paternal lineage was a long line of witches.

Amelia glanced over at her brothers, all of whom were sat comfortably on chairs throughout the room, which were centred around the circular table where her father was currently stood glaring at her.

“Sorry Dad.”

“OK, so as I was saying, you all need to master controlling your powers, learn your triggers and finally you need to work as a team.”

Amelia glanced over at Ben, the independent, charming and quiet leader of the four of them, who shrugged. As a set of quadruplets, the four of them were closer than typical siblings but that didn’t mean that their closeness led to constructive team work as they had a lot of disagreements and differences. For example: the night before Sam and Ben had been arguing about whose turn it was to walk the dogs with Lia and as a result several plates and mugs had been broken.

“OK Dad, how do you want us to proceed?” Sam, the charismatic and driven quadruplet, who often acted as the voice of the siblings, asked.

“For now, I simply want you to work on controlling your powers. Each one of you has control of an element alongside your active powers of telekinesis and telepathy. Once you have mastered these then we can move onto the more difficult aspects of your craft.”

“I don’t understand how this all works Dad.” Charlie, overly cautious and stubborn, piped up.

Charlie was having the most difficulty trying to adjust to the powers they had acquired; his natural belief was based in science and logic, so invisible magic abilities were beyond his comprehension. Amelia, the youngest of the quadruplets and the only girl, was quite open to the idea of magic existing but due to her more daydreamy nature she was having a lot of trouble mastering her powers. Ben and Sam had accepted the powers and were coming into their own with the control, they still had blips but overall they were doing the best of the four of them.

“Charlie, I understand that you are having difficulty grasping this but you need to at least try and learn how to use your powers.” David, their father, groaned. They had been having variations on this conversation for the last couple of months since the quadruplets had turned 17 and Charlie was still not interested in attempting to learn his craft.

“There is no basis for magic!”

“Charlie that’s enough! We can talk about this later but for now I need everyone.... Amelia what are you staring at now?”

Ben quickly kicked his sister’s ankle, as she had once again begun to focus on the huge bookcases that covered the walls.

“Oops, sorry Dad. I’m just fascinated by all these different topics, can I read any of the books?” She asked for the hundredth time since starting magic lessons. She hadn’t been allowed in the garage until her seventeenth birthday and therefore was intrigued by the books she had recently discovered.

“Later, come on now guys! I only ask for two hours a week to try and teach you how to use your powers. Today’s lesson is again focused on your telekinesis as this is one of your active powers. Now, I have been watching you guys and I’ve got some ideas of your triggers, this is what activates your powers. Ben your initial trigger is anger, Sam yours is your excitement, Amelia yours seems to be when you get nervous or flustered and Charlie yours is frustration.”

“How does that help us?” Sam asked.

“Well by knowing what your trigger is, we can begin to work on control and then we can work on using your powers without triggers.”

“How are we meant to control our natural reactions?” Lia asked.

“It’s not about controlling your reactions, it’s just ensuring that you don’t accidentally use your powers inappropriately.” David explained. “Right, let’s get started with today’s lesson.”

Lia adjusted her position in the chair so she was sitting with one leg crossed over the other and pulled out a notebook, which she balanced on one knee, to make some notes on what her dad was telling them. After an hour of listening to an explanation on how telekinesis worked and the best way to control their emotions, they were allowed to practise their powers.

In the centre of the table was a plain coffee mug and each of them had to try and move it towards them and then back to the centre again.

“I’m going to knock this one out of the park.” Sam announced, as he got up to stand by the table.

Sam squinted his eyes at the mug and sure enough it began to move towards him.

“Yes!” he shouted, which caused the mug to pick up speed and crash onto the floor.

“Sam! What have we just talked about? When you get it overly enthusiastic about something, it causes you to lose control of your powers. Alright Ben, your turn.”

Ben stood up and again squinted at the mug, somehow Ben managed to get the mug to do exactly what was needed.

