



A WITCHES OF PINE LAKE
PARANORMAL COZY



SUMMITS
AND SPELLS

NATALIE SUMMERS

SUMMITS AND SPELLS

NATALIE SUMMERS

Copyright © 2018 Natalie Summers

Summits & Spells

By Natalie Summers

The book that bounced around 90k.

All rights reserved.

Book 2 of a paranormal cozy mystery series. Also released as a lesbian fiction version under another name.

Sign up for my mailing list to hear about new releases and special offers!

<http://eepurl.com/dojQ1r>

Created with Vellum



CONTENTS

[Chapter 1](#)

[Chapter 2](#)

[Chapter 3](#)

[Chapter 4](#)

[Chapter 5](#)

[Chapter 6](#)

[Chapter 7](#)

[Chapter 8](#)

[Chapter 9](#)

[Chapter 10](#)

[Chapter 11](#)

[Chapter 12](#)

[Chapter 13](#)

[Chapter 14](#)

[Chapter 15](#)

[Chapter 16](#)

[Chapter 17](#)

[Chapter 18](#)

[Chapter 19](#)

[Chapter 20](#)

[Chapter 21](#)

[Chapter 22](#)

[Chapter 23](#)

[Chapter 24](#)

[Chapter 25](#)

[Chapter 26](#)

[Chapter 27](#)

[Chapter 28](#)

[Chapter 29](#)

[Chapter 30](#)

[Chapter 31](#)

[Chapter 32](#)

[Hi Reader!](#)

[About the Author](#)

CHAPTER ONE

I hadn't really expected to spend my Friday morning standing at the top of a hill, staring at the incoming lightning storm. But there I was, waiting, with my insane grandmother standing next to me.

See, I'd moved to Pine Lake a couple months ago, only to find out that, surprise, I'm a witch. Oh and by the way, my Grandma Vivian's missing daughter is my long-lost mother.

Then, there was this whole murder thing that I'd got involved with and after that, a kid needed a home. So, I'm 29, a former social worker, and a pseudo-parent. And a weather witch. Which is how we'd ended up doing this whole, standing on one of the taller parts of the mountain, staring at the lightning, thing.

Taylin had been smart about the experience – she'd decided to stand back at least fifty feet, the book she'd been reading clutched in her hands. I could barely see her, but I could feel the amusement in her eyes. She thought the whole thing was hilarious. Like me, Taylin was a witch, but she was a spirit witch.

She had been shunned by the community because they believed in dark magic. It was a whole long, complicated story. But, we all got along pretty well, except when my grandmother was terrorizing me. And when I had to set curfews. Parenting was hard.

"Are you nervous?" Grandma Vivian asked, looking at me out of the corner of her eye.

I looked back at her. “In what world would I not be nervous?” To be fair, if you asked me, being nervous was the sane thing to be. Only crazy people weren’t nervous about what was going on here.

Then again, I was a witch. I wasn't sure exactly where that put me on the sanity spectrum.

“You're sure she won't get hit?” I looked at Vivian.

She just gave me that “child, please” look. I was now quite familiar with that look, in all its various incarnations. Taylin was 11 and entering that lovely preteen stage. But, she was a good kid, even though her mother had died eight years before and her Grandma barely a month ago. She was handling it about as well as could be expected.

There was another dark roll of thunder and I looked back up at the sky, my attention redirected.

I’d missed the lightning, so I had no idea how far away it was. When I looked at Vivian, though, she looked way too satisfied. Personally, I wanted to go find something to hide under, but instead, I stood up there on top of that freaking summit, waiting to be hit by lightning. Sweating.

“Stay there,” Vivian said, taking a step forward.

Vivian was also a weather witch. It wasn't something you ever would've expected of her, because she kind of looked like everyone’s jewelry-covered grandmother. She had that fluffy, cloud-like white hair hidden by a silk bandana, but her eyes were sharp, like she planned to eat you for dinner. While she hadn’t actually eaten anybody in the time I'd been there, I didn't put it past her. She dressed in those Bohemian blouses and skirts, and tended to be covered in bangles with large marbled discs. She looked like one of those TV psychics.

That was not something I said out loud, though. I rather liked my head attached my neck.

I dragged my focus away from everything that I’d been thinking about and turned it back to the situation at hand. I didn't think it was good for my attention to be wandering when I was staring at lightning. I took a deep

breath, trying to sink into my magic. I'd just started learning about it, and so far, all I could really do with the wind was throw things around.

