

JAMES PATTERSON PRESENTS



# KINGDOM OF THE WICKED

No. 1 *New York Times* Bestselling Author

KERRI MANISCALCO



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*For my grandmother Victoria Marie Nucci and my aunt  
Caroline Nucci.*

*And for my great grandparents—who immigrated  
from Sciacca, Sicily, to America—whose restaurant  
inspired much of this story.*

*This may be a fantasy, but the love of family found  
within its pages is very real.*





*Flectere si nequeo superos,  
Acheronta movebo.*

**If I cannot bend the will of Heaven,  
I shall move Hell.**

*Virgil, Aeneid*





## **PROLOGUE**

**Outside, wind rattled** the wooden chimes in warning. In the distance, waves crashed against the shore; the frantic whispers of water growing louder as if the sea was a mage summoning violence. On this date—for nearly a decade now—the storm followed the same pattern. Next, thunder would roll in quicker than the tide with lightning cracking electric whips across an unforgiving sky. The devil demanded retribution. A blood sacrifice for power stolen.

It wasn't the first time he'd be cursed by witches, nor would it be the last.

From her rocking chair near the fire, Nonna Maria monitored the twins while they chanted protection charms she'd taught them, a *cornicello* clutched tightly in each of their little fists. Pushing the howling gusts from her mind, she listened closely to the words Vittoria and Emilia whispered over the horn-shaped amulets, their matching dark heads bent in concentration.

"By earth, moon, and stone, bless this hearth, bless this home."

It was the start of their eighth year and Nonna tried not to worry over how quickly they were growing. She pulled her shawl closer, unable to ward off chills in the small kitchen. It had little to do with the temperature outside. As much as she tried ignoring it, sulfur snuck in through the cracks along with the familiar plumeria-and-orange-scented breeze, raising the graying hair she'd swept up from her neck. Had she been alive, her own human grandmother would have called it an omen and spent the evening on her knees in the cathedral, rosary clutched close, praying to saints.

The devil was on the prowl. Or one of his wicked brothers was.

A sliver of worry slid in as quick and smooth as one of her paring knives, lodging itself near Nonna's heart. It had been an age since the last sighting of the Malvagi. Hardly anyone spoke of the Wicked anymore, except in stories told to frighten children into staying in their beds at night.

Now adults laughed at the old folktales, all but forgetting the seven ruling princes of Hell. Nonna Maria never would; their legends were burned into her mind, branding her with a bone-deep sense of dread. The area between her shoulders prickled as if their midnight eyes were upon her, watching from the shadows. It was only a matter of time before they came looking.

If they hadn't begun to already. One didn't steal from the devil and go unpunished.

Her focus darted back to the twins. Like the churning Tyrrhenian Sea, there was a restlessness about them tonight. One that spoke of unseen trouble to come. Vittoria's charms were rushed and Emilia stumbled over hers, trying to keep up.

A twig popped in the fire, quickly followed by another. The sound like wishbones snapping over their spell books; a warning in its own right. Nonna gripped the arms of her rocking chair, her knuckles turning the color of the blanched almonds lying on the counter.

"*Calmati!* Not so fast, Vittoria," she scolded. "You'll have to begin again if you don't do it correctly. Do you want to gather grave dirt alone in the dark?"

Much to Nonna's dismay, Vittoria didn't appear as frightened as she should have. The thought of wandering around a graveyard under the light of a full moon and an angry storm seemed appealing to the child. She pursed her lips before offering a slight shake of her head.

It was Emilia who answered, though, giving her sister a warning look. "We'll be more careful, Nonna."

To prove her point, Emilia held up the vial of holy water they'd gotten from the monastery and tipped it over their amulets, allowing one drop to sizzle over each. Silver and gold. An offering of balance between light and dark. A gift for what had been stolen all those years ago.

*As above, so below.*

Pacified, Nonna watched as they finished their charm, relieved when white sparks rose in the flames before burning red again. Another year, another victory. They'd tricked the devil once more. Eventually there'd come a day when the charms wouldn't work, but

Nonna refused to think of that now. She glanced at the windowsill, pleased by the dried orange slices laid out in even rows.

Lavender sprigs hung to dry over the mantel, and the tiny stone island was covered with both flour and fragrant herbs waiting to be tied into neat bunches. Verbena, basil, oregano, parsley, and bay leaves. The scents mingled pleasantly. Some were for their celebratory dinner, and others for their charms. Now that the protection ritual was done, they might enjoy their meal.

