

Curse of the Wolves by Jane Doe Chapter 8

Chapter 7

Blakely

The rage I felt towards that dickhead of a god lasted a whopping ten minutes.

I stumbled down the wooden stairs, trying my best not to fall on my face. A retort began to build in my chest, or maybe it was a good old-fashioned scream, when Orion slammed the door and locked it behind him.

“Screw you, asshole!” I screeched into the darkness.

Anger and sheer desperation had my eyes watering. No, I would not cry. That jerk of an immortal didn’t deserve the satisfaction.

Two sconces attached to the far wall flickered with little tendrils of flame. I held up my hand in front of my face and squinted. My empty stomach clenched with fear. I could barely see its outline. The darkness down here wasn’t normal, but what was normal in the godly realm?

I craned my head and began to take in my surroundings.

A smooth cement wall stood to the left of me, and another several feet ahead. To the right was a row of stacked boxes. There were a few out of place, forming an opening I could easily fit through. I didn’t see the point in sitting around. Orion didn’t seem like the type to regret his actions, so my best option was to pray I’d find a cellar door I could crawl out of.

I needed to escape this place, grab my dad’s compass from where I’d stashed it, and get the hell out of dodge.

Shuddering at the cold draft that licked up my bare legs, I stepped through the opening within the boxes and paused. Surrounding me were more boxes. Stacks of them all positioned in neat rows, towering high above my head. The small gaps in between them allowed tiny beams of firelight to come through. Just enough to keep me from falling and cracking my head open.

I walked down the rows, taking left and right turns at will. When I came across a dead end, I froze. This place was like a labyrinth. A labyrinth of boxes impossible to navigate due to the scraps of dwindling light.

Ugh, this was all Orion's fault.

Whatever divine force decided that gods deserved not only immense power but incredible beauty, was officially on my shit list. Azrael's was mischievous and playful with his messy hair and arms of swirling ink. Orion's was cold, refined, and lethal.

Like the portrait of a dashing prince, his nose upturned at the castle full of suitors waiting to kiss his knuckles and bend the knee.

As I attempted to backtrack through the labyrinth of boxes, I thought about the rush of emotion when he leaned into snarl in my face. There had been terror, but also a sick sort of excitement that had my toes tingling. Clearly I was mentally ill.

That pale, blonde hair of his had drawn my attention instantly. It was perfectly styled, curling slightly at the ends. Everything about Orion had been exquisitely put together, right down to his rumpled dress shirt. Much like the ancient sculptures on display at a museum, his chiseled face had been a work of pure art. High cheekbones led down to pouty lips and a jaw delicious enough to lick.

I froze, groaning at the sharp turn my thoughts had taken, and ran a hand down my face. Fuck, I needed someone to remind me that stockholm syndrome was very real, and I was not going to fall victim to it.

"Okay, so he's so attractive you briefly contemplated getting on your knees and worshiping the ground he walked on. So what? He's a douche who has no personality. There's nothing desirable about that."

Stopping at an intersection of boxes, I realized I had no clue which way I'd come from. Wasn't that just great? Not only had my patience officially thinned, but my stomach was now kicking up a storm that left me

suffering through hunger cramps. The good news was that my anger and intense hatred for Orion was renewed.

Bad news, it sputtered out when I realized I wasn't alone.

'Anything you'd like to say?' I asked my absentee wolf. 'No? No life saving advice or a joke to break the tension? Yeah, didn't think so.'

The darkness around me seemed to gather, collecting in one corner like a rolling fog. I bristled at the feeling of eyes roaming my skin. I'd stupidly thought Orion was lying about the shadow demon in an attempt to scare me. Cowering wouldn't do me any good. If I was destined to die, then I'd do it on my own terms. Which meant I was not going to sob and beg for mercy.

Maybe, anyway.

Too tired, hungry, and stressed to think clearly, I turned towards the gathering shadows and bit out, "I don't know if you're corporeal or not, shadow demon, but I will punch you square in your creepy face. And in case you don't think I mean business, I'm pretty sure I gouged the eyes out of this shapeshifting, soul-stealing mirror collector." I cringed, "Wow, never thought I'd say that out loud."

A voice like broken glass scraping over stone sounded from the mass of darkness.

"You wounded Mirari?"

