

Witch's Promise

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It was a day like any other when she first saw him in her forest. She didn't know when he'd entered it or where he was going, but the simple fact that anybody at all was in the woods was quite unusual. For close to two years now she'd been living alone in the forest and had come to think of it as her own, as nobody from the village would even think of coming there, at least not until he came that day.

She watched him as he wandered through the woods, all from a safe distance of course, and under her cover. She'd become more experienced with her talents over the months, experimenting with the dark arts, but she still had to be wary of the villagers. She'd thought her powers had been coming along quite nicely when she was finally discovered, but even so, her magic could still not win out against a whole group of people coming after her.

In the end, she'd been able to get away, but it had been quite a chase and was very unnerving for her. As it was she'd run into the woods and took refuge there. The villagers were wary of her growing powers and did not want to risk hunting her through the forbidding forest. They'd let her be, hoping that the dangers of the wilderness would take care of her.

She'd been able to survive in the woods though, and was getting along quite well, away from the village. Perhaps they thought she was dead by now, which was fine with her, letting her study her skills in private. Nobody had dared to set foot in her woods since then, so why was a lad from the village doing so now?

She watched him wander, seemingly aimlessly through the woods, studying his intentions. At last she decided he must just be a foolish youth out exploring the wilderness. That was not a very wise thing to be doing, especially since it was her woods he was trespassing in. Hadn't he heard the tales of what might befall him if she were to catch him out here in the forest?

She continued to study him, watching as he crouched low to the ground. A few times he must have sensed her presence, for he stopped and turned, looking around as if he thought he was being followed. He never saw her secluded in her cover though, and eventually he shrugged the nervousness off of him.

She followed his meanderings for some time, trying to think of what to do with him, until a realization slowly dawned on her. Looking upon him, he was a handsome young man, whose boyish face betrayed his twenty years. In all her time out there in the woods, she hadn't realized how lonely she'd become. It was all the stupid villagers' fault she thought bitterly, she didn't deserve this cruel exile. As she thought about it more, she knew that she didn't want to be alone like that. She needed some company, and he was as good as anyone. Certainly he was the best chance at a companion she'd had in quite some time.

She had to be careful about it though. One wrong move and he might alert the villagers to her and raise their interest in her once again. She did want to get him and to keep him, but she'd have to take it slow. Watching him, her body pressed against the ground in her hiding place, she began to form her plan. The ideas taking shape in her mind, she smiled to herself. Flicking

her ear in amusement, she twitched her tail idly.

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He heard the rustling of branches off to his side and quickly turned to that direction, getting ready to back off from the animal, or stand against it if necessary. He breathed a small sigh of relief when what emerged from the forest's covering was simply an everyday, normal cat. It was normal in all respects save one, the color of its coat was a jet black. If he noted the omen of its ebony fur he didn't show it, only expressing mild amusement at finding a common feline so far away from the village.

"Well now, what have we here?" he asked, addressing the cat directly. It did not answer him, as was to be expected and simply looked cautiously up at him. It had stopped several feet from him, eyeing him as if studying him closely.

"Come now kitty, you don't need to be afraid of me... I won't hurt you." He kneeled down upon the ground to appear less threatening, slowly offering his outstretched hand towards the feline. The cat sniffed at his finger gingerly, skittering backwards slightly when he moved to try and pet it, then approaching him slowly, still aloof and wary.

It took several minutes for him to coax the cat near him, gaining its confidence. Finally it crept closer and gave his hand a tentative lick. He smiled at that, reaching up to stroke the dark fur of its cheek. "Well now, that's better kitty. but I still wonder what you're doing way out here in the woods?" Once again the cat didn't answer, save for its soft purring as he stroked its fur.

He stayed there for quite some time, his attention focused on the feline, until looking up he realized the sun's light was growing dimmer as sunset approached. "Oh, it's getting late," he remarked. "I must be going home. You don't seem to have an owner do you, how would you like to come home with me?" He tried to pick up the cat then, but it hissed softly at him and struggled from his grasp, darting from his reach. It then turned to look upon him, its features calmer than a moment before.

"Very well then," he chuckled. "I see you're quite at home out here in the woods. I won't take you away from them then... Perhaps I could come and visit you tomorrow." Finished, he stood and with one final look upon the curious feline, he strode off down one of the old paths in the forest. The cat watched him go, then turned and made its own way through the woods which it knew so well.

