

Begonia {part seven}

by Emily Sparkles

Princess Isabella had given up trying to converse with Mezereon as they continued to flee from the clearing. She was not certain where they were going, for they had entered into the woods from the far side of the stream; to her disappointment they were going farther away from her home at the castle, and even away from the dragon's expansive cave.

It hadn't taken her long to learn during their flight how to make the most of being carried by a flying dragon. He held her in his scaly front arms against his chest, like a mother cradling her infant. As much as she wanted to watch their progress, to somehow keep track so she could find her way home again, the wooded surroundings held far too many snapping branches. She turned around as well as she could and snuggled her face into the dragon's chest.

Swoosh, swoosh, swoosh, swoosh; the rhythmic thrust of Mezereon's wings... *Th-Bumm, th-bumm, th-bumm*; the drumming of his heart... *Hooou, hooou, hooou*; the exhalations of his breath... *Swoosh, th-bumm, hooou, th-bumm, swoosh, hooou*; Isabella was lulled to sleep without hardly realizing it.

* * *

The girl awoke, and stretched her limbs before opening her eyes. Her heart leapt to her throat out of instinctive fear that she would fall from the dragon's arms, before she saw that she was laying on soft lime-green grass underneath a massive oak tree. As her eyes adjusted to the dim glow of twilight, she sat up and took in her surroundings. The area was lovely, as all of Begonia was, but she was unfamiliar with this particular spot. The trees did not grow as closely together, and she was sitting on an incline. A glance to her right gave her answer to where she was; looming a matter of yards away was the majestic purple rock face of Begonia's mountain side.

"How far we have traveled," Isabella thought. She tore her gaze away from the beautiful mountains and saw the enormous

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dragon sleeping close by. Her tender heart swelled as she watched his massive chest rise and fall. "And how tired you must be, Mezereon," she said aloud. "Flying so intently all the day long; fleeing from you knew not what." She sighed. Saying such truths aloud brought her mind to her situation yet again. What *was* the dragon so afraid of? She knew from being held in his strong arms that his claws were like thick stone jousting points; his teeth like the fiercest, sharpest daggers that her soldiers carried. Not to mention his scaly skin, which was sure to be more effective than any chain mail. Her thoughts then wandered to where he was taking them, and with them came fear of her own. She began to pray as her parents had taught her; speaking openly and honestly with her Lord. Not much time had passed before the princess felt her God was showing her something. So clear was this truth that she jumped to her feet; "Thank you, Father!" she said out loud. Her movement and words awakened the dragon. With a roar he was on his hind legs, head darting around. After seeing that all was well, he lowered himself down and faced the giggling Isabella.

"I'm sorry I startled you, Mezereon," she said.

"It...it is alright," said a puzzled Mezereon Starwort. The princess seemed joyful; when he had laid her beneath the tree to rest, he had feared she would awaken upset. After all, he had taken her even farther away from her home. He was searching for words to say to this girl, when she came to him and placed her hand on his snout.

"I do not know why you have brought me here, dragon. Nor do I know where you intend to go next. But I do know something; I understand fear. We are alike in that way; we both fear the unknown."

"I fear nothing!" Mezereon stated, his warrior-beast pride wounded. The girl was not impressed by his bravado, however, and maintained her kind smile as she looked into his eyes.

"I do not know where I will wake up tomorrow. I do not know if I will ever see my people again. Will my parents get well? Will I marry Prince Sage? Will I ever be at peace with letting

Coriander go? At one point, I was afraid that you would harm me, but I know now that is not so. And, Mezereon, my heart is glad that we have met. Perhaps the circumstances were unique, but it is good to know you. Do you see? My fear over you has been turned into something lovely.”

The dragon listened intently to her words; he trusted this creature for reasons beyond his ken. “How do you find this peace?” he asked.

“The Lord, Mezereon.”

