

## Chapter 3

### Falling in

**You Already Know** —JJ Heller. [JJ Heller - You Already Know \(Official Audio Video\)](#)

#### He Takes Possession

Aurelio stood next to Cecelia as she slept in her hammock, with a woven silk pillow that she had found surprisingly comfortable. She had fallen asleep nestled into the pillow, with the hammock pulled over her. Now that she knew who Aurelio was, she had to push aside the thoughts of what she was actually sleeping in. Aurelio noted that her eyes were moving, seeing her eyes dart he knew that she was having a dream he leaned in and whispered, “Hold on. Don’t fall in. I’ll send you a line. Just hold on.” Then he backed up, watching her body startle and twitch. He cracked his leg against the pillar causing a big thud that woke Cecelia up.

“Ah! Oh,” she sucked in a quick breath that only filled her throat, as her stomach muscles pulled into her backbone. “What? Where?”

“My dear,” crooned Aurelio, “are you alright?” He said approaching her, but keeping to the shadows.

“I fell. I was dreaming I was at the ocean, then all of the sudden I was in Cova d’en Gispert, my kayak was wedged in a crack, the water was dropping. I was dangling from my tipping kayak, and,” she paused and looked at Aurelio, “and you were there. I couldn’t see you but you called to me, I could feel a soft rope.”

“Oh my dear, what a terrible dream. But I’m glad I could play a part, a sweet part for you. Now, come, sit up and eat your breakfast. I made you breakfast.”

She sat up, reaching carefully for the floor with her feet. Before her was a flat slice of bread and a cup of weak orange juice. Cecelia kept her eyes on her food, unable to fully look at Aurelio after her first fright.

“I hope you like it. I’m not the cook that Lorelei was.” As she nibbled her food, Aurelio continued, “She decided to leave us, you know. All of the sudden. I don’t know. I’m so disappointed and sad that she chose to go like that.”

Alarmed, “She’s gone? She was my only friend. The only one I had left.”

“Only? Only friend? What about me? Aren’t I your friend? Haven’t I saved you? Don’t I keep you safe? It’s you and me against the hunters.”

“I didn’t mean, I mean, she’s my only human friend. And you’re...”

“I’m offensive to you. Do I scare you?”

She lied, “No, no. I’m getting used to you. It just takes a little time. It’s different, you know. We’re different.” She dared to glance up at his foot that rested on the table, the cute paw of brown and golden fur, with the two claws in the center that slowly tapped on the table.

“Anyway, I hope you are finding it comfortable here. I do love having your company, especially since my old friend needed to go.”

She nodded with a slight frown of confusion. “Needed to?”

“I miss her so much,” he lilted, ignoring her question. “Now, do tell me what brought you here. How is it that I find myself with a new friend?”

“I was running. Well, moped to be exact. I needed to get away from the Jordi.”

“Jordi?” Aurelio nearly shouted, then quickly recovered himself. “I knew a Jordi.”

“You know him?”

“Just in passing. No one of consequence in my life. A friend of a friend, lets say. Tell me about Jordi.”

“He was nice and all, awkward,” she scowled, “I don’t know, he was, he was good. As far as I could tell. But that never seems to be the truth.”

“I know what you mean, dearest. How misunderstood I am. I look terrible to people, yet I am good. As good as they come. I only want to love others. And then you have your handsome prince, shall we call him that, yes, your handsome prince who comes to sweep you off your feet, but really is a socially awkward, incompetent, selfish idiot. I know the type.”

“I guess so. He was pretty weird with me, at times,” Cecelia made a sour frown, “But he seemed nice enough.”

“Then why did you leave him?” Aurelio accused, “you must have known he was no good.”

“No, not really. More like he was that good, and I was that terrible.”

“Certainly not! How can you say such a thing. I’ve met the type myself. They act all shy when really they’re a wolf in sheep’s clothing.”

“I thought I wouldn’t be good enough for him.”

“You’re good enough. My dear, oh my dear, you can’t let someone like that put you down.”

“I didn’t say he put me down, exactly.”

“You didn’t *have* to say it. This type can make anyone feel less than important because he’s SO important.”

