

I'm dozing off, dreaming about the Palm House. This one plant we had, a century plant. It was an agave that Annie Rose said bloomed once in its entire life. Thirty years of nothing but leaves, then it would send up this huge great shoot with a flower on the end. Only the flower took all the energy the plant had, because right after it wilted and died.

"I didn't tell her our name was Green."

"What?" I say vacantly.

"I didn't tell her our name was Green, Juniper." Bear's voice floats out into my Palm House dream.

He's more certain now. Louder. "I didn't tell her our surname. I might have said Juniper. When I was upset. Or she might have heard me calling for you, because I called you all yesterday, but I didn't say Green. I didn't, Ju."

I sit bolt upright. "*You get some rest, Juniper Green.*" That's what Violet said as she went out.

I put my hands on Bear's shoulders. "When she was asking who you were, where you were from, it didn't slip out? You're certain about that?" I'm shaking him. It's too rough, but I'm shaking him anyway because I have to know.

"No!" Bear snaps. "I told you! She wasn't even nice to me. We didn't talk. Not like that. She just kept asking about you. Where you were. Trying to get me to remember. I didn't tell her anything about anything, Juniper. I wouldn't! I told you that, only you didn't listen."

I look at him, horror curdling in my stomach.

"Why would she know our surname, Juniper?"

But there's no time to answer. I'm already throwing open cupboards. Turning over boxes.

Everything's mostly empty so I move to the bedroom, to the little alcove off the main room, behind a pink curtain, which throws up a grey cloud of dust when I rip it aside. There's barely anything here either, except the bed with dirty sheets and an open wardrobe full of stale, crumpled clothes, most of which aren't even hanging, they've fallen to the floor.

There are no books. No pictures on the walls. No sign this woman does anything except hunt. That's what the whole cottage smells of. Dead things.

I slump down in a chair in front of a small table. There's an ornate oval mirror, dusty, with red velvet curtains either side. I've seen ones like it in the Emporium. It's a dressing table and the mirrors were always in three sections — the main one and a smaller one either side, like wings.

I tear back the curtains, but it's just my own reflection, staring back at me three ways in the dusty mirrors — my eyes hollowed out in my face, my skin smeared with dirt. I look sick and I feel sick too — sick and sleepy. The sweet sticky tea, which Bear refused, swishes around my stomach.

There's a hairbrush on the table. I've seen things like that in the Emporium too — the cream oval base, the soft bristles. I used to think they were pretty, until Barney told me they