"Is that her name? Huh, interesting. Not my first guess, but I suppose it fits." I caught myself and puffed out my chest. "Yes, I did wound her, and I'm sure I could find a way to wound you too."

There was a long pause, almost as though the demon was thinking. Did demons think? I had no clue. None of the legends I'd ever read mentioned shadow creatures or crazy mirror ladies.

"I will not harm you." It said after several seconds.

All of the false bravado fled from my body. I managed a weak laugh, covering it up behind a cough. A shiver wracked my body. He couldn't have tossed me down here with a blanket and a cup of soup?

"That's what I thought." Thank the Goddess I didn't have to beg. "Now, do you know how to get out of here? I'm staging a jailbreak."

"The only escape is the door in which you came through."

"Great. So, no jailbreak."

Another long pause. "I do not know what a jailbreak is. If you wish, I can lead you back to the door."

See, even shadow demons had chivalry. Who was going to tell all the mediocre wolves back in the mortal realm?

The darkness continued to gather, rolling across the cement floor in a smog that quickly began to take form. I blinked several times at the man towering over me. Every feature was cloaked in shadow, making it impossible to see what they looked like. It extended its arm to the left and took off down the row.

Wiping the cold sweat from my brow, I followed close behind.

"You've never heard of a jailbreak?" I asked it, desperate for some way to pass the time. "Do you guys not have prisons in the godly realm?"

"Yes, we have a prison. A most terrible place from which there is no escape."

It definitely sounded happy over that fact, but who was I to judge?

"Oh, that's lovely. What do you have to do to get sent there?"

"Most heinous things." It replied in its gravelly voice.

I pinched my lips, fighting a laugh. This was not at all what I thought would happen when the curse took hold. Instead of being six feet under

and eating bugs, I was six feet under, alive, and talking to a shadow demon. Did that make me a badass?

Yeah, it totally did.

We made it back to the entrance without a hitch. I had assumed the demon would vanish into thin air, going wherever it was shadow demons went, but it didn't. When I plopped down on the cold, concrete floor, it followed suit.

Turns out shadow demons weren't terrible company to keep.

He (yes, the shadow demon was a he) answered almost all of my questions. Some it chose not to respond to, which was understandable. I wasn't going to give away all of my secrets either. We talked about the origin of his kind, and how they were created by the god of shadows. Since the gods seldom came to the mortal realm, there were many we simply didn't know about. Whoever he was didn't seem all too concerned that he was missing a demon.

Guess Orion wasn't the only dickhead immortal.

My stomach snarled for the thousandth time, and I groaned, "Is this how I'm going to die? If so, it's pathetic. Blakely, cursed by the gods, left to starve to death."

The shadow demon made a warbled crackling sound in the back of its throat. Over the past few hours, I learned that was its way of expressing agreement. Either that or it had some form of hellish strep throat.

"I know what it is to starve."

A chill slithered down my spine. I pulled my knees up to my chest, hoping to stave off some of the cold. "What do shadow demons even eat?"

"You do not want to know."

I frowned, opening my mouth to reply, only to change my mind at the last minute. "You know what, you're right. I don't want to know what you eat. As long as I'm not on the menu, then it doesn't matter. Although,

being eaten by a shadow demon does sound badass. A lot better than starving..." I muttered.

He let out a shallow hiss that I'd come to assume was a laugh of sorts.

The hours ticked by slowly, though it wasn't as bad with the demon at my side. Eventually, my stomach's valiant protests fell silent. One complaint I had was the uncomfortable floor. Surely they could've spared a damn chair to cradle my already bruised ass.

I was in the middle of explaining to the shadow demon the mind-blowing magic that was the bathroom upstairs when the basement door swung open.

We were partially concealed behind a stack of boxes. The demon didn't care for the little flames dancing in the wall sconces, so it sat as far away from them as it could get. Since it was my only company for the night, I scooted a bit closer.

I could feel the three of them approach. All of the oxygen was sucked from the room, and the temperature had risen several degrees. The oxygen part I blamed on Orion and his big head.

Azrael's starburst eyes were bright in the darkness, covered in a green sheen that reminded me of a canine. His sooty lashes fluttered, and I had just enough time to glare at him before he threw back his head and roared with laughter.