As he'd promised, he returned the following day to wander through the forest once again. Whatever the purpose of his journeys there were, he found himself in a familiar area once again. As he waited, he soon was greeted by his strange woodland companion once again. The cat padded eagerly to him that time, rubbing gently against his legs as he bent down to scratch the fur of its neck gently.

They spent the afternoon together once again, and he seemed perfectly content to wile away the time out in the forest with the mysterious feline who'd somehow came to live there. Once again, as the hours grew late, he left the woods for his home, leaving the cat to its own forest dwelling.

The third day showed the same events and he met the black cat there just as he was expecting.

"So tell me" he asked idly as he scratched the cat's belly, "what are you doing way out here in the woods all alone anyway?" It was too his abrupt surprise when this time the feline actually answered him.

"I could ask the same thing about you my lad" the cat replied, turning her head to look up at him. Her voice was that of a woman's, with the hint of a purr added to it.

Startled, he jumped up and backed away from the cat, looking upon her and realizing the implications of her black coat for the first time. "What...?" he managed to stammer out.

He would have turned and ran, but felt compelled to stare upon the mysterious feline who'd just now hinted at the possibilities she possessed. "Don't be so surprised," she stated, "you have heard the tales about me in the village now haven't you?"

"Yes... but I didn't think they were real. Nobody's seen you for so long and these woods didn't seem all that frightening. I didn't believe you were actually here." He tried to back up a step as she crept toward him, but found his feet stuck firmly in place.

"So what were you doing out here in my woods then my lad?"

"Nothing, just exploring... I didn't think I'd find anything bad..."

"Well, you were in for a little surprise then weren't you?" the cat replied, chuckling in a throaty purr. "Still, it's not quite what you think..."

As he watched the cat creep closer towards him, she began to change, her body growing larger. In the space of moments her form flowed into that of a person, passing through a melding of feline and human appearances. As he watched her features became more human, her ebony fur evaporating from her body. Finally she stood before him as a woman, the beauty of her pale skin complemented by the dark cloak she now wore and the long, flowing tresses of her raven hair.

As she approached him in her new form, he stammered "no, get away from me, you witch... I never should have come here..."

The smile she showed him was not cruel, but surprising soft for such a sorceress. "Now please, don't be like that... I had to take the form of the cat to watch you. It's not everyday someone from the village comes to pay me a visit and I had to be sure you meant me no harm."

She returned his confused look by reaching out and gently touching his arm. His body stiffened, then slowly relaxed after she didn't affect him with some horrible spell as he'd expected. "Now yes, it's true that I do experiment with the arcane arts, but I mean you no harm. If I were a dark sorceress, I could've hurt you long before now...."

"The people of the village, they don't understand and they mean to hurt me if they ever do find me, but I'm not like that..." Pausing she added "are you lonely to be walking around in the woods like this instead of busying yourself with the affairs of the townsfolk?"

Looking upon her, he slowly nodded his head in agreement. "I thought so, why else would you be out here wandering by yourself like that. Perhaps you were looking for something you

didn't realize you wanted..."

"I'm lonely too you know" she continued, trailing her fingers softly down his arm. "Do you know what it's like to live all alone out here in these woods. I was hoping you'd continue to come and visit me..."

"But why... why me?"

"You're the only one who's come out here in all this time. I can sense you're different, and I like being with you... Didn't you sense something yourself? Why else would you have come out here these past few days?"

Nodding slowly, he did have to admit that he had felt something special about the cat, but he hadn't realized just what it meant until now. Looking into her enchanting eyes he could feel those feelings growing deeper as he noticed the warmth of her body next to his.

"Do you believe that I won't hurt you now?" she asked him softly. He nodded once again.

"Good, now we can get that behind us. Tell me then lad, what is your name?"

"Oh, it's John" he answered, finding his tongue once again. He then thought to ask "and what might I call you?"

"My name's Selene my dear John, and I'm very pleased to finally make your acquaintance this way..." With that she leaned in and softly placed kiss on his lips. He reacted with surprise, much as she though he would, but with her gentle insistence he soon relaxed against her.

"There now John, I'm not so bad am I?" she asked, her smile quite charming.

"No... No you aren't Selene. I just didn't expect this."

"Nor did I, but I want to take this opportunity while I can... You can't possibly know how lonely I've been out here. Please don't go from me, not now..."

