Forged by Malice (Beasts of the Briar #3)

The following will recap WITH MAJOR SPOILERS the events of Forged by Malice.

This is meant for anyone who has already read book 3 of the Beasts of the Briar series and would like a general refresher on the characters and events in the book. These summaries of characters and events are based on what is known by the end of Forged by Malice only. Any future reveals, details, or spoilers from subsequent books will not be included.

Also, please note this is a summary and touches primarily on the overarching events of the book. Specific details may not be included.

Important Characters:

Rosalina: Recently discovered she is half fae, mates with Keldarion and Farron, learned how to protect herself with a bow, believes she is mates with Dayton but no bond is discovered, believes that Caspian is her mate, is able to visit Keldarion in her sleep while he is in Winter (he can touch her, but her body is not actually there), able to control briars, known as the Golden Rose, discovers she is mates with Ezryn, able to use the Queen's bow without a token, blood relation to the Queen, taken captive by Kairyn on an airship

Keldarion: Prince of the Winter, in charge at Castletree, turns into a large icy wolf at night, has a bargain with Caspian that prevents him from breaking the curse, traveled to Winter to convince his uncle to become the steward of Winter and potentially the official ruler of Winter (passing the blessing), is able to see and feel Rosalina when she appears to him while she is sleeping (potential part of the wilde courtship), reveals that he and Caspian were in love, comes to Rosalina's aid when she is attacked, helps Ezryn when he loses control of his magic, chooses to defend Caspian against Ezryn at the end of the book

Farron: Prince of Autumn, researching an alternate explanation for why Rosalina can mentally communicate with Caspian other than him being her mate, fixes Caspian's journal from Rosalina, is asked by Caspian to find a way to make Caspian human, becomes upset with Rosalina when he finds out about her bargain with Caspian, notices the red flowers around Florendel are peculiar

Dayton: Prince of Summer, a chaotic yet charming man, known for his irresponsible sexual escapades and flirtatious nature, acts like nothing bothers him when in reality he feels deeply, is deeply upset when a mate bond does not develop between himself and Rosalina, hooks up with Rosalina and Farron, discovers he is mates with Wrenley at the end of the book

Ezryn: Prince of Spring, always wears his armored helmet (tradition dictates that only his mate and immediate family are allowed to see his face), is conflicted regarding his brother Kairyn, lifts Kairyn's banishment and places him as official Steward of Spring, lost control of the Spring blessing and accidentally killed his mother when she passed the blessing to him, is fearful of his own power, has healing magic, saves Rosalina from drowning and falling down a waterfall, is mates with Rosalina, prevents his curse from breaking after solidifying his bond with Rosalina, arrested for showing his face to those outside of his family and mate bond (and killing guards in the process who witnessed it), passes along the Spring blessing to Kairyn during his trial (for taking his helm off), Kairyn cuts off the points of his ears and banishes him from Spring, fights his way through the monastery to save Rosalina, is saved from Kairyn killing him by Caspian

(who then promptly kills Ezryn's father), Ezryn tells Keldarion he will never see him again after Keldarion defends Caspian

Caspian: Prince of Thorns, a menace, in control of the thorns in Castletree, can travel through the thorns, from the Below (where the goblins are from), has an old bargain with Kel that prevents him from breaking the curse, former friend to the four high princes, when on the surface for too long black rot comes from his eyes, nose, and mouth, asks Farron to help him find a way to become human, was once the great love of Keldarion, mate to Rosalina (Rosalina does not know for sure, but confirmed by Rosalina's imprisoned mother at the end of the book)

Astrid: Younger Castletree staff from the Winter realm, turns into a white hare at night, transformed into a bird at the end to travel to Castletree with Marigold and Eldy

Marigold: Older Castletree staff from the Spring realm, turns into a raccoon at night, slightly feral over the attractive princes (and not afraid to make a slightly inappropriate remark about them to Rosalina and Astrid), has a long standing romance with Eldy (majordomo of Spring Keep), transformed into a bird at the end to travel to Castletree with Astrid and Eldy

Dominic (Dom) & Billy: Twins, Farron's younger brothers, younger princes of the Autumn Realm, with George on his journey across the Enchanted Vale, able to send messages to Rosalina about George and their journey

George: Rosalina's father, eccentric and believed Rosalina's mother was taken by faeries, met Rosalina's mother on an archeological dig, decides to travel around the Enchanted Vale in search of Rosalina's mother, becomes ill during his travels, his life is tied to Castletree

Perth Quellos: Former Winter Realm advisor, rescued from imprisonment by Sira, resides in the Below, experimenting with plants and on goblins

Kairyn: Banished second-born prince of Spring, Ezryn's younger brother, wears an owl-like helm, banished for losing the Rite challenge against Ezryn after he took the Spring blessing and became high prince of Spring, works with The Nightingale and the Below to take power in Spring, blames Ezryn for the death of their mother, passes judgment that Ezryn should be banished from Spring and pass along the Spring blessing (now the new high prince of Spring), fights Ezryn and nearly kills him, takes Rosalina captive on an airship

