

Chapter One

“What would you say if I told you I could make your deepest fantasies come true?”

Danice Carter snorted over the rim of her martini glass. “Been there, done that, and I wasn’t impressed.”

The man sitting next to her at the bar frowned. “I was being serious.”

“So was I.” Danice finished off her second Cosmo and figured it was about time to call it a night. The co-worker who had been planning to meet her here for dinner had just called and said she couldn’t make it, and Danice wasn’t in the mood to eat alone.

“You don’t believe me.” The blond sitting next to her didn’t look drunk, but judging by the amount of Bushmills he had consumed in the hour since he’d arrived, he had to be. He certainly had the persistence of the truly sotted. “You don’t understand that I can do exactly what I say. You don’t understand that I can give you your deepest desires.”

“And you don’t understand that you are just not my type, sweetie.” She scooped her cell phone off the bar and stood. Time to head home to her empty apartment for some real peace and quiet. “Sorry.”

“Wait. You can’t leave. You don’t understand what I’m telling you.”

He grabbed her arm. If she weren’t feeling mellow and a little sorry for the guy, he’d have taken it away minus a few fingers. Instead, she just stared pointedly at his ridiculously pale hand against her café-au-lait complexion and raised her eyebrows. “Excuse me?”

“I have powers. I can sense your fantasies and make them come true.”

“Right. Sure you can. Now, why don’t you let go of my arm before I have to tell the bartender to call the cops, okay?” She tugged on her arm, but he held firm.

“Just wait. I’ll prove it.”

She started to roll her eyes, but when they met his, they froze in place. He had green eyes the color of old-fashioned glass bottles, with an intensity that sent a shudder through her for no reason she could fathom. He really *wasn’t* her type. She’d noticed him when he walked into the bar behind her and had a silent giggle over him, because he looked like he’d just come away from a Tolkien convention. About six-foot tall, he looked skinny as a rail, with the sort of gangly height that should have made him awkward, but he carried it with unexpected grace. Still, he wore his pale blond hair nearly brushing his thighs, with the sides pulled back into two braids, exposing the surprisingly realistic prosthetics he wore to make his ears look pointy. Anyone who spent that much time pretending to be a fictional character was not the man Danice was looking for.

When she tried to look away, she found she couldn't. Those green eyes held hers, like they exerted some weird force. They seemed to look deeper inside her than anyone had a right to do, and she didn't like the sensation. No one should be able to have this hold over her, unless they used magic.

She looked away and dismissed the idea with a nervous laugh, but she couldn't help feeling like he'd been the one to break the spell, not her. After her good friends Reggie and Missy had succumbed to another side of the supernatural and ended up in love with men who shouldn't have existed, Danice didn't like the possibility that magic, too, might be a little too real for comfort.

"Look, it's a flattering offer, kid, but I just don't think it would work between us. I've never even read *The Silmarillion*." She flashed him a grin and tugged hard, freeing her arm from his grasp. "Thanks for the offer."

She turned and walked quickly toward the door, ignoring the uneasy feeling creeping between her shoulder blades. Maybe she shouldn't have had that second drink, after all.

"Oh, you will be thanking me for a bit more than an offer, fair Danice." His voice was mocking and soft and much too close for comfort. "And you'll be doing it before the sun is fullrisen this morning. Best you mark my name, so the thanks might be a proper one. Know to whom you owe your gratitude, lass. And that's to Jack Green."

She whirled around, ready to confront the guy and threaten him with the cops, only to see him still seated on his barstool. Thirty feet away.

Her eyes widened, and she stared for one long minute, knowing that in the new version of her reality—where her friends married vampires and werewolves, and had other shapeshifters over for dinner—a lot more things were possible than she'd ever thought before. Maybe this guy was magical, but either way, Danice had no interest in finding out what he meant. In this instance, retreat was the best part of valor.

Stomach knotted but chin high, she spun back around and pushed herself out the door. It was definitely time to head home where she could pretend none of this had ever happened, and where the closest she got to magic was flipping past the latest "Magic Secrets Revealed" special on TV.