Nonna looked at the clock on the mantel; her daughter and son-in-law would arrive from the family restaurant soon, bringing with them laughter and warmth.

Storms and omens or not, all would be well in the di Carlo home.

The flames settled and Emilia sat back, biting her nails. A nasty habit Nonna was determined to break. The child spit a nail clipping out and went to toss it on the floor.

"Emilia!" Nonna's voice rang loudly in the small room. The child started, dropping her hand, and gave a sheepish look. "In the fire! You know better than to leave things for those who practice *le arti oscure*."

"Sorry, Nonna," Emilia mumbled. She chewed her lip, and her grandmother waited for the question she knew was coming. "Will you tell us about the dark arts again?"

"Or the Malvagi?" Vittoria added, always interested in stories of the Wicked. Even on nights they were forbidden from uttering such names. "Please?"

"We shouldn't speak of dark things aloud. It invites trouble."

"They're just stories, Nonna," Emilia said quietly.

If only that were true. Nonna Maria traced a protection charm over her heart, finishing it with a kiss to her fingertips, and exhaled. The twins exchanged triumphant grins. It was impossible to keep the legends from the girls, no matter if it filled their heads with dreams of the seven princes of Hell. Nonna feared they romanticized demons too much. It was best, she decided, to remind them why they should be wary of beautiful creatures without souls.

"Wash your hands and help roll the dough. I'll talk while you make the *busiate*."

Their matching smiles warmed the chills still clinging to Nonna brought on by the storm and its warning. The little corkscrew pasta served with tomato pesto was one of the girls' favorite dishes. They'd be pleased to find cassata already waiting in the ice box. Though the sweet ricotta sponge cake was an Easter specialty, the girls loved it on their birthday.

Even with all of their precautions, Nonna was unsure how much sweetness would remain in their lives, and spoiled them often. Not that she required extra incentive to do so. A grandmother's love was its own sort of powerful magic.

Emilia pulled the mortar and pestle from the shelf, face strained in concentration as she gathered up the olive oil, garlic, almonds, basil, pecorino, and cherry tomatoes for the pesto alla Trapanese. Vittoria removed the damp cloth from the mound of dough and began rolling the pasta as Nonna had taught her. Eight years old and they already knew their way around the kitchen. It was unsurprising. Between their home and the restaurant, they practically grew up in one. They both peered up from thick lashes, their expressions identical masks of anticipation.

Vittoria said impatiently, "Well? Are you going to tell us a story?"

Nonna sighed. "There are seven demon princes, but only four di Carlos should fear: Wrath, Greed, Envy, and Pride. One will crave your blood. One will capture your heart. One will steal your soul. And one will take your life."

"The Wicked," Vittoria whispered, her tone almost reverent.

"The Malvagi are demon princes who stalk the night, searching for souls to steal for their king, the devil, their hunger ravenous and unyielding, until dawn chases them away," Nonna continued, slowly rocking in her chair. The wood creaked, covering the sound of the storm. She nodded toward their tasks, making sure they held up their end of the bargain. The girls settled into their work. "The seven princes are so corrupted by sin, that when they cross into our world, they can't bear being in the light and are cursed to only venture out when it's dark. It was a punishment sent from La Prima Strega, many years ago. Well before man roamed the earth."

"Where is the First Witch now?" Emilia asked, an edge of

skepticism creeping into her little voice. "Why hasn't she been seen?"

Nonna thought carefully. "She has her reasons. We must respect them."

"What do the demon princes look like?" Vittoria asked, though she must have had this part memorized by now.

"They appear human but their ebony eyes are tinged red, and their skin is hard as stone. Whatever you do, you must never speak to the Wicked. If you see them, hide. Once you've caught a demon prince's attention, he'll stop at nothing to claim you. They are midnight creatures, born of darkness and moonlight. And they seek only to destroy. Guard your hearts; if given the chance they'll rip them from your chests and guzzle your blood as it steams in the night."

No matter that they were soulless creatures who belonged to the devil, or they'd kill them on sight, the twins were enchanted by these dark and mysterious princes of Hell.

One more so than the other, as fate would have it.

"But *how* will we know when we meet one?" Vittoria asked. "What if we can't see their eyes?"