Caught up in the feelings of her closeness he answered. "No, I couldn't do that to you..." his emotions spurred on by her enchanting presence.

"Oh good... please say you'll stay with me here then..."

"Out here, in the woods..." his voice became credulous once again.

"Of course John, I cannot live in the village, the townspeople will never give me peace there, so I'm forced to live out here. It's not so bad though, especially if I can have you beside me."

"But I don't know... it's such a big decision." His confusion was heightened by the feelings of her gentle touch once again.

"You don't have to decide right now I'll give you some time to decide... But please can you come to me tomorrow? I want us to be together and tomorrow night is the night of the full moon. There is a simple ritual I'd like to perform, one that will join us together. The timing is perfect for it and that way we'll never be apart, not ever..."

Her lips found his once again before he could respond, and she worked deftly at convincing him to her ideas. Feeling his resistance weaken, she asked him once again "will you come for me tomorrow then?"

Seeing his uncertain nod, she kissed him one final time, and with her lips still touching his she shifted forms once again. Watching him, she saw his eyes go wide as her features changed, taking on the feline aspect, her body once more covered with black fur. She kept her muzzled pressed against his lips as she changed into the shape halfway between human and feline, kissing him as a human-form cat.

Even with his surprise, he didn't resist her much, and she felt him responding to her suggestions. She kept her hold on him until she was sure of his decision, then having finally convinced him she pulled away, slowly withdrawing her embrace. "Meet me here tomorrow night at dusk and then we can be together, always..." she said, and turning, she walked from him. Going a few steps she quickly shifted to her full feline form, the cloak she was wearing disappearing along with the transformation. Padding softly away from him, she swished her tail behind her as she went off into the woods, leaving him alone there, stunned and confused.

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As she'd expected, he returned to the woods the following evening. Even though he'd hesitated the day before, she knew he'd be there. She knew she'd won him over, and that soon he would be hers. As the shadows of twilight crept up around the trees, he walked along the path, his nervous excitement showing clearly on his face.

He found her where she said she'd meet him, sitting under a tree next to the path watching for him. She was in her human form that time and didn't try and surprise him with another transformation, at least not right then. Seeing him approach, she smiled and stood up to greet him.

"John, you came just like you said you would" she exclaimed happily, reaching out to him.

"Of course I did Selene," he replied. His voice was still a little unsure, but he gazed upon her with a wanting need, his mind driven on by her suggestive overtures and promises from the previous day. "After yesterday I couldn't stop thinking about you. I couldn't sleep at all last night. I knew that I needed to be with you."

She smiled at that, quickly covering up the flash of a satisfied grin with a warmer pursing of her lips. Pulling him towards her she responded, her voice hushed slightly. "I was hoping you'd come to me tonight. Now we can truly be together." Without another moment's hesitation, she kissed him once again. It was a soft, quick kiss, but deliberate in its own way. It had the desired effect of getting his attention. Moving her lips from his mouth she then whispered softly in his ear. "Come on now, it is getting dark and we must be on our way." She finished with a slight throaty purr, a small hint of her secret nature, which she'd only begun to show him.

It was easy for her to lead him down the path going deeper into the woods. She chuckled to herself as she thought of how fine a job she'd done at snaring her prize, drawing him closer to her. As the dusk faded into the darkness of night, he became a little nervous seeing the growing

darkness encroaching upon them; that was simple for her to remedy though. Muttering the strange notes of a now-familiar spell, she called forth her magic torch.

Once again he was startled by the display of her skills, jerking away when he saw the energy pour forth from her open hand. As the magic coalesced into a luminous ball she held floating above her palm, lighting their way, she smiled at him. Touching his arm with her other hand she soothed "don't worry, it's just a simple spell to keep us from getting lost out here in the darkness... See, I told you my magic wasn't harmful. You'll see that it can be quite helpful and will serve us well, if you'll let it." Seeing him reassured, she thought to herself, just wait until he sees some of my other spells tonight... Then we'll see who's serving who.

They reached their destination long after the darkness of the night had swallowed up the forest and were greeted by the rising fullness of the moon as they entered the clearing she'd long become familiar with. Walking out into the moonlight, she led him across the grass bathed in the celestial orb's pale glow.