Chapter Two

He slipped into her dreams like a wraith, but his body felt warm and substantial against her skin. He curled around her, a firm, living blanket pressed against her back, his large frame making her feel tiny and protected as he wrapped his thick arms around her and snuggled her closer.

Danicesighed and stretched a little, arching her back to press her behind against the erection that prodded her. That felt hot and a good bit more than substantial. Her sleep-fogged brain tried to latch

onto something about the moment that seemed off, but he distracted her with a soft, rousing kiss, placed just behind her ear where the skin was fragrant and sensitive. “Mmm.”

He matched her murmur with a low rumble that sounded an awful lot like a purr. His tongue flicked over the curve of her jaw, traced its way up to the lobe of her ear and teased for a moment before his teeth closed delicately over the plump flesh. He nibbled, and her murmur became a moan.

The arm around her waist tightened in a brief hug before his hand slipped over bare skin to close around a sleep-soft breast. It firmed against his palm, the nipple drawing into a tight bead and taunting his cupped fingers. They closed around the small nub, squeezing gently, tugging in time to the nibbling at her ear. His other arm shifted, and she felt the scrape of a callused hand over her hip and belly before long, lean fingers cupped possessively over her mound.

She sighed, the sound shivering through the darkness. Sleep still cradled her, drowsy and secure, but the sensation of her lover’s touch turned the lazy feeling into a sort of spell, holding her in place, making her unwilling to pull away. She’d much rather get closer. Shifting, she tried to turn over in his arms to face him. His hands tightened to hold her in place, and she frowned.

He shushed her murmur of protest, nipping lightly at the curve of her shoulder. His large hand kneaded her breast, taking her mind off his refusal to allow her to change position. Then the hand between her legs slid down and took her mind off of everything else. Strong, lean fingers combed through the small patch of curls and dipped, parting her folds and burying themselves in her wet heat.

Instinct arched her hips toward his touch. Her clit burned and ached with need, but he avoided it. Two fingers eased her lips apart, finding her opening and rimming it with delicate pressure. A gasp escaped her lips, and she squirmed against him. His cock pressed hard and hot against her buttocks, and she canted them so the shaft rode the crevice between. She reached up behind her to pull him closer, her fingers tangling in a mass of silky soft hair, surprisingly long and wonderfully thick. He resisted her attempts to guide him, making a soft tisking sound against her ear. His hand lifted from her breast, and he laced their fingers together, holding them together as he shifted, rolling to his back and pulling her over on top of him.

The blankets slid away, cool air caressing her erect nipples, chilling her fevered pussy when he insinuated his legs between hers and forced her thighs to spread wide around his. She lay atop him, fully open to his touch, feeling the shift and play of his chest cradling her back. He purred again, the sound rumbling in her ear as he nuzzled it and planted kisses in the sensitive hollow beneath.

“Sweet,” he whispered, his breath another caress. The hand between her legs shifted, two fingertips pressing against her opening, sliding easily within. “Soft.”

She gasped and arched, trying to draw him deeper inside her. “Hard.”

His mouth curved against her skin, and his fingers thrust suddenly harder inside her. Danice cried out. Her pussy clenched around the sudden invasion, the ripple of internal muscles making her shudder. She shuddered even more when his fingers twisted, screwing deeper, scraping delicately against inner walls. “Hmm, like that?”

His voice was a dark rumble that made her shiver above him. Or maybe that was his fingers. “Just like that.”

He chuckled, and his fingers pulled away. Her hips followed him, greedy for his touch. He gave it back with three fingers, stretching and filling her until her breath caught in her throat. “How about like this?”

She could only gasp.

He withdrew, thrust again, establishing a slow, driving rhythm. As in driving Danice right over the edge. Her fingers tightened in his hair, and she braced her heels against the mattress to get more leverage. She couldn't decide if she should use it to press closer, or to get away. He untangled his fingers from hers and shifted his free hand to close again around her breast, thumb flicking over the distended nipple, and that pretty much decided things for her.