Nonna hesitated. They'd already heard so much, and if the ancient prophecy held true, she feared the worst was yet to come. "You just will."

Steeped in family tradition, Nonna Maria taught them magical ways of hiding from both humans and the midnight creatures. Each year on their birthday, they gathered herbs from the tiny garden behind their home and made charms of protection.

They wore amulets blessed in holy water, freshly turned grave dirt, and sparkling shafts of moonlight. They recited words of protection and never spoke of the Malvagi when the moon was full. More importantly, they were never without their amulets.

Emilia's *cornicello* was made of silver, and Vittoria's gold. The girls weren't allowed to bring them together, or something terrible would happen. According to Nonna it would be like forcing the sun and moon to share the sky, bringing the world into an eternal twilight. There, the princes of Hell could escape their prison of fire for good,



murdering and stealing souls of the innocent until the human world turned to ash—like their nightmare realm.

After they devoured their dinner and cake, the twins' mamma and papa kissed them good night. Tomorrow they'd begin helping in the family restaurant's busy kitchen, their first real dinner service. Too excited for sleep, Emilia and Vittoria giggled on their shared mattress, swinging their horn amulets at each other like tiny fairy swords, pretending to fight the Malvagi.

"When I grow up, I want to be a green witch," Emilia said later, cradled in the nook of her sister's arms. "I'll grow all kinds of herbs. And have my own trattoria. My menu will be crafted of magic and moonlight. Like Nonna."

"Yours will be even better." Vittoria's grip tightened in comfort. "By then I will be Queen, and I'll make sure you have whatever you like."

One night they decided to be brave. Nearly a month had passed since their eighth birthday and Nonna Maria's dire warnings seemed a lifetime ago. Vittoria thrust her amulet at her sister, her face determined. "Here," she commanded, "take it."

Emilia hesitated only a minute before clasping the golden horn in her palm.

A shimmering lavender-black light exploded from their amulets, startling Emilia enough that she dropped her sister's necklace. Vittoria swiftly fastened it back where it belonged, brown eyes wide as the glittering light abruptly faded. Both girls remained silent. Whether in fear or fascination, they couldn't be sure. Emilia flexed her hand, trying to work out the pin-prickling sensation crawling under her skin. Vittoria watched; her face hidden in shadow.

Nearby a hellhound howled up at the moon, though later they'd convince themselves it was only the wind snarling through the cramped streets of their quarter. They never told anyone what they'd done, and never spoke of the strange inky-purple light.

Not even to each other. And especially not to Nonna Maria.

Since they pretended the incident away, Emilia didn't tell her sister she'd been irrevocably changed—from that evening forward, whenever she held her *cornicello* and concentrated, she saw what

she'd call *luccicare*. A faint shimmer or aura surrounding a person.

The only exceptions being herself and her twin.

If Vittoria also possessed this new talent, she never admitted so. It was the first of many secrets the twins would keep from each other. And would prove deadly for one.



## ONE

*Ten years later*

**Nonna Maria buzzed** around the kitchen like she'd guzzled every drop of espresso in our restaurant. Her mood was downright frantic. My twin was late for dinner service and our grandmother saw it as a portent of doom, especially since Vittoria was out the night before a holy day. Goddess forbid.

The fact that the moon was not only full, but also a putrid shade of yellow had Nonna muttering the kind of warnings that normally made my father bolt the doors. Thankfully he and Uncle Nino were in the dining room with a frosty bottle of limoncello, pouring after-dinner drinks for our customers. No one left Sea & Vine without sipping the dessert liqueur and feeling the utter satisfaction and bliss that followed a good meal.

"Mock me all you like, but it's not safe. Demons are prowling the streets, searching for souls to steal." Nonna chopped cloves of garlic for the scampi, her knife flying across the worn cutting board. If she wasn't careful, she'd lose a finger. "Your sister is foolish to be out." She stopped, immediately shifting her attention to the little horn-shaped amulet around my neck. Worry lines carved a deep path around her eyes and mouth. "Did you see if she was wearing her

*cornicello*, Emilia?"

I didn't bother responding. We never took our amulets off, not even while bathing. My sister broke every rule except that one. Especially after what happened when we were eight.... I briefly closed my eyes, willing the memory away. Nonna still didn't know about the *luccicare* I could see shimmering around humans while holding my amulet, and I hoped she never would.