“Excellent.” David said, nodding to Ben.

“Amelia? Would you like to have a go next?” he asked his daughter, who was no longer paying any attention to the class and was doodling in the notebook she had been using.

“I can try.”

Lia got to her feet and walked slowly to the table. She squinted her eyes like her brothers had however the mug did not move.

“Why don’t you try using your hands? When your mum startled you the other day, she said that you waved your hands then all the books and paper on your desk went flying.”

“Why would my powers be different to Ben and Sam though?”

“Because you’re different.” Smirked Sam, trying to wind his sister up.

“As I was explaining earlier, telekinesis can be accessed in two ways, either by your eyes or by your hands, yours might be controlled through your hands.”

Lia sighed but lifted her hands up, she focused on the mug and gestured that it should come towards her. Sure enough, the mug did begin to move in her direction. Unfortunately at that moment Charlie sneezed, causing Lia to jump and send the mug flying into the wall.

“Oh no!” Charlie exclaimed, as Sam and Ben dissolved into laughter at their siblings’ misfortune.

“Well, this proves my point about your powers being linked to things that make you jump Amelia. Have a seat and we will try again.” David stated, going to collect another mug and pick up the shards from the one that had just been broken.

Charlie slumped in his seat and looked down at the ground but Lia still patted him on the shoulder as she walked the long way back to her seat.

“Don’t worry Charlie, it’s not your fault.” She said, as she passed him.

“It’s not that I am worried about.” Charlie snarled into his lap, his sister’s natural empathy picking up on his low mood. “Dad! I am not taking part, this whole thing is a sham and I will not be a part of it!”

“This is a magic lesson Charles and you all have to learn to control your powers.”

“NO!” Charlie snapped, before shoving himself out of the chair and stomping out of the room.

“OK, Ben you are dismissed, Sam and Amelia could you have another couple of goes at trying to move a mug. I will be back shortly.”

Lia stood up after her father left the room but rather than heading over to the table, she wandered over to the bookcases that had been capturing her attention over the last few weeks. The shelves were filled with books that were written through the centuries and covered a wide variety of topics

and subjects, including spells, potions and magical creatures. Lia wandered along the shelves, staring at the books, wondering how she could not have known that they were in here until a few weeks ago.

“Hey Lia, we are supposed to be practising this whole telekinesis thing, you don’t want to get caught looking at the books. Dad will kill you.” Ben advised, as he left the room.

Sighing wistfully, Lia turned back to the table where Sam had placed two new mugs and was trying hard to concentrate on getting his to move. Following her brother’s lead, Lia took her place at the opposite side of the table and raised her arms. The mug began to move as she gestured for it so she smiled and kept her arm moving until slowly the mug made the journey, coming to rest in front of her. In an effort to get the mug to move a bit faster on its return journey, she flung her hand out, however she accidentally caught the edge of the tablecloth and pulled everything off the table.

“Lia!” Sam yelled, frustrated that his efforts had been disrupted.

“Sorry!”

“Forget it.”

“What is happening in here?” David asked, as he re-entered the garage.

“I was trying to get the mug to move a bit faster but my hand got stuck in the table cloth and well...” Lia trailed off, gesturing to the mess at her feet.

“You know what, let’s just call this lesson over.” Some progress had been made at least, David decided.

Sam quickly left the room whilst Lia stayed to put the table back to rights. Once everything had been replaced she packed up her stuff and headed into the main house. As soon as she walked into the house, Betty and Veronica, the two family Golden Retrievers ran into the hall and began jumping up at her.

“Hi girls, is it time for a walk?” She asked, grabbing her walking boots and coat from the cupboard. She clipped both leads in place. “Mum! I’m taking the dogs out, I’ll be back in time for dinner!”

Lia headed out down the driveway, letting the dogs run around ahead of her while she tried to untangle her headphones from her coat pocket. At the end of the drive, she paused to put her headphones in her ears.

“Lia, wait up!” Ben called, as he jogged down the drive trying to zip up his jacket.