Stopping, she turned to face him. Smiling confidently, she changed forms once again, feeling the power of the transformation flowing through her as she took the shape of the cat's body over her own. The change was mostly for show, but the way her body felt as she donned that form seemed so right. She could work her spells in any of the three appearances she possessed, either the form God had given her or the other two she'd learned to wear herself by other means. However, tonight especially, the figure halfway between her human and feline guises seemed most suited for the task at hand. She liked the feeling of this form, as well as the ability to change her shape at will. She also enjoyed the way he looked at her when she changed for him. Even amongst his apprehension and confusion, he could not help but show the barest glimmers of excitement and intrigue on his face as he looked upon the exotic beauty of her half-feline form.

For a second he looked as if he might turn and run from her, but she knew that impulse was only fleeting. Seeing her magic in the dark of night, stranded out there in the depths of the forbidding forest would be enough to unnerve any man, but she also saw the look of expectation in his eyes. No matter how much he might not wish to admit it, she knew he found her cat-girl form exciting.

"It's alright John... You've seen my like this before and I didn't hurt you. Why would I do so now?" she purred out in a soothing voice as she reached for his arm and softly stroked his skin with the pads of her fingers. "This is the best form for me to perform the ceremony in... and besides, I'm not that scary like this am I?"

"Well no," he breathed out, as he gazed upon her smiling feline visage, seeing her ebony fur soak up the ghostly glow of the moon's rays. "It's just that you're so different like this..."

"But different isn't always bad now is it?" she asked, another chuckling purr escaping from her mouth. Her tail twitching in anticipation as she watched him, she flashed him the briefest of a toothy grin. "You do still want to join with me tonight don't you...?" she added, brushing against him so he could feel her warmth through the fabric of her cloak.

He nodded dully to that, but she could see the expectation and wonder in his eyes. Caressing his cheek softly with the fur of her hand she pressed her muzzle to meet his lips and kissed him

once again, pulling him closer. Holding him against her, she smiled to herself. It was going to be so easy to snare him. Why hadn't she thought of that before? Of course it would've been hard to find a man in town, as the villagers knew her full well for what she was and could spot her even in the guise of her fully-feline form. No, it would've been too risky to go back into the village like that, at least not before she'd learned more of her craft. In the meantime, he could keep her company quite nicely.

She kissed him deeper, holding him into their embrace until she felt his uncertainty melting from him. Pulling away from their embrace, she licked at his cheek playfully. Smiling at him once again, she turned to the small pile of wood she'd made in the center of the clearing earlier that day. She spoke the familiar arcane syllables and pointed an outstretched hand at the oft-used fire-pit. In an instant the glow spread from her fingertips and leapt onto the dry wood, kindling it almost instantly, the magical light blooming into flames. Once again she saw John was astonished with her magic and her tail twitched with her secret thoughts.

How fun it would be when the ceremony was complete and he was bonded to her. He would be hers, body and soul. She would soon be able to get him to do anything she wished, and already several wicked thoughts were forming in her mind. She'd been denied the pleasures of the flesh far too long and would make up for that with him tonight. He would truly be an obedient consort. He would make a useful servant as well, and by tapping some of essence, feeding upon his will, she could supplement her own powers.

Letting her mind run with the wild thoughts within her, she let out a long purr. Without another word to him, she began the ceremony that would make him hers. She all but had him with her charms, now she would make it permanent. Turning to face him, she smiled once again, licking at her muzzle in a brief show of anticipation. Her ears perked up, her tail curled around her legs, she opened her mouth and began the chanting.

The words in the alien tongue of the spell came softly at first as she began to walk around the fire, but soon they grew in volume, slowly becoming more powerful. She circled the fire three times, never taking her eyes off him as she wove the dark fabric of the incantation. As she circled the dancing flames for the last time, she moved towards him, her body flowing with feline grace and feminine charm, her tail moving with the soft swaying of her hips. She looked into his eyes and saw his glazed expression as he gazed upon her.

As she approached him her chanting became stronger, more insistent and she looked upon him with a stare that began to betray her predatory intentions for him. It was now his last glimmer of a chance to escape her, if he did not bolt from her grasp then, she would have him for sure. She continued to recite the arcane mantra, calling upon the forbidden power that flowed through her. As the words poured from her mouth the flames of the fire grew brighter, consuming the wood with unearthly vigor.