"Mamma, please." My mother raised her gaze to the ceiling as if the goddess of sky might send an answer to her prayers in the form of a lightning bolt. I wasn't sure if the bolt was meant for Nonna, or my mother. "Let's get through dinner service before worrying about the Wicked. We have more pressing problems at the moment." She nodded to the sauté pan. "The garlic is starting to burn."

Nonna mumbled something that sounded suspiciously like "*So will their souls in Hell if we don't save them, Nicoletta,*" and I bit my lip to keep from smiling.

"Something's terribly wrong, I feel it in my bones. If Vittoria isn't home soon, I'll go looking for her myself. The Malvagi won't dare to steal her soul around me." Nonna brought her cleaver down on an unsuspecting mackerel, its head flopping to the limestone floor.

I sighed. We could've used it to make fish stock. Nonna was *really* getting herself worked up. She was the one who'd taught us the value in using every part of an animal.

Bones, however, could only be used for stock, not spells. At least those were the rules for us di Carlos. *Le arti oscure* was strictly forbidden. I scooped the fish head into a bowl to give to the alley cats later, banishing thoughts of the dark arts.

I poured some chilled wine for Nonna, adding orange slices and sugared peels to sweeten it. In moments, condensation bloomed like morning dew across the glass. It was mid-July in Palermo, which meant the air was stifling at night, even with our windows open, coaxing a breeze.

It was especially hot in the kitchen now, though during colder months I still wore my long hair up because of the soaring temperatures created by our oven fires.

Sea & Vine, the di Carlo family trattoria, was known across Sicily

for our sinfully delicious food. Each evening our tables were crowded with hungry patrons, all waiting to dine on Nonna's recipes. Lines formed in the late afternoons, no matter the weather. Nonna said simple ingredients were her secret, along with a touch of magic. Both of those statements were true.

"Here, Nonna." We weren't supposed to use magic outside of our home, but I whispered a quick spell, and, using the condensation dripping onto the stone, slid the drink along the counter in front of her. She paused long enough in her worrying to sip the sweet red wine. My mother mouthed her thanks when my grandmother's back was turned, and I grinned.

I wasn't sure why Nonna was so agitated tonight. Over the last several weeks—starting around our eighteenth birthday—my twin missed quite a few dinner services, and had snuck in well past sunset, her bronze cheeks flushed and her dark eyes bright. There was something different about her. And I had a strong suspicion it was because of a certain young vendor in the market.

Domenico Nucci Junior.

I'd stolen a peek at her diary and had seen his name scribbled in the margins before guilt had overtaken me and I'd tucked it back under the floorboard where she'd hidden it. We still shared a room on the second floor of our small, crowded home, so thankfully she didn't notice my snooping.

"Vittoria is fine, Nonna." I handed her some fresh parsley to garnish the shrimp. "I told you she's been flirting with the Nucci boy who sells arancini for his family near the castle. I'm sure he's busy with all the pre-festival celebrations tonight. I bet she's passing out fried rice balls to everyone who's overindulged. They need something to soak up all that sacramental wine." I winked, but my grandmother's fear didn't abate. I set the rest of the parsley down and hugged her close. "No demon is stealing her soul, or eating her heart. I promise. She'll be here soon."

"One day I hope you'll take signs from the goddesses seriously, bambina."

Maybe one day. But I'd heard stories about red-eyed demon princes my whole life and hadn't met one yet. I wasn't too worried

things would suddenly change now. Wherever the Wicked had gone, it seemed to be permanent. I feared them as much as I worried about dinosaurs suddenly returning from extinction to take over Palermo. I left Nonna to the scampi, and smiled as music filtered in between the sounds of knives chopping and spoons stirring. It was my favorite kind of symphony—one that allowed me to focus entirely on the joy of creation.

I inhaled the fragrant scent of garlic and butter.

Cooking was magic and music combined. The crack of shells, the hiss of pancetta hitting a hot pan, the metallic clang of a whisk beating the side of a bowl, even the rhythmic thwack of a cleaver against a wooden cutting board. I adored each part of being in a kitchen with my family. I couldn't imagine a more perfect way to spend an evening.

Sea & Vine was my future and it promised to be filled with love and light. Especially if I saved enough coin to purchase the building next door and expand our family business. I'd been experimenting with new flavors from across Italy and wanted to create my own menu one day.