I should've said no when Vivian had offered to show me the lightning storm, but like the crazy person I was, I'd said yes. Vivian didn't like to really listen to the rules. There was an order in which you should learn stuff, but she didn't really care.

It was both awesome and terrifying. Plus, I was pretty sure that "would you like to come" was a command phrased as a request. My superiors back in Minnesota had been very good at that.

I took a deep breath, my eyes closing. I made sure I was standing up straight and that my posture was strong. My magic could tell me where the winds were going.

I reached out and hooked a couple of them, manipulating them to see if I could. I spun one into a corkscrew, and sent the other one in a wide elliptical pattern. It was still hard, and I was breathing heavier when I finished, but it was easier than it had been originally. Wind was the easiest element to manipulate, so we'd started with that one. I could also do a little bit with rain.

And by that, I meant, I could make it rain inside. Not really useful.

"Deep breath," Vivian said, amusement in the tone of her voice.

"Yes ma'am," I said, taking another deep breath like she asked. I could feel my magic filling me up, drawing energy from the crackling world around us. I had never known that a weather witch was a thing, but now I couldn't really imagine being anything else. For all that I was nervous, and for all that I felt completely insane, there was something I was addicted to, standing up there, feeling the energy in the lightning crack around me, hearing the deep rumble of the thunder as it went by. I knew that I was entirely, completely safe, especially with Vivian there.

We'd skipped meditation, which probably wasn't the greatest thing, but Vivian had been in a hurry to get to the storm. There was another crack of lightning, and then a few seconds later thunder roared.

"It's close," Vivian said, sounding way too cheerful for my liking.

I wanted to mutter something sarcastic, but I didn't dare. I glanced back at Taylin, who was settled on the ground, a small shield on top of her. Relief hit me like lightning. Vivian had guarded her. Instead of being caught in the weird storm, or drenched by rain, Taylin was in this nice little rainproof bubble.

There was a large cracking sound and the ground exploded in front of me. I jumped back, my heart racing. "What the hell was that?" I couldn't stop the words, even though I realized they were dumb once they'd come out.

Vivian didn't say anything and started laughing.

Well wasn't that suitably creepy.

I took a half-step back.

"Stay still," Vivian instructed. "If you don't, I'll make sure you do."

Grumbling, I straightened back up, keeping my eyes half closed. She hadn't told me to close them, but I wasn't entirely certain I wanted to see the lightning coming for me or Vivian.

There was another crash, and I heard Vivian's laughing intensify, saw her arms raise. She was smiling as the white flame engulfed her, seemingly draining its power.

I stared at her, and watched as the lightning bolt that hit her dimmed in size and color. Then she opened her eyes, opened her clenched hands, and revealed two little yellow circles, smaller than marbles, in them. I reached out to touch them and flinched back. Not because I didn't want to touch Vivian, but because I could feel the scorching heat of them.

"Doesn't that burn your hands?" The hairs on the back of my neck were standing up. Maybe it was nerves. Maybe it was the lightning.

"No," Vivian said dreamily, looking down at the baubles. She tucked them into a pocket, although where the pocket was or where it came from I didn't know.

She turned to look at me, and I could still see sparks of lightning in her eyes.

Okay, she'd just confirmed that she was crazier than I thought she was. Who willingly let themselves get struck by lightning? Vivian smiled her

devious smile, and I half turned to look at her, my eyes narrowing. Then she pointed at me.

There was a large crack and my body went hot all over, my eyes closing forcefully. It felt like my skin was burning, like my whole body was burning from the inside out. My hands were pinned to my sides, and it took all of my strength not to fall to my knees. I could feel the energy sizzling under my skin, melding with the magic that I knew was there. The light was blinding, and I clenched my eyes shut as tight as I could.

I was afraid I would be blinded when I opened my eyes. I waited for the heat to subside, feeling the humidity against my skin, for the prickling sensation to fade. When I finally opened them it was hard to breathe, because I was still warm all over. Raindrops had started steaming when they hit my skin, evaporating.

“I released the energy,” Vivian said. “You can't create the baubles yet.”

“Thanks,” I said, letting myself sink to one knee and tilting my head towards the ground, focusing on breathing. My muscles were twitching, and it was hard to keep standing. As it was, it – surprisingly felt good. I felt electrified, pretty much literally. Like I could take on the world.

