

## Curse of the Wolves by Jane Doe Chapter 3

The amusement drained from the gods breathtakingly beautiful face the longer I sat there gawking at him. I guess he wasn't the understanding type, because if he was he'd know how utterly mind blown I was right now.

One of the wolf gods had answered my call.

What was even more surprising what that he hadn't known who I was at the time of our deal. Clearly the same couldn't be said now, though.

Before I could think to ask him what his name was, Duncan groaned and sat up from the floor.

He twisted his bulbous head towards him and scowled, "Who the fuck are you?"

The god didn't skip a beat, reluctantly looking down at Duncan as though he were no more important than the wood scattered along the floor.

"You want to know who I am and not the savage beast ready to gouge your eyes out?"

Duncan craned his head my way, his hands still clutching his round belly. How rude!

I scoffed at the two of them. "First I'm a rabid wolf and now a savage beast. Is that how you plan on doing it? You're just going to insult me to death?"

"Not her, foolish human." The god shook his head, messing up that perfect ebony hair of his. "I'm talking about him."

Even I had the sense to scoot back as a massive wolf sauntered in through the open doorway. Its fur was the color of fresh snow, made brighter by his eyes which were of the deepest, darkest blue. Its tongue flicked out to lick its muzzle. All the while it stalked Duncan with murderous intent.

I might've felt bad for the guy if he wasn't a raging, misogynistic prick. The wolf's eyes left Duncan for a fraction of a second, flicking over to my face. I held back a gasp, another glimmer of recognition hitting me square in the chest.

No, this couldn't be that wolf. It had been years since I'd last seen it. It was impossible.

Faster than Duncan could scream, the wolf lunged. Its teeth sank into his shoulder, slicing through muscle and bone. He dragged Duncan out

kicking and screaming, into the night where his cries continued without faltering.

The god stood a mere five feet away, his arms folded over his broad chest and a lopsided smirk on his face. Of course he'd enjoy hearing Duncan's cries for help.

We locked eyes and he shrugged, "he likes to play with his food."

"Lovely," I croaked, wondering if I'd suffer the same fate.

Hearing Duncan's final breaths helped me make my decision. My childhood was spent fighting for what scraps of freedom I could get my greedy fingers on. If I was going to die it would be on my terms.

I snatched the shotgun off the floor, mimicking Earl's movements until something clicked inside the barrel. Fuck, please let this work.

One of the god's dark, angled brows lifted. "I wouldn't do that if I were—" BOOM!

The bullet slammed into his chest. Liquid silver painted the front of his shirt. Never in my life did I think I'd see the blood of the gods with my own eyes. All of my hopes and dreams came crashing to the ground in a messy inferno because the damned god hadn't moved an inch.

He wasn't dead. What he was, was pissed.

His plump upper lip peeled back, revealing perfect teeth with two sharpened canines. Every muscle in my body tightened until I could no longer move.

Two strides were all it took for him to close the distance between us.

I sucked in a ragged breath, tears stinging my eyes that I refused to let fall. He was so close I could smell him. As hard as I tried, I couldn't help but drink him in. This god smelled of moonlight, primrose, and pure magic. My body must've not gotten the memo that we were about to die, because my mouth watered.

He leaned in close to my face. Just when I thought he'd bite it off, he flicked my nose.

"Bad wolf."

Magic snared my mind and squeezed until I promptly passed out.

It could've been hours or days, but eventually awareness settled back into my body.

Thick arms cradled me, one beneath my legs and the other supporting my back. I didn't stop to think who those limbs belonged to. The air around me felt thicker than normal. It's touch like swimming through a river of fresh silk. Even its scent was different.

The shrill cry of an animal rang out, echoing for several seconds. I didn't recognize the creature it had come from, a fact that chilled me to the bone.

I knew the forest like the back of my hand, but wherever I was—it felt foreign.

Suddenly, there was this voice singing in my head. Much like the strange air, it surrounded my body and tickled my flesh. It was sensual and masculine. Dark, but surprisingly playful. It oozed the kind of earth-shattering magic that instantly made me wary.

Magic only the gods possessed.

“Oh, Maiden. Oh, Maiden, so fair and slight. With sapphire hair, and eyes so bright. For twenty-one years, the curse did sleep, but the time has come for the beasts to leap!

Be it miles and miles of land or sea, there's not a place on this earth where their Maiden can flee. She journeys to the border far to the east, taken to their lair where they'll feast and feast!”

I cracked open an eye, then quickly shut it.

I had to be dead because there was no way I was in the arms of the same god that had knocked me out twice now—a score I was without a doubt keeping track of.

A throaty scoff pulled me from my internal spiral. “I can practically feel your distaste, oh rabid one. You can cease pretending you're asleep. We've crossed the border now, so it doesn't very well matter.”

My eyes snapped open.

Oh, Goddess. I crossed the border—the fucking border. The mist of Emrys was all that kept the mortals from trespassing into the realm of the gods. Well, that and the threat of imminent death, but still.