"Please." Her voice was a moan, a plea, a subtle threat.

He chuckled again, but his fingers drove deep into her wet cunt, and his thumb rubbed tight circles around her clit. "Please, what?"

"Don't...give me that...shit," she growled, yanking hard on his hair. "You know what I want. Just fuck me."

She felt his hands still. For a moment, she wondered if he intended to leave her. His hand slid from between her legs, and she cried out, but he just shifted his grip to her sides. He lifted her enough to position himself, then brought her hips down, easing her closer as he pressed slowly and relentlessly inside.

She froze.

Breathhalting on a ragged sigh, she stilled every muscle she could to savor the moment of his first penetration. She felt the burning stretch as he eased past her tight entrance, the endless, breathless parting as he tunneled deeper. Time stopped while he made a place for himself inside her, and it didn't move forward until he hilted, every last inch of his cock gripped snug in her moist heat.

And, oh, but there were a lot of inches.

Her head tipped back against his shoulder, and her eyes flew open in the darkness. The lack of light blinded her, but she didn't need to see when she could feel so damned well.

"This then," he said, voice growling against her ear. "This is what you wanted. Me, inside you."

"Yesssss."

"Then you should give me something I want in return."

Her teeth clenched against the rush of sensation as he guided her hips up off his shaft, then back down to receive his return thrust. "What do you want?"

His fingers tightened, hard enough to leave bruises against her caramel skin. "I want you to scream for me."

He punctuated the demand with a jerk that forced her harder against him and butted the head of his cock against her womb. She didn't scream, but she moaned, and he seemed to take it as a challenge.

Over and over, he lifted her as easily as a rag doll, forcing her to ride his cock as he pounded his hips up against her ass. Helplessly, she let him, their position preventing her from taking any sort of control over

their primitive mating. All she could do was clench her fingers in his hair and moan, tightening her inner muscles around him on every thrust, milking his cock with her cunt. But those contractions affected more than her lover. They shuddered through her womb, making her hotter and wetter so that he glided inside her as if he'd been born to be there. She quivered and arched, her free hand closing around her own breast, kneading the flesh and pinching hard around her aching nipple. The rough sensation barely fazed her. It felt like a tickle compared to the driving, digging rhythm between her thighs.

“Not good enough.” His voice sounded rougher this time. Control was abandoning him, as well. His breath panted, and he, too, sounded as if he spoke through clenched teeth. The thought made her smile smugly.

“I said...”

His hands shifted, one sliding lower to get a firmer grip on her hip, the other reclaiming its place between her legs.

“...I want you...”

Shemoaned, the sound high and sharp, almost like a squeal as he spread her folds and found the plump flesh of her clit. She was swollen with arousal and sensitive to the slightest brush of air, let alone the brush of his fingers.

“...to *scream* .”

His fingers closed around her clit, pinching firmly, and scream she did.

She came like lightning striking, all heat and energy and pyrotechnic glory. Her whole body clenched in a spasm of ecstasy. Her pussy closed hard around his cock, squeezing until she thought she heard him cry out himself, but then she felt the hot pulse of his release, and she lost what little awareness she'd managed to hold onto. For hours it seemed she balanced on the head of a pin, buffeted by wave after wave of pleasure. Her breath came in gasping pants, roughening a throat already raw from her hoarse cry of completion, and every inch of her trembled as if electricity really did course beneath her skin.

She finally collapsed on top of him, limp and breathless. Her hand had clenched so tightly in his hair that it took a minute to convince the fingers to stop spasming and let go. She heard him grunt and felt the whisper of his breath against her ear as he wrapped his brawny arms around her to cradle her against him. She folded her arms over his, savoring his warmth and the thick ropes of muscle that had enabled him to move her so effortlessly for his pleasure. Fighting back a shiver of remembrance, she turned her head to rest her cheek against his chest and rub kitten-like against his warm skin.