“So you’re saying that he made me feel like I wasn’t good enough for him?”

“Right! And that doesn’t give him the right to insult you like that.”

“Insult?”

Aurelio cut her off, “Certainly, his highbrow attitude would make anyone uncomfortable, especially if you’re thinking about living with him the rest of your life! What a hell that would be.”

“Hell? Oh, I don’t know...”

“Oh, yes--hell! Just think of how you could never measure up.”

“Yes, I could never be good enough.”

“But you’re good enough for me. You’re my savior,” he stroked her hair away from her face. “Where would I be without you? All alone and despised, rejected and shunned. You are my only friend, and I can’t live without you. That man, he can survive just fine. But not I. I have found the apple of my eye, and without you I am nothing.”

“Nothing? Certainly not.”

“I have been rejected and beaten. But you have always treated me with care and respect.”

Cecelia thought about her reactions of disgust and fear in light on his reaction, and started to convince herself that her reactions had been well hidden. He must just have seen her as quiet and shy. Could she do that going forward, she asked herself. Aurelio watched quietly as she contemplated these twists of logic settling into her mind.

She replied, “I’m glad I could be nice to you.”

“We need each other, don’t we. Where would I be without you. Certainly, I was contemplating ending my life before you came. I was so distraught about my old friend being sick and dying that I didn’t know if I could go on alone. Surely you can see that. I owe you my life,” he concluded, knowing full well that he was capturing her life in his devious clutches.

“Sick and dying. I thought you said she left.”

“She did. To go take care of herself in her old age. A quiet rest.”

Once again, most of her days were a blur of time passing irregularly. Meals came sporadically, sometimes three a day, sometimes one, occasionally none. Ramone would tentatively come to the door, shy and quiet. He

would place her food on the table, looking warily into the dark fissure at the back of the room. Cecelia got the sense that Ramone knew who Aurelio was.

“Have you seen him?” she asked.

“The master? Oh, yes. He is terrifying and resplendent. I worship his presence. Who can compare?”

“You worship?”

“To give honor where honor is due. Have you met anyone else like him?”

“Uh, no, certainly not. He’s the only spider I’ve ever spoken too, ever.”

“You need to be careful, though,” Ramone leaned in close to whisper, “You should...”

Aurelio appeared suddenly, “Thank you, Ramone,” he said in a commanding tone. Then he turned to Cecelia, ignoring Ramone, “I hope you will enjoy your meal.” Aurelio backed into the hammock and rested his abdomen.

Ramone shuffled out the door, nodding as he shut it behind himself.

There was no conversation. Aurelio sat in a way that gave the appearance that he was looking away from her, however his smaller eyes on the side took in her every movement.

Cecelia tried to appear nonchalant as she ate, looking up at him in a disinterested way. She was actually studying him. She looked at the easiest, most familiar part, his paws. The ends of his legs were covered in golden hairs, the very tip ending in two puffy toes with the claws relaxed and touching the floor. From his paws up were his glassy legs, a thin line of golden green translucent arches that met at his thorax. Along his legs ran clear hairs that stuck straight out, and at each joint was a touch of black. His thorax was small compared to his abdomen; Cecelia took quick glances at his face and tried to count his eyes. 6 she could see from this angle. From the front of his face came the two short and wide fangs with long curved clear spikes, and alongside those were his pedipalps. These were longer than the fangs, jointed like his legs, covered with spiky hairs, and curling up and reaching out.

Aurelio naturally kept his fangs and pedipalps moving in and out, smelling the air or a cleaning action by rubbing together. This movement was very hard for Cecelia to watch, so she turned her gaze toward his abdomen. He waited until her gaze had settled a moment, so as not to be too obvious, and then started to slowly relax and tighten his abdominal plates. Each plate was a shimmering irregular polygon, like the shapes on a giraffe. He reflected a pulsing rainbow of colors, mostly reds to orange, then orange to yellow and light green.

Cecelia thought he looked like a jewel. Not like the common diamond, but more like an Ethiopian opal. She couldn’t help but stare at this beauty, his slowly moving light show. She stopped eating as she gazed. He could see that she was transfixed.