My mother hummed along while forming marzipan into fruit shapes. "He's a nice boy. Domenico. He'd make a good match for Vittoria. His mother is always pleasant."

Nonna tossed a flour-coated hand in the air, waving it around as if the idea of an engagement with a Nucci stunk worse than the streets of the nearby fish market. "Bah! She's too young to worry about marriage. And he's not Sicilian."

My mother and I both shook our heads. I had a feeling his Tuscan roots had little to do with Nonna's disapproval. If she had it her way, we'd live in our ancestral home—in our little quarter of Palermo—until our bones turned to dust. Nonna didn't believe anyone else could watch over us as well as she could. Especially a mere human boy. Domenico wasn't witch-born like my father, and therefore Nonna didn't think he could ever fully be trusted with our secret.

"He was born here. His mother is from here. I'm fairly certain that makes him Sicilian," I said. "Stop being grumpy. It doesn't suit someone as sweet as you."

She harrumphed, ignoring my blatant attempt to charm her. Stubborn as a mule, as my grandfather would've said. She picked up her carved wooden spoon and pointed it in my direction. "Sardines washed themselves onto the shore. Gulls didn't touch them. You know what that means? It means *they're* no fools. The devil's stirring the seas, and they'll have nothing to do with his offerings."

"Mamma," my mother groaned and set the almond paste down. "A boat carrying kerosene crashed into the rocks last night. The oil killed the fish, not the devil."

Nonna shot my mother a look that would sink lesser souls to their knees. "You know as well as I do it's a sign the Malvagi have arrived, Nicoletta. They've come to collect. You've heard of the bodies. The timing matched what was foretold. Is that a coincidence, too?"

"Bodies?" My voice shot up several octaves. "What are you talking about?"

Nonna clamped her mouth shut. My mother whipped her head around, forgetting about the marzipan again. A look passed between them, so deep and meaningful that chills crept down my spine.

"What bodies?" I prodded. "What was foretold?"

Our restaurant was busier than normal while we prepared for the influx of people attending the festival tomorrow, and it had been days since I'd listened to gossip swirling around the marketplace. I hadn't heard anything about bodies.

My mother gave my grandmother a look that said *You started this, you finish it*, and went back to her candy shaping. Nonna settled onto a chair she kept near the window, clasping her wine tightly. A breeze lifted the oppressive heat. Her eyes fluttered shut, as if soaking it in. She looked exhausted. Whatever was happening, was bad.

"Nonna? Please. What happened?"

"Two girls were murdered last week. One in Sciacca. And one here. In Palermo."

Sciacca—a port town facing the Mediterranean Sea—was almost directly south of us. It was a little jewel on an island filled with visual treasure. I couldn't imagine a murder there. Which was ridiculous since death didn't discriminate between paradise and hell.



"That's awful." I set my knife down, pulse pounding. I looked at my grandmother. "Were they... human?"

Nonna's sad look said it all. *Streghe*. I swallowed hard. No wonder she was carrying on about the Wicked returning. She was imagining one of us discarded in the streets, our souls being tortured by demons in Hell while our blood slipped through cracks in the stone, replenishing Earth's magic. I shuddered despite the sweat beading my brow. I didn't know what to make of the murders.

Nonna often chided me for being too skeptical, but I still wasn't convinced the Malvagi were to blame. Old legends claimed the Wicked were sent to make bargains and retrieve souls for the devil, not kill. And no one had seen them wandering our world in at least a hundred years.

Humans murdered each other all the time, though, and they definitely attacked us when they suspected what we were. Whispers of a new band of *strega* hunters reached us last week, but we'd seen no evidence of them. But now... if witches were being murdered, I was more inclined to believe human zealots were to blame. Which meant we needed to be even more careful to avoid discovery. No more simple charms where we could be seen. I tended to be overly cautious, but my sister was not. Her favorite form of hiding was not hiding at all.

Maybe Nonna was right to be worried.

"What did you mean about the Malvagi coming to collect?" I asked. "Or it being foretold?"

Nonna didn't look happy about my line of questioning, but saw the determination in my eyes and knew I'd keep asking. She sighed. "There are stories that claim the Wicked will return to Sicily every few weeks beginning now, searching for something that was stolen from the devil."

This was a new legend. "What was stolen?"