Sleep came back to claim her, and she struggled briefly to fight it off. As comfortable and sated as she felt, she had that nagging feeling in the back of her mind that told her something was out of place. Something she needed to pay attention to...

Grunting, her lover stretched his hand over the side of the bed and returned with the forgotten blankets, pulling them up over their still-joined bodies. Danice felt her muscles relax even further and sighed. Maybe whatever she had forgotten wasn't all that important after all.

He turned his head, brushing soft kisses over her forehead and her closed eyelids before he pressed his lips softly to hers in a tender, almost innocent, kiss. “Go to sleep,” he murmured, shifting slightly beneath her. “We'll both still be here in the morning.”

Well, since he put it that way...

Danice gave one last sigh, snuggled back into his embrace, and let sleep claim her. Whatever she needed to do, she could always do it in the morning.

Chapter Three

She woke the moment he stirred from their sleepy cuddle. Her eyes flew open and that “something” she hadn’t been able to remember last night became the only thought in her frantic mind.

Danice didn’t have a lover, so who the hell had she been screwing last night?

Scrambling off the pile of muscle and testosterone she’d been draped over for the last God-knew-how-many hours, Danice grabbed the sheet to cover herself and turned on the strange man in her bed. He watched her through wary eyes the color of a stormy sea and sat up, bracing himself with his big hands against the cotton-covered mattress. A waterfall of thick, golden hair cascaded over his shoulders and down to the center of his back.

“Who the hell are you?”

She wasn’t sure which one of them said it, or if they both did, but it didn’t matter. Apparently they both needed the answers. “You first.”

He pushed himself all the way up and propped his back against the headboard. “Mac. McIntyre Callahan. You?”

“Danice Carter.” She knew she sounded snappish, but really, who could blame her? It wasn’t every day she woke up on top of a man she’d never met. “What the hell are you doing in my apartment?”

He glanced around, then looked back at her with his eyebrows raised. “I don’t think this is your apartment.”

“What do you mean? Of course it’s my—” She caught sight of the door with its “Security Procedures” posting on the back, and her jaw dropped. “Oh my God. We’re in a hotel.”

“Looks like.” He bent one leg toward his chest, draping his forearm over the knee. Danice tried not to wonder if his knee was the only thing tenting the sheet that covered his lap. “What I’d like to know is, why?”

Her gaze snapped back to his face. “I want to know how. How did you get me here without my knowing what was going on? Did you drug me?”

He snorted. "Only if you drugged me back, baby, 'cause I don't remember a bit of it. Which leads me to believe I know the how, and brings me back to wondering about the why. "

She stared at him, thoroughly confused. "How?"

McIntyre shrugged. "Magic."

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"Magic?"

Mac watched her nose wrinkle as if saying the word left a foul taste in her mouth. For all he knew, maybe it did.

"Yeah. Magic," he repeated. He hated having to be the one to shatter the illusions of humans, but in this case, it didn't look like he had much choice. "It's real. So are all sorts of things you've always thought only existed in fairy tales and badmovies. I hate to break it to you, but Manhattan is full of vampires and werewolves and things that go bump in the night."

He waited for her eyes to widen, for shock to make her pale under that lickably dusky skin, but she just watched him through her exotic, almond-shaped brown eyes. "I know," she said.

All of a sudden, his eyes were the ones widening. "You know?"

"About the vampires and werewolves. About the whole Council of Others," she said, kicking the foundation out from under his planned approach to handling this situation. "My two best friends just married a couple of them, a vamp and a Lupine. But no one said anything about magic."

That surprised a laugh from him. "You don't think that's magic?"

She shook her head. "No. Magic is spells and incantations and wands and pixie dust, right? I just figured the Others were a different branch on the ol' evolutionary tree."

