

*A little girl who lives with a family of witches follows the ritual with the devil and how she feels about it. She's 16 years old, the start of her womanhood and witch hood. She must go on this journey and see the ways of the witches in order to properly become the person she's meant to be. Starts off innocent, naive, curious and comes out understanding her role and what she has to be, confident, settled, she's seen the dark side and she can't go back to who she was before, she's no longer a child in this reality anymore.. Almost sabrina-esque

The first blood of a young girl's life is usually the commanding start of her womanhood. That very first shedding breaks the dam of your younger self and gives birth to the next stage of your life. My first blood did not only mark my womanhood, but my eternal fate.

We walk in straight lines, unbroken and focused, into the forest, into my eternal fate. The trees dance in the moonlight taunting me, rejoicing in my misery. The wind nips at my exposed feet and slips between the opening of my cloak leaving frozen kisses on my arms and down my legs. As we walk deeper into the forest, my body steadily grows weak and numb. My feet are covered in cuts from the exposed branches and fallen twigs. The dirt clings to my skin, refusing to let me go further. Our leader, my mother, walks in front of me oblivious to my dread and I so desperately wish that she would turn around and tell me I don't have to go through with this, but I know that is not who she is. It is not who we are.

Our blood red cloaks create a stain against the murky forest floor. I stare and follow my mother's steps, never missing a step as if my body understood what had to be done while my mind was in a state of turmoil questioning everything, protecting me from what may lie ahead. I am unsure if what I truly want for this decision does not have a way out. My first blood sealed the first step into my eternal decision, but I am not for certain that I am prepared to make that next step. I'm afraid that the decision is not entirely my own, possibly not mine at all. We walk and walk deeper into the forest and not a word is spoken. My heart is hammering against my chest and I feel like the air around me is tightening around my throat. I keep walking, following the train of my mother's cloak. I'm not sure I can do this. Her cloak slowly loses its sharpness

and begins to blind with the forest. The darkness erasing her from me, This isn't right. I keep walking and walking and I feel as if we will walk forever into the night never to be seen again.

“We are here,” my mother announced. I looked up and realized the forest had opened up and revealed to us a clearing. The moon stood above us, erasing the darkness that began to consume me. She turns around to face and looks at me deeply.

“It is time,” she whispers

“Mother...please,” I beg, tears threatening to escape. Her hands grabbed my face tenderly, the warmth from her hands hugging my cheeks

“Do not be afraid of your fate. It has to be done.”

I stared into her eyes hoping to find some sort of understanding, but I found none. Her eyes show complete devotion and belief and mine did not. She let me go and began walking towards the middle of the clearing. The others began to gently push me forward, breaking me out of my trace and alerting me to follow her. I followed my mother's steps until I stood a couple feet away, facing her. While the others circled around my mother and I, one of them breaks from the circle, reaches around the front of my cloak, and unhooks it. It pools at my feet and it reveals my pure white slip. The removal of the cloak leaves me completely exposed to my coven's doing. I'm open and afraid. My hands tremble and I close my fists trying to make them stop, desperately trying to gain some sort of confidence in my decision. My nails pierce my skin, the trickles of blood warm my rather frozen skin, I try to search in the eyes of the others, but their hoods cover them. They can not help me for they are unwilling to see me.

The others began chanting the summoning spell in low whispers. The wind grows stronger and I feel myself slowly slipping from this reality. Their chants grow louder until their voices are ringing in my ears, until their chants are all I know. Fire erupts from their hands and the chanting stops. The fire breaks the darkness and creates a circle of light around us. I look at my mother and her eyes are closed as she recites a spell I have not heard of. As she ends the spell, everything is completely silent. The wind, the trees, and the creatures of the night seemed to all have some understanding for not a sound was made. The sound of my ragged breath is all I can focus on. My thoughts are interrupted by soft rustling in the distance. Each breath I take, the

small movement grows louder and closer.. I look around trying to find the source of it, but my vision is blocked by the others in the coven and their mighty flames.

“Mother...”, I whisper.

The soft pitter pattering of its feet grow closer and closer despite not being able to see it. A few of the others make a small opening in the circle to allow whatever creature inside. The small creature walked through the opening and I realized the animal was a lamb. The lamb inched towards me until it was standing right next to my mother, it's large doe eyes staring up at me waiting for me to make the next move. I think I know what I must do.

“Father I come to you with my heart open and my eyes full of your ecstasy. I deliver my child to you. My only child for your desire and grant you her soul. Her first blood has come, my lord. She is prepared for your eternal blessing!” my mother announced while reaching up into the sky, the moonlight dancing in her eyes.

My soul? I'm sacrificing my soul? Tears streamed down my face and my skin grew tight. I knew all of this, but hearing her say those words out loud makes it seem all too real.

“My child, you must remove the heart of the lamb,” my mother explained

“What? I...I..can't do that. I-”

“My child, you must remove the heart of the lamb,” my mother repeated, her stanced unchanged.

“Mother...please. I can't..”

“You must! This isn't your choice, child! This is the way of our people and I won't be disrespected by my own in front of my coven because you are weak!”