“Oh, hey, what’s up?”

“You know you aren’t supposed to walk the dogs by yourself in the dark.”

“I use the same route everyday, I see the same people. How much danger can I be in?” Lia asked, passing Ben one of the dogs’ leads.

“I’m just repeating what the parents have already told you.”

Sighing, Lia took her headphones out of her ears. They walked in silence for a few minutes, along the path which led to the local woods, letting the dogs walk ahead of them, sniffing the trees around. Lia loved the woods, particularly in Autumn when all of the leaves were changing colour. At the entrance, Lia paused as she heard some rustling in the bushes, Ben moved so he was positioned slightly in front of her. The bushes continued to rustle as a large Husky jumped out of the bushes and leapt up at Lia.

“Hi!” Lia cooed, shifting so she could pet the dog without being knocked over.

“Buster! Come here!”

“He’s over here, Aidan!” Ben called out.

“Ben didn’t expect you out here!” Aidan called out, as he followed his dog out of the bushes.

“Lia was walking the dogs, thought I would give her a hand.” Ben explained, as he shook his friend’s hand.

“Hi.” Lia mumbled, as she continued to pet Buster.

Lia stumbled backwards as Buster leant his full weight against her legs, causing Aidan to grab his dog’s collar, pulling him away from her. Smiling, Lia shifted so that she could focus on the dogs and look at Aidan without being obvious. He looked at ease, wearing a pair of faded jeans, black shirt and unzipped grey hoody. She had known Aidan for years and had a crush on him for nearly as long. Consequently, whenever he was around, which was a lot of the time as he was Ben’s closest friend, she turned into either a babbling idiot or a mute. Lia glanced down at the dogs when Aidan looked over at her and busied herself taking off Betty’s lead.

“You alright Lia?” Aidan asked, watching her closely.

“I er, ye..” Lia mumbled.

Ben smirked but put his hand on his sister’s shoulder as a sign of support. Her crush was well known to everyone, except maybe Aidan who seemed ignorant of the fact that Lia wasn’t herself when he was around.

“You guys beginning or ending your walk?” Aidan asked, petting Betty who had wandered up to him.

“Just starting, you?” Ben responded, letting Veronica off her lead so she could join Betty who was now examining the bushes.

“Same, let’s get going then.” Aidan stated, moving forward, whistling to Buster who had once again vanished into the bushes.

The dogs ran ahead enjoying the freedom of being off the lead. The curvy path was the perfect place to walk dogs, as it followed the perimeter of the woods and the dogs were allowed off their leads. Ben and Aidan went on ahead as Lia dawdled through the woods, trying to get rid of the red blush that had come from her being around Aidan. Lia knew the woods like the back of her hand, she had been playing in them with her brothers since they had moved to this house when the quadruplets were five. As she had gotten older she would come into the woods to daydream or fantasise about

Aidan, to worry about the school work that she had to do or to simply have a couple of minutes peace when her brothers had all their friends round. She loved sitting underneath the tall trees and reading during the summer holidays.

After they had been walking for a few minutes, Lia got caught up in a daydream about Aidan and didn't notice that he and Ben had disappeared round one of the path's curves and out of sight. Lia was pulled out of her harmless fantasy when another couple of dogs came running out of the trees up to Lia. Kneeling Lia stopped to pet the dogs, she saw them everyday and always made a fuss of the cute Cocker Spaniels.

"Lia, where are you?" Ben called.

"Just behind you." Lia called back, standing back up, brushing the grass and leaves off her knees.

"Which bit of stay in sight don't you understand?" Ben yelled, when Lia came round the corner to where the boys stood waiting for her.

"The rule is I have to have you, Sam or Charlie come with me if I'm walking the dogs when it is dark, I don't remember being told anything about having to stay with you when you go steaming ahead!" Lia grumbled.