“Was it that bad?” Vivian asked, smug.

I turned to look at her, but I wasn't brave enough to say anything. My Mom always told me, if you couldn't say something nice, you shouldn't say anything at all. Or however the saying went.

“Speak, child.” She snapped her fingers, and the winds lifted me back up onto my feet. If there was one thing I envied, really envied, it was her effortless mastery of the winds. She was so good at what she did. That was why she was on the Witch's Council.

Slowly the winds around me eased, but I stayed standing. I could see the lightning flash in the sky, but the thunder was ten or twenty seconds later. It had moved, and moved quickly.

“It's started to move off,” Vivian said, and there was a trace of sadness to her voice.

“Okay,” I said, both sad and not. It was always cool to learn something new. But I also wasn’t certain I wanted to keep playing with lightning until I could actually do something with it.

I half turned, making sure that Taylin was okay, only to see her book on her lap and her face staring at me, eyes wide.

“I take it most witches can't do that?” I looked at Vivian.

Vivian snorted. “Metal witches come closest,” she said. “They could sustain the heat, but it would be difficult.”

I thought of my friend Gracia, who was a metals witch and had done all sorts of nifty things. I couldn’t really imagine her signing up to be hit with a lightning bolt. She had a lot more smarts than I did.

I took a step towards Taylin, surprised when my muscles didn't fail me.

“You get used to it,” Vivian said.

I turned and looked at her. “Used to it?”

Her eyebrows raised. “You didn't think this would be the last time you’d do this, did you?”

I resisted rolling my eyes through sheer act of will. “Oh,” I said, trying to convey that I did indeed think this would be the last time I would be doing something this crazy. But whatever. Crazy was just how my life had become.

We stood there for a while longer, the thunder rolling by and slowly becoming quieter. Vivian was still pointing, flicking her fingers one direction or another. I wondered if she was meant to be directing the lightning, or whether the lightning was telling her what to point at.

It sounded crazy that there was a difference, but there really was. That was the hard thing about the weather. You never knew if you could manipulate it, or if it was manipulating you.

Other types of witches had it easier. Kara, my cousin and friend, was a cooking witch. She could manipulate food, ingredients, cooking times - they didn't manipulate her. Me – I played with fire – almost literally – every time I worked my magic.

Okay, yeah, there was that one time that I’d accidentally almost hit someone with lightning in the middle of the town. And lit some foliage on

fire. It had been that one time, but no one was ever going to let me forget it.

“That was awesome,” Taylin said, coming up behind me.

I turned and looked at her, being good and not narrowing my eyes. Her grey-blue eyes were wide with glee, and her book was clutched tightly to her chest. Vivian had apparently dropped the guard, because her brown hair was starting to stick to her face. Taylin scowled briefly at Vivian, then tucked the book under her jacket to ensure it didn't get wet from the rain.

“I'm glad somebody appreciated it,” Vivian said with a sniff.

I resisted the urge to roll my eyes for the umpteenth time. The whole family was full of drama queens, I swear. My friend Kara was the worst. Speaking of.

“Anything else?” I asked, trying to keep my voice as respectful as I could. Kara had mentioned something about taking me for coffee and showing me what the weird packets that the coffee maker gave out could do. I'd been taught not to take powder in small bags from strangers, but apparently that didn't apply as much in a magic town.

“You're dismissed,” Vivian said with a wave. “Go away.”

“Thanks,” I said dryly. That was practically a compliment. I turned to look at Taylin, who was still staring at Vivian with wide eyes. “Are you coming?” I asked, glancing between them.

For second Taylin hesitated, and I thought she was really going to stay with Vivian. I would've been fine with that – the more friends that she made in this town, the better. And Vivian was a good person to have on your side.

“I'm coming,” Taylin said, turning away from Vivian and coming to my side.

We started towards the weirdly treacherous path down the summit leading to the small meadow we had parked in. It wasn't long trail, but we'd driven there, me in my car with Taylin and Vivian in her own car. I wasn't really certain she should be driving, but you didn't really tell Vivian no. Not if you wanted to keep all your fingers, toes, and limbs still attached.

I stretched, relieved as we made it all the way down. At the base of the stairs were Kara and Gracia, who had their arms crossed over their chests.