My mother stilled before shaping the marzipan again. Nonna sipped her wine carefully, gazing into it as if she might divine the future in the pulp floating on the surface. "A blood debt."

I raised my brows. That didn't sound ominous at all. Before I could interrogate her further, someone rapped on the side door

where we brought in supplies. Over the chatter in the small dining room, my father called to Uncle Nino to entertain the dinner guests. Footsteps thudded down the hall and the door creaked open.

"*Buonasera*, signore di Carlo. Is Emilia here?"

I recognized the deep voice and knew what he'd come to ask. There was only one reason Antonio Vicenzu Bernardo, the most newly appointed member of the holy brotherhood, ever called on me here. The nearby monastery relied heavily on donations and charity, so once or twice a month I made dinner for them on behalf of our family restaurant.

Nonna was already shaking her head as I wiped my hands on a towel and set my apron on the island. I smoothed down the front of my dark skirts, cringing a little at the flour splattered across my bodice. I looked like a queen of ash and probably stank like garlic.

I swallowed a sigh. Eighteen and romantically doomed forever.

"Emilia... please."

"Nonna, there are already plenty of people in the streets celebrating before the festival tomorrow. I promise I'll stick to the main road, make dinner quickly, and grab Vittoria on the way back. We'll both be home before you know it."

"No." Nonna was out of her chair, ushering me back like a wayward hen toward the island and my abandoned cutting board. "You mustn't leave here, Emilia. Not tonight." She clutched her own *cornicello*, her expression pleading. "Let someone else donate food instead, or you'll find yourself joining the dead in that monastery."

"Mamma!" my mother scolded. "What a thing to say!"

"Don't worry, Nonna," I said. "I don't plan on dying for a very, very long time."

I kissed my grandmother, then snatched a half-formed piece of marzipan from the plate my mother was working on and popped it into my mouth. While I chewed, I stuffed a basket with tomatoes, fresh basil, homemade mozzarella, garlic, olive oil, and a small bottle of thick balsamic Uncle Nino brought from his recent visit to Modena. It wasn't traditional, but I'd been experimenting and loved the flavor of vinegar lightly drizzled on top.

I added a jar of salt, a loaf of crusty bread we baked earlier, then

quickly ducked out of the kitchen before I was wrangled into another argument.

I smiled warmly at Fratello Antonio, hoping he couldn't hear Nonna condemning him and the entire monastery in the background. He was young and handsome for a member of the brotherhood—just three years older than Vittoria and I. His eyes were the color of melted chocolate, and his lips always hinted at the sweetest smile. He'd grown up next door to us, and I used to dream about marrying him one day. Too bad he'd devoted himself to chastity; I was certain half the Kingdom of Italy wouldn't mind kissing his full mouth. Myself included.

"*Buonasera*, Fratello Antonio." I held my basket of supplies aloft, ignoring how odd it felt to call him "brother" when I had some *very* un-sisterly thoughts about him. "I've been experimenting again and am making a sort of a caprese-bruschetta combination for the brotherhood tonight. Does that sound all right?"

For his sake, I hoped so. It was quick and easy, and though the bread tasted better brushed with olive oil and lightly grilled, it didn't require a fire to make.

"It sounds heavenly, Emilia. And please, Antonio is fine. No need for old friends to stand on ceremony." He gave me a shy nod. "Your hair looks lovely."

"*Grazie*." I reached up and brushed my fingers against a flower. When we were younger, I began weaving orange blossoms and plumeria in my hair to set my twin and I apart. I reminded myself Antonio was involved with the Almighty Lord now and wasn't flirting with me.

No matter how much I sometimes wished otherwise.

While he studiously ignored the tinny sound of a pot hitting the stone floor, I internally cringed. I could only imagine what Nonna might toss next.

"Most of the brotherhood won't return to the monastery until later," he said, "but I can help, if you'd like."

Nonna's hysterics grew louder. He was polite enough to pretend he didn't hear her dire warnings of demons killing young women in Sicily and stealing their souls. I gave him my most winning smile,

hoping it didn't look like a grimace. "I'd like that very much."

His attention slid behind me as Nonna's cries reached us, a tiny crease forming in his brow. Normally she was careful around customers, but if she started screaming about the dark arts and protection charms where he could overhear her, our bustling family restaurant would be ruined.

If there was one thing humans feared as much as the Malvagi, it was witches.