Aidan cleared his throat, making Lia jump as she had briefly forgotten he was there. Ben shrugged and turned away from his sister, before stomping ahead to where the dogs were hovering. Aidan stood awkwardly between the two siblings debating which one to go with. In the end, he stuck with Lia as he knew better than to try and talk to Ben when he was annoyed. In silence they all continued their walk around the path. Once they had come full circle, they clipped the leads back on the dogs. Lia grabbed the leads and headed off with both dogs, leaving Ben and Aidan.

"Mum, I'm back. Ben is at the bottom of the drive with Aidan, he will be up in a few minutes." Lia called, as she hung up her coat and the leads in the cupboard. She dropped her walking boots in the shoe rack on the floor of the cupboard.

Standing at the bottom of the Taylors' drive, Aidan and Ben stood, mirroring each others stance of slightly leant back with their hands shoved in the pockets of their jeans, as they discussed the plans for the weekend.

"Do you know what's up with Lia?" Aidan asked out of the blue.

"What do you mean?" Ben queried.

"Well, she seemed really happy on the walk until you two had words and I've seen her at school and she just seems a little different." Aidan explained.

"I don't think there's anything going on with her; she hasn't said anything to me anyway." Ben mumbled thoughtfully.

"So, no new guys or anything in her life? Aidan asked, dropping eye contact with Ben.

"I don't talk to her about things like that, she's my sister." Ben groaned.

“Forget it.” Aidan said. “I was going to offer to walk the dogs with Lia if you wanted but needed to check I wouldn’t be stepping on some guy’s toes by hanging out with her.”

“What?” Ben exclaimed.

“I can walk the dogs with Lia, I have to walk Buster and if all your parents are worried about is her being alone in the woods, she wouldn’t be if I was with her.” Aidan explained.

“Why?” Ben asked.

“I’ve heard her arguing with Sam a few times and I was there today when you had words with her.” Aidan clarified.

“Right, but what does that have to do with you offering to walk the dogs with Lia?” Ben questioned.

“Trying to prevent World War Three in your house. If you, Charlie and Sam don’t have to argue about dog walking then it gives everyone a bit of peace.” Aidan commented nonchalantly.

“I’ll check with Lia and let you know.” Ben decided, after a few seconds.

With that, both boys nodded at each other and went their separate ways. Ben headed up the driveway to the house, while Aidan headed off down the street. Back inside, Lia grabbed her school bag from the bottom of the stairs where she had dropped it coming in from school and walked up the two flights of stairs to her bedroom, hoping to get another glance at Aidan before he headed home. She and her parents had bedrooms on the second floor whilst the three boys had the first floor to themselves.

Once in her room, Lia took her History textbook out of her bag and dumped it next to her laptop so she could continue working on the essay she was currently writing. Lia claimed that her room had an order to prevent her mum, dad and Charlie from complaining but in reality, as it had been for years, it was quite simply a mess. Her desk was covered in pads, papers and books in no particular order; her laptop was balanced haphazardly on the chair where she had dumped it the night before, having spent half the night on Youtube.

“Amelia? How do you work in here?” Charlie asked, appearing in the open doorway to her bedroom.

“The same way I have always done. I simply move the unnecessary onto the pile on the floor or work sat on my bed.” Lia explained, plopping down on to her unmade bed.

Charlie sighed and shook his head as he glanced around the disorganised mess his sister called a room, there were dirty clothes spilling over the top of the laundry basket, a leaning pile of clean clothes about to topple over on top of one of Lia’s chest of drawers, books scattered on the floor and any number of other surfaces.

“Dinner’s ready.” He announced, with one last head shake before heading out of the room.

Lia grabbed one of her slippers from where she had kicked it off that morning and glanced around her room for the second one. When she couldn’t find it straight away, she kicked at the cushions and stuffed animals that had fallen off the bed in the night. Still not able to find the slipper, she checked

under the bed and sure enough there it was. Pulling both slippers on, Lia quickly left the room so she could get down to the kitchen.