Mac stared at her, absolutely fascinated. Not only did this woman have a body that drove him insane and a pussy he'd be dreaming about for the rest of his life, but she knew all about the other side of reality. It almost left him speechless, but since she stared at him, obviously expecting an answer, he dredged up the power somewhere to refute her supposition. "Well, they are, sort of, but that doesn't mean magic doesn't exist. I don't know what your friends and their... spouses have been telling you, but there are a lot more things in this world than just vamps and shapeshifters. In fact, there are more worlds than just this one. And even in this one, there are certain... people with the power to do magic."

Her eyes narrowed in suspicion. "Are you one of them? Did you magic us here somehow?"

He shook his head. "No way. I mean, I've got some talents, but this is beyond me. Teleportation is reserved for those of pure blood, not mutts like me."

Her gaze raked over him—from the top of his head, over his bare, hairless chest, to the sheet that covered his lower body. "You don't look like any of the Lupines I've met."

His mouth quirked in a half-smile. “Not that kind of mutt. I don’t mean I’m a werewolf. Mutt is a way of referring to someone who is part human and part something else.”

“What else?”

“Fae.”

He saw her frown, watched her chew over that thought until she found a bone. “Fae. As in fairy? The little people?”

“The fair folk,” he corrected quickly, casting a nervous glance around the room. “But yeah, like them.”

“You don’t look like any fairy I’ve ever heard of.”

“Faerie,” he said, changing her pronunciation slightly. “And how many have you seen?”

“None that I know of.”

“Most likely none. The fae don’t spend much time in Ithir. The human world. They think most humans are a bit simple.”

“Then how did you end up being half-human?”

He gave her a wry look. “I said most.”

“So one of your parents was... fae.”

He nodded.

“Then that makes you...”

“A changeling.”

“But you’re not powerful enough to have teleported me here from my apartment and yourself from wherever you were?”

She had a quick mind, which he liked. Almost as much as he liked her sweet scent and the silky texture of her skin. “Right. Only a pure blooded fae could manage that. Or an extremely powerful witch. Run into either of those lately?”

Danicesnorted. “Like I’d know if I had. I didn’t even know either of them existed until you told me.”

Mac sighed. “Then we’re back to square one. Trying to figure out what the hell is going on.”

He watched while her spine straightened and her chin tilted a few inches higher. “That might be your square one,” she said, wrapping the sheet she wore more snugly around her, “but my square one is to get dressed, get back to my apartment and forget this ever happened.”

Her words delivered a surprising sting, making Mac frown and shake his head. He might never have seen this woman before tonight, but the idea of her leaving made him realize he wanted to see her again. Preferably naked. In good lighting. He definitely did *not* want her leaving him, let alone forgetting about

him. He looked around the room while he tried to think of a way to stop her, and he found it. He felt the grin spread across his face like sunrise.

“Um, that might be a little tough,” he said, crossing his arms over his chest and leaning back against the headboard with a deep sense of satisfaction.

She scowled. “Why?”

“Neither of us seems to have any clothes.”

Chapter Four

Danicelooked at Mac, looked at the bare floor, the empty chairs, the sterile bathroom and back at Mac. Her eyes narrowed. “So make me some.”

He shook his head. “I can’t do that.”

“You said you could do magic. Is this suddenly too complex for you?”

“Okay, let me rephrase. I won’t do that.”

Danicestifled the urge to smother him with a feather pillow and took a deep breath. Contrary to her outspoken demeanor and forward reputation, she was *not* the sort of woman who woke up next to strange men on a regular basis. Men, yes, but she usually at least knew their names. Since this particular experience counted as a first for her, she figured the universe owed her a little leeway.

“Look,” she said, using her most reasonable, court-is-in-session tone, “I realize that what happened between us might have given you the wrong impression about me, but I’m not playing games here, and I want to go home. Now.”

Those blue-grey eyes had the nerve to look sympathetic. “Trustme, I know this isn’t a game. No matter what you might like to believe, I didn’t get us into this situation, and I have a sinking suspicion that I’m not going to be able to get us out of it, either.”

He rose from the bed and headed toward the hotel room door.

