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# Arcane Circle (English Edition)



*Par Linda Robertson*  
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## Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurEven magic cant solve everything. . . . After facing down the forces of Fairy in mortal combat, Persephone Alcmеди still must deal with the aftermath. Not only does Seph now possess deadly secrets she must hide from the arcane and mundane world alike, but the dozens of magical creatures whove taken up residence behind her cornfield need food and shelter, and theres still her foster daughter Beverlys tenth birthday party to plan. And thats not all. . . . Sephs boyfriend Johnny has revealed himself as the wewolf Domn Lup, and the ruler of the wre world is en route from Romania to make sure Johnny really is

the king he claims to be. But Johnnys hiding a dangerous secret: his magic is locked in his mysterious tattoos. He and Seph must find a way for him to reclaim it despite those who have no intention of letting Johnny gain his full powers. Seph knows that, in the arcane world, strength is always a necessity and power must be constantly proven, but how far is she willing to go to succeed . . . and at what cost?

CHAPTER ONE

Nearly dragging the veterinarian behind me, I raced up the tight and twisting stairs, desperate for him to treat my boyfriend. It was just after two P.M. and the vet, Dr. Geoffrey Lincoln, was already well acquainted with his patient, Johnny Newman. What other type of doctor would make an emergency house call to treat a wewolf? Johnny, wearing only dark jeans and an Ace bandage wrapped high around his rib cage, lay on his narrow bed in the attic bedroom of my saltbox farmhouse. Despite a grimace of pain, he made no sound. As soon as Kirk, a wewolf from Johnnys pack, saw the doc and me enter the room, he rose from the folding chair next to the bed. He hadnt moved since wed gotten Johnny in the bed hours earlier. Kirk nodded at us and then walked quietly to the foot of the bed. Dr. Lincoln set his bag on the chair, pulled latex gloves from it, and bent to inspect Johnnys wound. It kept seeping blood and had completely saturated numerous gauze pads and two of the elastic wraps already. In the time Id been gone, the blood had again soaked through layers of padding and was darkening the bandage like an ever-expanding Rorschach blot. I hoped that I appeared to be holding myself together and functioning, but my shaking hands threatened to expose my counterfeit calm. This is all wrong. Johnny was in wolf form when injured. These wounds should have healed when he transformed back, but they didnt. My fears ricocheted inside me like wild bullets the crossfire could shatter my cool and collected facade at any moment, exposing my panic.

A veterinarian by trade, Doc Lincoln had experience with the traumatic wounds animals sometimes inflicted on each other, and he had treated Johnny and other wres before. At five-foot-nine, with receding brown hair, brown eyes, and glasses, the doctor appeared at first glance to be an average man, but the fact that he was willing to provide care to wewolves albeit secretly made him very special indeed. He took a pair of scissors from his bag and cut carefully through the wrapped bandage. I need more light. When Johnny moved his rock n roll self in a few weeks ago, hed brought a table lamp made from a guitar neck. I jerked the shade off and twisted the little knob. A hundred watts brightened the narrow, slope-sided room. Hold it closer. I stretched the lamps cord as far as possible. Under the harsh illumination, he peeled the bandage back and exposed Johnnys gruesome chest injury. The three jagged slashes were deep, each at least six inches long. Despite the swelling, each time Johnny inhaled the wounds gaped wider. Fresh blood welled up, flowing across his chest. It was thick enough to hide the winged pentacle tattoo that spanned his pectorals. Dr. Lincoln examined the gashes, and even though his touch seemed light, Johnny grimaced, compressing his features so tightly the Wedjat tattoos around his eyes almost disappeared. But the wolf king does not whimper. He had recently revealed to his pack he was the fated Domn Lup, able to make a full transformation at will, not just when the moon was full. At least the doctor was here now. Hed know what to do to help Johnny. Doing something, anything, was better than the helplessness Id felt while waiting for him to show up. As he completed his examination, the docs thin lips pressed into a firm line and he announced, Ive sewn up worse on you, John, but this doesnt show any indication of that accelerated healing you wewolves are notorious for. Was it silver that cut you? Nope. Johnny shot me a grim look that, in effect, passed the task of answering the doctors question to me. Johnnys wounds had been inflicted by a phoenix raking him with her claws during a dawn battle with fairies. Another consequence of that battle was the myriad elementals unicorns, griffons, dragons, phoenixes now grouped in the wooded grove behind my house. I was planning to ask the doc if hed serve as their vet several of them were injured. But, for now, if I told him the source of the injury was a creature that supposedly didnt exist, hed go all skittish and spew questions. He wouldnt believe it until he saw it for himself, so I answered cryptically. It was a creature of magic that cut him. Magic? The doc rubbed at his brow. Then some residual effect must be preventing the healing. Magic had a negative effect on wres. It could force them into a partial shift and leave them forever stuck that way: neither human nor wre.