He watched her come to him, his face still uneasy, but he held his place, his gaze locked on hers, following her hypnotic voice. She reached out for him, placing her hand on his chest, gliding her fingers over his shirt. She circled him once, chanting the notes of the dark chorus that would bind him to her, sapping his will from him, making him hers. Walking around him, she stayed close, trailing her touch over him, her fingers promising the secrets of what soon would come.

She was working her way to the frenzy of the spell, feeling the magic encircling them both. It was almost time, she would have him soon. Then as her hand trailed over his chest once again he sprung into action. In an instant he broke from his trance and threw out his hand to grab hers. Shocked, she tried to pull away, but his grip was too strong.

Her concentration broke, the words of her chanting stopped as her mouth fell open in surprise. The glassy-eyed expression he'd worn a moment before was replaced by one of cold determination. Her spell broke, he wasted no time and began uttering his own incantation.

The power of his words washing over her, she struggled to get free, her mind reeling in fear and confusion. He held her tight though, his hidden strength now fully demonstrated. She looked up at him desperately, her eyes pleading with his, trying to coerce him with her charms and once more, but it was all in vane. He looked upon her intently and held her to his gaze as he continued the words of his spell.

Her body trembling, she felt the power of his magic pouring down on her. It was stronger than anything she'd ever felt before and her feeble attempts to ward it off were brushed away very quickly.

Forced to listen his voice, now full with the energy of his chanting, she felt a familiar tingling sensation running through her. As the feeling built she was startled to find herself changing forms once again, this time against her will. Still struggling against his grip and the power of his spell, she felt her body transforming. As she changed, her form growing smaller, she became lost in the widening expanse of fabric of the cloak that hung around her. Finally, when it was all over the garment had fallen from her to the ground and she was left in the form a fully-feline cat, struggling meekly in his arms.

"There, there my little kitty" he chuckled, his spell completed. "What's all the fuss about?"

Relinquished from the hold of his magic, she tried to retaliate against him, but was shocked to find she couldn't make the spell. She still had the knowledge of the arcane arts she'd learned, but the power to use them was blocked from her. In a moment of frightening understanding, she also realized she was unable to change her shape from the form he'd locked her in.

"Ah-ha my little witch, we see that I'm not exactly the simple lad you took me for am I?" As he laughed once again his own body went through a quick transformation. In the span of moments he aged several years, taking on his true form of experienced power and wisdom. A quick series of flickering sparks of magic dancing on his fingertips further illustrated his skills.

"What... what will you do to me?" she asked, her voice a frightened little squeak. At the very least his spell had not taken her speech from her, he had left her with that.

"Oh, nothing worse than what you were planning to do to me kitten. I know you were hoping to bind me to you, using this simple lad's mind and body for your own uses. Well I won't be so cruel to you. You'll be able to retain some of your will, but you will still serve me. I've been looking for a new servant for quite some time."

"Passing through your village I heard tales of the tricks you played. You were so foolish to advertise your skills when you were still in the midst of your training though. It takes a long time to become fully adept at the arts and until then you're still quite vulnerable... as I've

demonstrated tonight" he added with another chuckle. "You should've learned how to disguise your talents instead of flaunting them."

"Please. Please let me go," she let out with a plaintive mewling, still held tightly in his arms as he looked down upon her.

"Oh no. We can't have that my little kitty. Your skill is rough, but your talent has great potential. I can use that potential in my own gains, and if you serve me willingly I might be persuaded to help you along with your own studies."

"For the moment you'll make a wonderful familiar to me though," he said, and reaching into his pocket he retrieved a silver collar. He placed it around her neck and she could feel the magic it possessed, strengthening his hold upon her.

"No. Please don't leave me like this... I don't want to stay in this form... Not forever."

"But what's the matter, I thought you liked playing the role of the kitten," he chided. "Besides, you're the easiest to manage in this form and it'll make the trip home for me much easier. As I said, if you learn to serve me well, you might be able to take on the role of my student someday, and then you'd be bettered suited to take on your old form again... but for now you'll stay as you are."

"It's not so bad is it?" he asked grinning down at her. Chuckling once again, he stroked her softly along the length of her belly. "Besides, I do appreciate the shape of the kitty girl you were wearing for me earlier. If you're good to me, I'll probably let you take that form from time to time... when it suits me."

As he started walking away from the clearing, leaving the dying light of the fire for the darkness of the woods, he added one final statement. "You were right about one thing in your promise though... Whether you meant it or not, your magic will serve me well."