Trees larger than I'd ever seen stretched up into the sky, kissing the plump clouds that hung above our heads. They were a breathtaking mixture of lavender, cornflower blue, and carnation pink. The tree's twisted limbs were covered in wide leaves, the colors muted under the cloak of darkness. A chill slithered up my spine.

This was the forest of Adira, goddess of the Hunt.

The god holding me an arms length away from his chest cleared his throat with a heavy note of impatience. “I'm aware this is all very new to you, but it doesn't matter. If your mortal brain hasn't processed it yet, then I highly doubt it ever will.”

“Are you always this pleasant?”

I should've kept my damn mouth shut, but I was having a very stressful night. Seeing as I was going to die anyway, there was no point in holding onto my manners. A huff sounded from off to the side. I craned my head and caught a glimpse of snow-white fur.

Those starburst eyes of his glowed, silencing me instantly. A gentle breeze shifted the ebony hair hanging over his forehead. "You shot me in the chest and have the gall to complain about my attitude? Seeing as you're awake and we're past the border, you can walk on your own." Without warning, he dropped me. I yelped as I landed on a sharp rock. It dug into my ass, and I knew later on, if I lived that long, there would be a lovely bruise. A snarl slid past my lips, deafening in the silence. The god froze, and I wondered if this muddy patch of earth would be where I died.

Giving me the slightest glimpse of his chiseled jaw, he turned his head and dragged his eyes down to where I sat in a useless heap. His tone wasn't angry, but worse. It was intrigued.

"You dare snarl at your god?"

My god? The pieces clicked into place, and my jaw dropped. This wasn't just one of the three gods of our kind. No, this was Azrael.

God of the Wolves.

That left Draco, God of the Lycan's, and Orion, God of the Mages. Our three species, all created by the Moon Goddess herself, Lunette. But where were they? Maybe that was why Azrael hadn't killed me yet. Perhaps he was taking me to the others.

Why was some sick part of me excited by that?

I clamored to my feet and whipped around, quickly scanning the forest. Everything looked the same. There was a weight to my pocket that made me pause. Dad's compass!

Hope threatened to spill across my face. I quickly smothered it beneath a blanket of curiosity. "Where are we?"

"As I previously mentioned, we just passed through Emrys's mist.

Welcome to the forest of Adira, mortal."

"First off, I have a name. It's Blakely, thank you very much. And is that whose voice I heard back there?"

Azrael paused, a glimmer of confusion brightening those starburst eyes. The wolf at his side, who was so large his head eclipsed my own, huffed.

"You heard Emrys? Interesting. He's usually rather shy. What did he say to you?"

I pursed my lips, mulling over whether I should tell the truth. Gods were tricky beings, always searching for the upper hand. I needed to be careful now more than ever, but it wasn't like Emrys had said anything I didn't already know.

"He sang me a song."

Azrael laughed, loudly. The sound was pure music, the embodiment of night itself. I swore the stars twinkled at the sound. "That sounds like Emrys. It would be smart of you not to pay him any mind."

The wolf cocked his head like he might disagree. An unsettling feeling washed over me the longer I stared at the beast. There was an intelligence in his eyes that felt unnatural.

"If you're Azrael, then where are Draco and Orion? The legends say you three never go anywhere without each other."

His eyes sparkled with humor, as though I were the butt of a very funny joke.

"You'll meet them soon enough. Will you behave, or do I need to knock you out again?"

"Where are we going?"

Azrael continued walking, that massive wolf keeping pace at his side. I stumbled, practically running to catch up. I knew enough about the god realm to fear the vicious, cunning creatures lurking in the dark.

"We are going to my home, the mansion of stars."

Both he and the wolf easily navigated the rocky, uneven terrain. It took every ounce of my concentration not to fall behind. The stray roots seemed hell-bent on knocking me over, almost like they had a personal vendetta against me.

That was impossible though, right? The trees weren't alive...

A shudder worked its way down my spine. "Is that where you're going to murder me?"

He didn't turn or falter, but simply shrugged. "Orion will almost certainly murder you once he catches wind of your attitude. As for me, I'm interested in seeing how long you last. The others didn't have your...fire."

"That's so comforting." I tripped over another tree root and cursed under my breath.

I had no clue how much time had passed when we finally stopped for the night. All I knew was that my feet ached something fierce, and my stomach was a grumbling mess of knots, and indigestion.

Azrael sat on a bed of moss; his back propped up against the trunk of a rather massive tree. His legs were crossed at the ankles, the laces of his combat boots untied. He was so unusually beautiful that it was hard to peel my eyes away from him. The moonlight seemed to seep into his skin, giving it this unnatural glow that did strange things to my insides.

“Your stare is unnerving, you know.” The hem of his t-shirt lifted as he folded his arms behind his head. He snapped his fingers, “is this what the humans call eye-fucking?”

The acrid taste of anger burned my tongue. “Like I’d ever eye fuck you.”

He cracked open an eye, “what was that?”

“Nothing.”

I waited what felt like hours for Azrael and his beast to fall asleep.

Holding my breath in fear that I’d wake them, I stood from my spot and slipped away into the forest.