As usual, Lia was the last one into the kitchen. Grinning as pasta bake was her favourite, she grabbed the plate that had been left for her, accepting that it probably had the smallest portion as her brothers would have stolen a few forkfuls. Taking her place next to Ben and opposite Sam, she helped herself to some bits of garlic bread. For the next few minutes the meal was eaten in silence.

“How was Aidan, Lia?” Sam asked, pulling a face at his sister “Did you actually manage to form a whole sentence?”

“Sam.” Warned Diane, their mum.

“What? She needs to get over this crush, it’s ridiculous.” Sam complained.

“It’s fine, Mum.” Lia said, lowering her gaze to her plate.

“He offered to walk the dogs with you, if you want.” Ben commented. “He seemed to think that it would be better for you than walking with one of us.”

“That’s nice of him.” Diane observed.

“Why would he offer that?” David enquired.

“Ben and I might have had words, while out with dogs.”

“No, you wandered off by yourself, which is the one thing you know you are not supposed to do, so I reminded you.” Ben retorted.

“I have been walking the dogs all year. I don’t need someone to come with me.”

“We’ve already discussed this Amelia. As it is dark outside and you are walking through the woods, it is in your best interests to have one of your brothers walk with you.” David interjected.

“Fine!”

“So one of us still has to go with her?” Charlie asked.

“Yes.”

“Moving on.” Diane started. “How was everyone’s day?”

“Mine went really well, I had a chat with my Chemistry teacher and I now have some additional study materials to help with my coursework.” Charlie announced. “Also, I am ahead of the rest of my class in Maths and Physics, so have been given a couple of separate assignments to ensure that I get the A grade I need.”

“Geek.” Ben muttered under his breath.

“Ben.” David warned.

“What? He always brags about how far ahead of the rest of the class he is. He’s always getting extra work and his main friends are his teachers.” Ben argued.

“Ben!”

“Whatever.”

“Well, how was your day Benjamin?” Charlie smirked.

“Know something, Charles?” Ben snarled.

“Oh crap!” Sam laughed.

Lia stared at Ben and Charlie who engaged in a silent battle of wills over who would talk next. Lia knew instinctively due to her brothers’ behaviour that Ben must have failed a test or got into a fight protecting someone that had gotten him in trouble at College and that Charlie, being nosy and a teacher’s pet had found out about it. Deciding that she did not want to get involved in whatever Ben had done, knowing that it would likely result in him being punished, Lia turned her attention back to her dinner and quickly ate the last few mouthfuls before one of her brothers, having finished their dinner, tried to help themselves.

“Children! Behave!” David yelled, when Charlie started to say something and Ben kicked him under the table. “I think that dinner is over for tonight. Lia, it’s your turn to clear the table and deal with the dishwasher.”

Lia waited until her brothers had left the table before she began stacking the dishes to carry through to the kitchen, her mum gave her a hand by carrying in a few of the glasses through on her way out of the dining room.

“How is your Law coursework coming along, Sweetheart?” Diane asked, watching her daughter load the empty plates into the dishwasher.

“It’s going OK, I’ve got a couple of hundred words done but still have quite a bit of research to carry out, I’m thinking about heading into town to hit up the library at the weekend.”

“Sounds like a plan, do you have much other homework that you need to get done?”

“Erm, I have a mini History essay which I am about halfway through and I’ll hopefully finish it off tonight and a few mini assignments with some Psychology data due next Tuesday.”

“OK, I will let you get to it then.”

Diane left the kitchen to head into her office, leaving Lia to finish off her chores. Once the dishwasher was loaded she switched it on and left the room. She checked in the main living room and saw Sam and Ben engrossed in watching sport on the television. In the smaller living room, Charlie had a documentary on pause and was getting set up to do some research on one of his school projects. Deciding that she didn’t want to watch TV with her brothers, Lia went up to her room where she switched Netflix on her laptop and settled herself on her bed with her History textbook so she could read the necessary chapters.