In the small town I lived in, I was labeled the Weird Girl. Ever since I was little, nobody would believe me, when I told them the Hemlock trees called to me. It annoyed my parents, so when I even spoke a word about it, they’d send me to my room with no dinner for a week. It annoyed me to no end, and the only one who believed me was my best friend. He moved away a couple years ago, and haven’t heard from him since. His parents didn’t like him around me, so they left when we were both in the sixth grade. I’m now in tenth grade. I was constantly bullied by the kids at my school, and I wanted to snap at them so badly.

 After a fight with my parents, the whispers from the trees in the backyard were louder than before. I tried to ignore them, but they were echoing inside my head louder and louder. I even tried to put my hands against my ear in an attempt to keep them out. They got so loud, I finally tried to listen to the voice. It got a bit quiet, and I finally understood what it was.

 “Odelle Knightly, come home,” it whispered in a soft honey - sweet voice, and I looked out my window. I made my decision quickly, and grabbed a bag filled with important things: a brush, extra clothes, hair ties, and the necklace I got from my best friend. I slid my window open, and climbed out quietly. I was on the first floor, so it was an easy sneak out.

 I made a break for it, and heard the screams of my parents behind me. I didn’t pay attention to them, angry at them for never believing me. I followed the voice, and it led me to an abandoned looking cabin. I walked closer to it, and noticed someone lived in it. I was confused, as the Hemlocks were off limits. I subconsciously made my way to the door, and knocked before I knew what I was doing. I heard heavy thunks from a person's boots, and waited silently. Soon enough there was a man. Tall. Hairy. Strong. He was staring at me in confusion, and I was staring at him in shock.

 “Who’re you?” he asked me while furrowing his eyebrows. I gaped at him.

 “I-uh, I’m, um, I’m Odelle Knightly,” I stuttered out, and he glanced around. He pulled me inside, and sat me at the table.

 “How did you find my cabin?”

 “I don’t think you’ll believe me if I told you,” I said with a fake smile, and he rubbed his face annoyed.

 “Just tell me, Odelle.”

 “I followed the voices in my head, they told me where to go. After they told me to run away from home, and into the Hemlocks,” I said finally, after a few minutes of silence.

 We stared at each other in silence, and it wasn’t as awkward as one would think. I knew he was thinking I was crazy, but I was used to it. I was thinking about how he’d answer.

 “You hear the voices as well?” He asked me quietly, and I nodded a bit. We just sat in silence, studying each other. Watching. Silent. Still. Sitting. Breathing softly. Time went by slowly. I could hear the ticking in my mind every second. I didn’t know how long it was until he spoke again.

 “Odelle Knightly, sounds familiar. I think She told me about you a few months ago. I am Ash Bronzeworth,” he said quietly, and stuck out his hand. I shook it, and then realized he said She.

 “Who’s She?”

 “The voice who whispers in our ears.”

 It all made sense to me, the honey - sweet voice was a woman.

**To Be Continued**

**By Naomi Jones**