“Did you die?” Kara asked.

I looked between them, a bit baffled by their sudden appearance. “Do you think I'd still be here if I did?”

Gracia rolled her eyes. “Ladies,” she chided. “Rock, paper, scissors to see who has to drive Vivian home?”

Suddenly their presence made a lot more sense. Taylin stood behind me, looking apprehensive. Kara and Gracia weren't sure what to do with her, not yet. Taylin had spent most of the month that I had had custody of her staying in the house, away from others. They had come over a couple times, and Taylin had met them, but social situations still made her nervous.

Not that I could really blame her. Her mother had been involved in a scandal about eight years ago, and her reputation tarnished by black magic. Everyone had assumed that the whole family was cursed. While we'd cleared her mother's record and proved she had never done black magic, it would take a while for society to catch up. There was no such thing as erasing memories like that.

Well, that and Caella had murdered someone. That didn't help her family's reputation either.

“Do we have to play rock, paper, scissors?” Kara muttered.

“You only say that because you lose more often than not,” Gracia retorted.

“Do not,” Kara said with a scowl. Then they did a quick game of rock, paper, scissors.

Kara lost. “Best two out of three,” Kara said, desperation to her voice.

I sighed. “If you two are done?”

Kara scowled at both of us. “I hate you.”

“Don't get electrocuted,” I called after her.

Kara gave me the middle finger. I bit back a grin. Then she turned towards the path, apparently heading to find Vivian.

I turned to look at Gracia, who grinned at me. “Glad to escape that,” I said dryly.

“Ready to go home?” Gracia asked.

And by home, she meant this sort of creepy looking cottage that I'd inherited from my great aunt Penelope. A great aunt that I didn't know I had, because oh – that was the other thing. I was adopted, if the whole not-knowing-who-my-mother-was didn't give it away.

I unlocked Betsy and got in the driver's seat, waiting and watching as Taylin buckled herself into the back, Gracia getting in the passenger side. "Let's go home." The word still sent prickles through my body. My adoptive parents had died four years ago, and nothing had really felt like home since. Penelope's house – and her ghost – wasn't perfect, but it felt like home. I had people who cared about me here, people who theoretically loved me.

Family. Something I didn't know I would ever have.

"Are we just going to sit here?" Taylin complained, crossing her arms over her chest to sulk.

"Keep your pants on," I grumbled.

"That's not how it goes," Gracia said with a grin.

I pointed a finger at her. "Don't you get started," I said. "Otherwise I'll make you ride with Kara."

Gracia held her hands up. "I surrender, I surrender. Don't kick me out of the car."

I gave her a threatening look, then broke into giggles. I started Betsy and headed down the mountain.

CHAPTER TWO

Now that Reese had given us the computer back, Taylin and I actually had to open the shop that we had sort of inherited from her mother. Haidra had run the local pet shop, which had gone to Taylin after her death. Since I was Taylin's guardian, I now technically owned the shop. At least temporarily.

I stood in the middle of the shop, hands on my hips. Taylin was leaning against the counter where the computer was, looking only halfway impressed. "What is all this stuff?"

"Unnecessary stuff to run an aquarium," Walter commented.

I turned and pointed my finger at him. "You're a fish," I said. "You don't get to comment."

"Amphibian!" The exasperation was loud enough that I could hear it. "Do I have to say that for you thirty more times?" An axolotl was an amphibian, not a fish. A weird-looking one, either way.

"Apparently," Taylin muttered.

I turned and looked at her, and she smirked.

"What have you done to her shop?" The voice was older and grumbly.

Of course. All I needed was a party.

Great Aunt Penelope appeared, sitting on one of the glass aquariums. Good thing she was a ghost and didn't weigh anything. She was Vivian's sister, a little bit kinder looking, and her fingers were pricked even in death from years of needlepoint. She dressed more conservatively, too. Long skirts,

long-sleeved shirts. Apparently it was only my aunts and cousins that had gotten the 'wear jeans' memo.

"What are you doing here?" I shot her a look, hoping she would get the hint.

"I got bored," Penelope said with a shrug. "And I can follow her signature." She nodded towards Taylin.

Of course she could. Taylin was a spirit witch, somebody who could communicate with the dead and see ghosts. It still freaked most of the villagers out, so we kept it on the down low.