Hes the Domn Lup, I said. He isnt as susceptible to magic as other wres. Even as I said it, I realized Id dismissed the obvious. Mad at myself for missing it, anger squashed most of my worry. The docs theory was a good one. This wasnt exactly magical energies being stirred up around Johnny. Magic made physical contact with the intent to damage him. Any wre without the powers of the Domn Lup probably would have bled to death from an attack like this. Can you cleanse the magic away? The doc mimed waving a wand. The answer wasnt going to make Johnny very happy. Yes. With salt. Salt in my wound, the wre grumbled. My hand gripped Johnnys. Sounds like a song title, I said. Being the guitarist and front man of a band, he could make lyrics out of just about anything. The doc peered at me over the tops of his glasses. Is using salt like

that something you specifically, as a witch, have to do? You mean: Does it take magic as well as salt? Medicine is magic to me. But, he reached into his bag, I was thinking more along the lines of washing the wound with this. He lifted an IV bag of saline solution. Its sterile. He was a thinker. That made me even happier he was on our side. Saline should be fine. Give it a shot. Are you sure? I use it to magically cleanse a space, but mundane humans often use salt to protect themselves. Ever spilled salt and then tossed a pinch over your left shoulder? You were supposedly protecting yourself from evil. Dr. Lincoln turned to Kirk.

Would you fetch some towels from the bathroom? Wait, I-I didnt say fetch because youre a I mean, I wouldve said it that way to anyone. The handsome Asian wre smiled and replied, That political correctness shit is for pansies who cant stomach the truth. He left the room. The doc laid the IV bag on the bed and clasped Johnnys shoulder. I can try just stitching it, but cauterizing it first is my recommendation. Just do what you need to do, Johnny said. My stitches arent quite as refined as those of a plastic surgeon working on a starlet, but then my usual clients dont worry much about scarring. Wre healing is good, but I dont know how the magic will play into this. It could leave a scar. Cauterizing it is even more certain to leave a mark. I dont care. Johnnys teeth were grinding. I set the lamp back in its place while the doctor dug in his bag and brought out a small tray and what must have been a cautery tool. It looked something like a soldering iron. When Kirk handed me the towels, I rolled them up and tucked one on either side of Johnnys rib cage. The doctor punctured the IV bag. I just want to make sure you know its possible the scar will show in all your shirtless rock-star pictures, he said, squirting the fluid into the cuts. I lifted the lamp again and saw a white flash of rib bone as the solution washed out the slashes. Johnny sucked air through his teeth. The doc blotted around the injury with another of the towels, then dabbed the wounds directly with gauze. The bleeding continued. I might have thought it was just a reaction to the wound washing if Dr. Lincoln hadnt directed a silent question at me with his eyes. My icy unease returned, wintry fingers stirring my emotions again, nearly forcing me from hidden fear into obvious panic. He cant keep on bleeding like this and we cant take him to a hospital. They transfer wres to state shelters rather than treat them. State shelters were more like human dog pounds than hospitals. I wasnt going to give up. Lets try a higher concentration of salt. Easy for you to say, Johnny grumbled as I charged down the stairs to my second-floor bedroom. From the cabinet where I kept magical supplies, I grabbed a pouch of coarse sea salt. This was already empowered for use in my spells, intended to cleanse the ritual area into a sacred space. Surely this would counteract the magic in the injury, but it was going to hurt like hell. Back in the attic, I apologized to Johnny and dropped an overflowing fistful of the coarse beadlike chunks onto his chest. Immediately, he growled, writhed once and dug his fingers into the mattress. Concentrating, I visualized the salt foaming like baking soda and vinegar being mixed, and imagined it neutralizing the lingering magic. When a coastal aroma wafted around me, it was a signal that the salt cleansing was complete. I gestured for the doc to take over. He pierced another saline bag and washed away the sea salt. This time, the bleeding had markedly decreased. My panic receded. The doc surveyed the wound again, holding the cauterizing tool ready. He motioned Kirk over. Hold him down. Not necessary. Johnny set his jaw; Kirk stayed where he was. Dr. Lincoln leaned in. Ill do this as minimally as possible, but your tattoo is going to need a touch up. Wait! Johnny grabbed for my arm, jerked, and swore loudly. A fresh spill of blood ran across his chest. The tattoo. My breath caught. Someone had found out long ago that Johnny was the Domn Lup. Whoever it was had magically locked his power into the various tattoos on his body. We needed to find out who had done this and have them reverse it to unlock that power. Will scars on this tattoo keep it from being unlocked? Johnny asked. I dont honestly know. The real question is: Can magic in a phoenixs talons sever the magic in a tattoo? Johnnys cell phone rang from the bedside table the chorus of Ozzy Osborn... Presentation de l'diteur Even magic cant solve everything. . . . After facing down the forces of Fairy in mortal combat, Persephone Almedi still must deal with the aftermath. Not only does Seph now possess deadly secrets she must hide from the arcane and mundane world alike, but the dozens of magical creatures who've taken up residence behind her cornfield need food and shelter, and theres still her foster daughter Beverlys tenth birthday party to plan. And thats not all. . . . Sephs boyfriend Johnny has revealed himself as the wrewolf Domn Lup, and the ruler of the wre world is en route from Romania to make sure Johnny really is the king he claims to be. But Johnnys hiding a dangerous secret: his magic is locked in his mysterious tattoos. He and Seph must find a way for him to reclaim it fast despite those who have no intention of letting Johnny gain his full powers. Seph knows that, in the arcane world, strength is always a necessity and power must be constantly proven, but how far is she willing to go to succeed . . .

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