The Nightingale: Caspian's adopted sister, has blue eyes, leader of Below army, has worked to usurp Spring through Ezryn's banished brother, attempts to kill Ezryn and Rosalina, commander of the Dread Knights, makes potions, has a complicated

relationship with Caspian (competitive with him yet will patch him up), created a potion to sever the connection to magic

Wrenley: A Golden Acolyte from the Queens Reach Monastery, has blue eyes, spotted by Ezryn in the Below during Caspian's party when he mistook her for Rosalina, often around Florendel, is originally from Summer, brings red flowers to Rosalina's bedroom, proclaims to be mates with Dayton at the end through a will-o'-wisp

Sira: Queen of the Below, Caspian's mother, serves the Green Flame, left the crowns with the green stones for Perth Quellos to find, freed Perth Quellos in order to use him to further serve the Green Flame, keeping the Queen captive

Summary of Forged by Malice:

Taking place about six weeks after the events of Woven by Gold, Castletree is suffering from a lack of magic as Keldarion, Dayton, and Farron frequently leave to their respective realms. Ezryn is left to stay at Castletree with Rosalina, but he disappeared into the briars and has not checked in. All four princes return to Castletree and feed magic to the roses. Farron and Rosalina are inseparable; from their research, this is due to the wilde courtship, which causes mates to desire each other more than usual early in their bond. Ezryn apologizes to Rosalina for leaving her and confides about his mother's death and his fear of hurting those he cares about. Rosalina uses her bargain with Caspian to practice summoning a thorn bow to protect herself, but Dayton also helps her learn to shoot a real bow and arrow. Caspian appears in Rosalina's room in the middle of the night searching for the grimoire she took from him (that he stole from Autumn) and she confronts him about the briars. She suspects that the briars are helping Castletree rather than harming it. Caspian swears her to secrecy about this secret.

Ezryn decides he must return to Spring the next time Keldarion and Farron leave, leaving Dayton with Rosalina. Goblins with a green flame attack Castletree, cornering Rosalina in the library and Dayton in his bedroom. The goblins reveal they are searching for Keldarion's Sword of the Protector and bear high quality, Spring forged steel swords. Following the goblin attack, Rosalina and Dayton hook up, believing there is a possibility they are mates. Unfortunately, no mate bond connects them. They decide to travel to Spring to warn them about the goblin's swords.

In Spring, Ezryn arrives to find that his younger brother, Kairyn, has left his banishment to the monastery and has self-proclaimed himself the Steward of Spring. Kairyn was banished shortly after Ezryn was passed the Spring Blessing from their mother. Ezryn's mother died after passing the Blessing to Ezryn. Kairyn accused him of murdering their mother and invoked the Rite, which is a physical and magical challenge for the crown and the Blessing. Kairyn lost. Ezryn decided to banish his brother rather than unhelming him or killing him. Ezryn demands that Kairyn return to the monastery to await his judgement for breaking his banishment. Back at the monastery, Kairyn plots alongside The Nightingale and Caspian. The Queens Army, who are to wait for the return of the Queen and only loyal to her, now serve Kairyn as well. They have the divine weapons in their armory, which can only be wielded safely by those with the Queen's tokens (the necklaces all worn by the high princes).

Keldarion is in the Winter realm attempting to convince his uncle to take the crown and Winter blessing from him. Keldarion shows his uncle his beast and understands that this offer would require him to stay in Winter to protect the chasm in his uncle's place. His uncle is not convinced and claims Keldairion was meant to rule. Back in Spring, Farron joins Dayton, Ezryn, and Rosalina. Rosalina meets Tilla, Keldarion's former fiancé and a blacksmith, when they inquire about the goblins having access to Spring forged steel. Tilla and Rosalina have an amicable conversation about Kel and she gifts Rosalina her first Spring armor: a pair of bracers.

Rosalina, Dayton, and Farron travel up the mountain to visit the monastery next. On their way up, they see the acolyte Wrenley being attacked by goblins and Dayton saves her after she falls into the river. Dayton takes her back to the castle while Farron and Rosalina continue up to the monastery. Ezryn is there to punish Kairyn for breaking his banishment. Rosalina wanders away to examine the art and runs into Kairyn, who gives her a tour and further explains the stories of the Queen. Ezryn considers all the positive contributions that Kairyn has made to Spring and decides to lift his banishment rather than punish him further.