Weak? That words echoes in my mind, shaking in my core and never ending.. It is true I am weak. I am not strong like my mother. I'm not even sure who I am. The anger that burned in her eyes when she said those words left me more exposed than I already am. I feel as if I don't know who I am. She conjures a long, curved knife made from black metal from the inside of her cloak and hands it to me. I shakily grip the knife and stare of the intricate markings along the hands and curve of the spine. The moonlight glints against the knife and I feel as if its darkness calls out to me. Is this who I was meant to be? Is this what everyone wants me to be? Is this who I truly am? I look towards the delicate lamb, completely unaware of the evil that surrounds it. It makes no wild attempts to run away, it just stands dutifully as if it knew what was about to

happen. I move closer to the animal, the dampness of the grass seeping into my skin. My breathing is laboured and my hands shake violently, but I must do this. I must do it for the coven, for the great Lord, but who exactly am I sacrificing? This creature or myself. I reached the lamb, squatted down to its level, and I stare into its dark eyes looking for something, anything to stop this madness, but I see nothing. Its empty black eyes told me everything that I needed to know. I grazed my hand against its soft cheek and rested my forehead against theirs. I whispered sweet prayers to the lamb to release some of my guilt and to remind the animal that this is what I must do this for my coven, not for myself. I wished for its soul to be free and any pain that I will cause will be quick. I can feel the others and my mother growing restless as I try to make amends. My hands tighten on the knife, I stare into the eyes of the lamb, and slice swiftly across its neck. The animal instantly collapsed as the blood squirted from its neck and began to drain down its sweet fur and onto the forest floor. I refused to let the tears pooling at my eyes to fall and began the process of removing its heart. I moved the lamb onto its back and cut under its left breast, and reached into its chest cavity. My hand grazed past bone and delved deeper in search of the heart. I find and grip the heart and pull it out slowly. The blood gushing out from the incision as I remove it from its chest. My hand and forearm are stained with the lambs blood as I hold its heart in my hand. I stood up and looked down at the fallen lamb. Its eyes started at me feeling nothing, saying nothing.

“Hand me the heart, “ my mother said breaking my trance.

“What?”

“Hand me the heart, “ she repeated

I handed her the lambs heart and she cradled it in her hands. Her smile grew wicked and her eyes burned with devotion. Before I could take my next breath, she took a large bite out of the lamb heart. She chews the flesh moaning with pleasure, the blood coating her mouth, and her eyes closed. She raises the decapitated lamb head over her head towards the moon, single tears breaking free, and whispers, “ For your blessing, my lord.”

My mother opened her eyes and stared at me. She stalked towards me, cradling the heart, and not breaking her stare. She loomed over me, staring down at my fragile and broken form. Taking her index and middle finger, she glided them against the bloody lamb heart, and slid it down my

forehead. I close my eyes as her fingers slide down my nose and the fresh smell of blood hits me instantly, completely overpowers any other scent. As her fingers slid past my lips, I could taste the copper seeps onto my tongue. The realization of what I've done truly hits me and my throat suddenly feels tight. She repeated this process over the left and right side of my face, and removed her hands. I open my eyes and see that she is pushing the lamb's heart into my own. I take the heart from her and stare at my killing, desperately wishing that I could place the heart back into the dear creature and saving it from its horrible fate, but we all know that we can not run for fate. My mother places her hands on my shoulders, pushing me down until my back is against the damp forest floor and the heart is groped in my hands. She disappears from view and all I can see are the flames of the others creating a halo of fire around me and the moon staring back at me. My mother goes back and forth between me and the dead lamb, lapping out whatever leftover blood is found, and rubbing it across my body. Her actions seem to disappear as I start to fade in and out of the here and now.

“My Lord, my child is here in ultimate form for your sacrifice! I give her to you for the final step!”

The others and my mother began to chant into the night sky and move closer and closer to my body. The thumping of my heart drowns out their words and my hands tighten on the bitten lambs heart. I close my eyes for just a second hoping none of this was real, desperately trying to hold onto whatever shred of innocence I have left. The halo of fire becomes a dome of red and orange as their red clocks and hands of fire loom over my body. Their chants grow louder and their fire grows deeper.

“Burn her,” my mother screamed into the forest.

“NO!”

Their fiery hands come rushing towards me, erractly reaching any flesh they can grab and burning my flesh. The fire scorches my skin, the smell of my flesh coated of my nose. I scream and scream and no one dares to help. The fire spreads across my body, searing my skin and seeping into my bones. The darkness consumes me and I feel nothing.

As soon as the pain appeared, it was suddenly gone. The fire, the pain, and the darkness was gone and all I could see was myself. The others and my mother stood around me, but they

no longer possessed the darkness that wasn't here once before. They seeped a power and a light that is beyond me. They looked at me as I was not myself, but something rather new. I don't quite understand what this feeling is, this power that I was granted. Everything that happened before seems so distant and insignificant. I feel as if I am myself, but not at the same time. Is this the me that I was destined to be this whole time? Is this the person that my coven saw before I did? I slowly stood up, testing my body, and looked into my mother's eyes, no longer afraid of her, but feeling as if we were united as one. With tears in her eyes, my mother cried, "I am so glad we all finally see you. Rejoice!"

The others and my mother clapped in delight, relishing in my rebirth. Their rejoice pumps in my veins, ending a rush of ecstasy through my body. Their tears of joy plant sweet kisses across my cheeks. A cursing power boils silently underneath my chest begging for a taste of our new found freedom. I am more than I ever could've imagined. I am reborn.