“I’m tired,” he said, and left.

She looked back at her messy plate. Her appetite had been lost in the repulsiveness of his mouth and the distraction of his beauty.

“My scared little toddler, I have a special dinner for you. We can celebrate your arrival, our baby friendship. And dare I say...” Aurelio stopped his words with a lilt, and turned to flash a little sliver of light over her eyes. “No, I better not.”

“What? What were you going to say?”

“Being here with you feels like a big mirror. You’re my mirror and I can get to know myself better. But I’m afraid you won’t understand me, that you’ll take it the wrong way. There are depths to the universe, my reality isn’t the world’s reality, it’s much more complex and mysterious.”

“Mysterious? I want to understand.”

“The mystery can wait, because here’s Ramone with your dinner delivery. Be a good little girl, and go get it, and lets enjoy some special time together.”

Cecelia went to the door, and brought back her meal with a small menu that said: Main Course —Shrimp

Tartar, Seabass with fig chutney and hibiscus salt, Wine Selection —Bodegas y Vineodos Alion. The shrimp tartar, with its shimmering transparent flesh, disgusted Cecelia.

“Look at us here, look at this meal, we’re just in a glorious movie. You must give up everything to experience everything. It’s quite expensive, I assure you, you don’t deserve something this special, but like an actress you get to eat what ever the character gets to eat. I have chosen to bless you beyond your capacity.”

“It’s raw,” she mewed.

“It’s like me, glowing and resplendent,” he paused and expanded his shiny abdominal plate, moving subtly to bring dapples of light into her eyes, “and always rejected.”

“Oh, I didn’t mean to....certainly you didn’t think I meant to hurt you.” Through the flashes of light, she could see the armored joints of his glass like legs, how they met around his belly. She thought of the crab legs she had torn apart to get to the meat, the soft flesh where the leg bent. He was so huge it was like looking through a microscope. His mouth parts, the fangs, the moist fleshy area behind the fangs, they way they pulsed and moved: her face showed her disgust and terror. She forced herself to smile through the pained look of fear and disgust.

“Everyone always hurts me. I was so hoping you would be different than all the others, they all...” Aurelio’s voice drifted off again.

She tried to relax her face, “I can be different, I am different!”

“You’ll just be an actress, so eat your dinner. You’ll see. It’s wonderful, even if you don’t like the looks of it at first. And the wine is simply the best. Please eat.”

Cecelia took a tentative bite of the shrimp, forcing a smile.

“Oh, no, you must have a bite with a little bit of everything on the plate, to stimulate your pallet. It will waken the universe and sing with every note of flavor. Only when we let everything go, can we receive everything.”

Cecelia carefully cut off a peice of meat, a bit of the greens, some chutney and a dip of the salt. He was right, it was an orchestra of flavor, but the texture was revolting. As she worked through squishy, slightly rubbery meat, she tried to focus on the flavors, Aurelio poured her wine, a small bit at first.

“Swirl it in the glass and then breathe in the depths of reality.”

She did. Her senses were taken to the next level. She focused on the scent, trying to look away from Aurelio’s face, which was so close to hers now. As his mouth moved she could see the bits of unidentifiable sinew pulsing with each word. Cecelia noticed that one of Aurelio’s pedipalps had been plucked clean of the hairs. A divot into its casing where every spear like hair used to be. She wanted to look more closely at where the hairs had been plucked, but this brought her gaze to the darker area where the fangs and pedipalps met. She guessed it was his mouth, but it didn’t match her idea of what a mouth was.

“Isn’t it orgasmic? When a person, a woman like you, can reach that state of bliss from a simple whiff, then you know you’ve reached the essence of humanity, the perfection of personality. My dear, you are so sweet and innocent, like a freshly plucked plum, so juicy and ripe.”

“A plum?”

“Here, enjoy some more wine,” he filled her glass.

Cecelia worked through her meal, trying to enjoy the flavors, trying to figure out how to perfect her personality in this experience. The shrimp was soft and gooey, and moved around her mouth unexpectedly.