I didn't think they thought I was any more sane, with the whole standing on the summit with lightning thing. Then again, I was pretty sure after spending a month with this family that insanity was the hallmark of them. Probably the whole town.

"So, fish produce nitrates when they live in an aquarium," I said, picking up a testing kit. I had been doing a lot of research on the internet, brushing up on my aquarium knowledge. "It starts with ammonia, and then goes through this whole chemical process."

"This is a fish tank, not biology class." Walter looked reproachful from in his tank.

"Do I need commentary from the peanut gallery?" I turned to look at him.

"Yes," the three of them said simultaneously.

I gave them my best unimpressed look, which did absolutely nothing at all. I should've been surprised, but I wasn't. "Well, that's what the internet said." At least the three birds were quiet.

I got that look again. They weren't really impressed with my internet research.

"Don't you just like, put fish in it?" Taylin asked.

"If we want to have healthy fish, this is the safer way to do it." I shifted my weight from foot to foot, trying to figure out how everything would work together. We could argue over fish safety for quite some time, but I wanted to give this shop the best chance at working out. We had four 40-gallon

breeder tanks set up against the far wall. On the wall opposite, there were two 125- gallon tanks that were going to be set up once the breeders were running. The breeders were the quarantine tanks, ensuring that all of the animals were healthy before the fish or corals or invertebrates were added to the main tanks. On the wall connecting the two was an 8 foot long 180 gallon tank. That – that was my favorite.

That one would have to wait to be filled until Gracia had confirmed that the floor could actually handle it. Because if we weren't careful, and didn't make sure that the foundation could support the weight of the filled tank, the whole thing could sort of crash through the floor. I don't know if you knew this, but that was a bad thing.

“So two freshwater, two salt water?” Taylin asked, looking at the breeders.

I nodded. “If that's okay with you?” Technically it was my decision, since I was the adult, but this was Taylin's shop. It was the last thing she had of her family, and I wanted to respect that.

“As long as I get my Nemo,” Taylin said, seemingly satisfied.

I bit back a grin. “One of the 125-gallons will be freshwater, but I'm thinking the other 125 and the 180 will be saltwater.”

“Nemo?” Penelope shot me a skeptical look.

“It's a fish movie,” Walter said. “Actual fish. Not amphibians.” He paused. “Not that Amalie can tell the difference.”

“I don't like any of you,” I muttered at them.

I heard Taylin laugh. She was grinning, taking it for the joke that it was.

I'd only had legal guardianship of Taylin for a bit over a month, and it had been almost two since her grandmother had died. Well, been murdered, but you know, same thing. Since I was her guardian, I was responsible for teaching her magic. Which we were working on, because her magic tended to show up in unusual ways. Like the fact that we were having a conversation with a ghost in a pet shop.

“When are you getting fish?” Taylin asked, her voice coming from close by my ear as she stood right behind me.

I didn't drop the test kit I was holding, but it was close. I turned and looked at the supplies that had come in. The internet was a dangerous enabler, that was for sure. "This is some live rock for the saltwater aquariums," I said, peering at the delivered, still-wet rock in large, mailable tubs. "It's supposed to help get the tank cycled, so it can help hold fish. "

"I think you're making this much more difficult than it needs to be," Walter said.

"You're an amphibian," I told him tartly. "What do you know about fish keeping?"

He did the axolotl impression of opening and closing his mouth. "Fair point."

I let myself feel proud about something for a little bit for a grand total of like three seconds.

"Why is it leaking?" Taylin asked.

Of course it was. And we hadn't got the tanks filled with saltwater yet, either.

"Go get that wheeling trashcan that we're using for water changes," I told her.

"You're sending a child to do your errands?" Aunt Penelope tsked.

I looked up at the ceiling and prayed for patience. That was when Taylin came back, trundling the 30 gallon trash can on wheels behind her. Carefully I picked up the 20 pounds of live rock that I had ordered and placed it in there, covering it with the water in the tubs.

The internet had said something about quarantining the live rock before putting it in the tank, because it could have strange creepy crawlies that you didn't want in your tank. I was fine with that. Quarantine away.

"Well, we can at least get the freshwater 40-gallons set up," Taylin said, looking at me.

I sighed. "Yes, we can. Make sure you grab the dechlorinator." Regular tap water had chlorine, which was poisonous to freshwater fish, so we had to add a chemical to it that took the chlorine out. Next was setting up the