Through some unexplained magic, Rosalina is able to visit Keldarion while he is away in Winter when she is dreaming. Both times this occurs, things get steamy between them. Rosalina suspects it is some feature of the wilde courtship, even though they have not completed their bond. Farron encounters Caspian, who requests that Farron help him find a way to make him human. Farron mends Caspian's journal from Rosalina (that he previously destroyed). Ezryn takes Rosalina to the site where his mother died, but they end up inhaling pollen from purple flowers and hallucinating. Rosalina uses water to clear her mind, but not before she witnesses Ezryn's hallucinated memory of his mother dying. Soon after, The Nightingale attacks Rosalina and Ezryn with goblins, Dread Knights, and a monster from the Below. Caspian drags Keldarion to Spring to save Rosalina. The five princes and Rosalina fight the monster until Sira appears and drags them all to the Below. Sira steals the prince's tokens and reveals the details of Keldarion and Caspian's bargain, as well as the bargain between Rosalina and Caspian. Eventually, Rosalina uses the briars to return herself and the four high princes to Castletree. She attempts to bring Caspian along as well, but he must remain in the Below. He is punished harshly by Sira's command, only saved when The Nightingale steps in.

Back at Castletree, the four high princes and Rosalina argue about all they learned. Rosalina gets news from Farron's brothers that her father has fallen ill. Keldarion and Ezryn comfort Rosalina while Farron and Dayton find comfort in one another. With the bargain out in the open, Keldarion admits that he loves Rosalina, but cannot complete the mate bond for fear of the bargain sending Rosalina to the Below, bound to Caspian. They return to Spring. Ezryn visits with Kairyn and his father. He grants his brother the official stewardship for Spring. Rosalina, back in her bedroom in Spring, frets over news about her father being ill and catches up with Astrid, Marigold, and Eldy (the castle's majordomo). Wrenley appears and brings red flowers to Rosalina's room. Soon after, Rosalina, Astrid, Marigold, and Eldy all feel the overwhelming urge to climb the mountain and jump. Before they reach the ledge, Rosalina throws herself and Eldy into the river and splashes Astrid and Marigold. Once their minds are cleared, Rosalina is unable to escape the river and transforms Eldy into a bird. Eldy finds Ezryn and reports that Rosalina is in danger.

Ezryn saves Rosalina from falling down the waterfall and takes off his helm to revive Rosalina. It is here that they discover they are mates. Ezryn's curse begins to break, but he fights the magic in fear that he will not be able to control the magic and might accidentally hurt Rosalina. His face is beheld by Spring guards and they attempt to arrest him. Ezryn's magic

creates a storm that only Keldarion is able to break through to save him. Rosalina is injured by the storm and saved by Farron and Dayton. Ezryn is shamed and stands trial for being unfit to rule Spring after breaking his vow (regarding his helm), as dictated by tradition.

Kairyn turns the people of Spring against Ezryn after revealing that Ezryn is the cause of their mother's death. He strips Ezryn of his title, the Spring Blessing, cuts the points of Ezryn's ears off, and banishes him from Spring. Farron notices peculiar red flowers and separates from the group to investigate. When the group leaves the city limits, The Nightingale appears alongside soldiers bearing the divine weapons. They beat and leave Ezryn for dead, capture Keldarion and Dayton for Kairyn, and kidnap Rosalina. When Rosalina next wakes, she is in the monastery and cannot access her magic, thanks to a potion brewed by The Nightingale. Ezryn is patched up by Astrid, Marigold, and Eldy. He takes his mother's sword and fights his way through the monastery to save Rosalina. Rosalina realizes she is able to use the Queen's divine weapon without a token because she shares blood with the Queen. They return to the castle to rescue the others and Ezryn's father. Meanwhile, Keldarion and Dayton are saved by Wrenley. She tells them that the pollen from the red flowers all throughout the city turn individuals into mindless puppets that serve Kairyn. Goblins have invaded the city while it is under the influence of the pollen. Farron, Dayton, and Wrenly join forces with Tilla to escape. Keldarion joins Ezryn and Rosalina to save Ezryn's father.

Ezryn, Keldarion, and Rosalina's rescue efforts are intercepted by Kairyn and the Queen's Army. Kairyn and Ezryn are locked into battle, but ultimately Ezryn is saved by Caspian, who appears just in time. Ezryn's father is afflicted by some magic that is transforming him into a monster and Caspian kills him with a thorn to the heart. Rosalina uses her briar magic to return Ezryn, Keldarion, and Caspian to Castletree, but is unable to escape herself. She is captured by Kairyn. Back at Castletree, Ezryn attempts to kill Caspian in retribution for his father, but Keldarion defends Caspian. Stating that Keldarion has made his choice clear, Ezryn vows to never return. Farron, Dayton, Wrenley, and Tilla observe an airship headed toward Summer. Farron detects Rosalina aboard. Wrenley reveals that she and Dayton are mates when she beholds a will-o'-wisp connecting them.

The story ends with us learning that the Queen has been imprisoned by Sira. Caspian has been in contact with the imprisoned Queen and helping her by protecting Castletree and her daughters. She reveals that Caspian is Rosalina's mate.