“Can you tell me the mystery?” she said softly, trying to distract herself from the meal.

Aurelio poured her some more wine, “I’m afraid that you won’t understand.”

“I know, but how can I understand if you won’t tell me?”

“Will you promise to stay? To always be my friend? You won’t run from me?” he reached out and stroked her cheek carefully to brush his leg softly in the same direction as his little hairs so an not to poke her.

She shuddered at his touch, but like the tasting of the shrimp, she forced herself to tolerate, to even try to enjoy

it.

“You are revolted by my touch. Please, I need you to open up to me being the reality. I am the manifest of what things seem to be. In truth there is no you or me, there are only alternate waves of being.”

“You just startled me. I’m trying to understand.”

“I startle to create fear. I’m so misunderstood, it’s the mystery of my deep being. But I want what’s best for everyone; I want what’s best for you.”

“Let me try again.”

“It’s too soon,” he played her a little more.

“No, please. I want to understand.”

Aurelio poured her some more wine, “I’m in love with you! That’s it. I know it’s so fast, so impulsive, rash! But I can’t help it. I love you!”

“Oh!” Cecelia leaned back a little, pulling away from his touch.

“See, even you. My heart will be broken again, I will always lose.”

“No, I’m so sorry. It’s just so different,” she reached out and forced herself to put her hand on his leg, the little hairs pricking her hand.

He took that opening and reached out for her face, careful to brush her cheek with the grain of his hairs again. Aurelio sat, if putting his abdomen on the floor was sitting, and pulsed his mirrors gently and carefully so as to shine sparkles across her face and body.

As she looked down, the dabs of light moved across her skin and she felt beautiful in a new way that scared her. The wine was warming her body, her meal was just half eaten and the bottle more than half gone. With her head starting to feel heavy she leaned back, “I will try. I will be your friend.”

Aurelio leaned in, while his hind leg pulled the curtain closed. It was nearly dark in the room. He began to stroke her breasts. Cecelia put her hands to her up to ward off his touch, but he gently moved them away as he whispered again, “Friendship is the lie that lovers tell each other. To know the depths, you must know the inside. The end is always around us, so we must embrace the beginning.”

He continued to stroke her, and passed her the wine glass yet again. The sun dipped beyond the city casting the room into shadows. He touched her belly, he opened a few buttons. A stream of spittle dropped from his mouth onto her bare skin. Her hands were slimed as she fumbled to close the buttons. He stroked her cheek again, while unbuttoning the rest. He touched her lips, not being able to simulate the kisses that he had watched from his captors: Bonito and Teo.

Cecelia’s mind was a wind of conflicting thoughts. She was muddled from the wine, her fear was rising, and her logic was trying to grasp at Aurelio’s reasoning. “Stop, please stop,” she pushed the words out of her mouth.

“Please, no. Please don’t reject me again.”

“I don’t want to do this. I don’t know what we’re doing even. What are you?”

“Don’t use those hurtful words. Can’t you accept me as I am? The wave of my being, to be one with your wave.”

“I’m trying, but this…” she tried to see him in the dark, “this, I don’t know what it is we’re doing.”

“I’m loving you, my dear. Accept that, accept me.”

Cecelia noticed a wetness on her face, running down her cheeks. She reached up and realized that it was tears.

My dear reader, we must turn our eyes away at this point. We have already invaded Cecelia’s privacy more than we should have. But you must know that Aurelio took her against her will, confusing her all the while by performing the role of a practiced and gentle lover. He knew that to possess her body, he would also possess her mind.

He left her there, alone as she rolled over and tried curled up. She reached for her clothes, but couldn't find them. He had taken them away with him, because he could do what he wanted. She pulled the hammock up, and tried to conceal herself. Her body was stiff and corpse-like again, but this time it felt hard to move because of trauma, her mind full of despair and confusion. She cried at the thought that he had made her body respond, that in that moment he had more control over her than she did.

A few blocks away, Jordi was pulling out a broken high heel from the grate, and examining the shred of fabric that came out with it. Even though it was dirty, he smelled the small strip. It smelled of her.