Danicesquealed. “What the hell are you doing? You’re naked!”

He grinned. “If you’re embarrassed, cover your eyes.”

And miss the sight of the finest male butt that had ever blessed her field of vision? She didn’t think so. But she still offered a protest when he threw back the security latch and pulled the door open onto nothingness.

Literally. There was nothing on the other side of the door, not a hallway, not a sidewalk, not a parking lot. Nothing. Not even sky. Just a great, blank grey space without a cloud to fill it.

Danice blinked and stared. "What is that?"

"Nothing."

"Well, I can see that. I meant, what—"

"No, really," Mac interrupted, gesturing to the grey space. "It's literally nothing. As I suspected, we're in limbo."

"Limbo is a mid-priced hotel room?"

Mac shut the door and turned back to face Danice, who had to struggle with every instinct and hormone in her body not to stare straight at his crotch. But she still noticed he had an erection. At that size, it became a little hard to miss.

"Not exactly." He waved away the bedspread she held out to him and stretched, gloriously nude, across the end of the bed where he could watch her. "If I'm right, we're not really in a hotel room. This is just a spell. An illusion to make us feel more comfortable while we're floating around in the grey stuff out there."

Dear Lord. Her head started to throb. "Then none of this exists? You're saying that we're really just floating around outside, and I'm not actually even wearing this sheet."

Mac grinned. "Exactly."

"Then you'd better damned well close your eyes, buddy, until we find a way back!"

He laughed and reached out to tug the sheet. "Relax. That's the theoretical part, but the reality is that our minds are both too human to not see all the things the spell wants us to see. For all intents and purposes, you're fully covered."

She sighed in relief. "Good."

"We could change that."

She should have smacked him for that, but he said the words so hopefully that she couldn't bring herself to do it. He was too charming for her own good. She forced herself to give him The Look. "Or we could not."

He pouted, and damned if it wasn't cute, too. "Well, what else do you suggest we do? I doubt we're going anywhere else anytime soon."

"How can you say that like it's no big deal? Aren't you the least bit curious to find out why we're here and who sent us here? I mean, I assume this wasn't some sort of spontaneous blip in my reality, because I'm pretty sure it's never happened before. So what the hell is going on?" She batted his hand away from the hem of her sheet. "And will you cut that out? I'm surprisingly unaroused by your insistence on using sex with me as a way to kill time!"

That was probably the last thing she should have said. His eyebrows lifted and an expression of surprised comprehension gave him a wicked look before it settled into a grin that was positively devilish.

“Is that what this is about? You think I only want to have sex with you because I have nothing better to do?” he purred, grabbing two handfuls of sheet and using it to pull her closer, close enough to grab and tumble onto the bed with him. “Because I’d be more than glad to show you how wrong you are about that.”

He loomed over her, a huge, golden presence with his hair falling like a curtain around them. She wanted to wrap herself up in that hair and feel the silky soft brush of it against her skin. Her fingers itched with the memory of its texture, and she bit back a groan.

His mouth quirked. “I’d enjoy showing you, Danice.” He settled his weight on top of her, bracing his forearms against the mattress and brushing her numerous tiny braids aside so he could cup her head in his palms. He tilted his hips more directly against her, and she felt his erection pressing against her belly until his heat seared her through the cotton of the sheet. Then he caught her gaze and winked, and all of a sudden, something ripped the sheet away, leaving nothing separating his skin from hers.

Danice gasped, but her legs shifted instinctively, parting just enough to allow his cock to nestle against the warmth between her thighs. She could feel exactly how much he’d enjoy showing her, and the thought threatened to drive her crazy.

She closed her eyes when he lowered his head, moaned when his tongue stroked over the curve of her jaw, danced down the side of her throat and flicked over her collarbone. Then he set teeth to skin and started nibbling, and a violent shudder quaked through her.

“In fact, there are a lot of things I’d like to show you, Danice.” His lips curved against her skin, feathered over lush curves and invaded sensitive hollows. “I’d like to show you the difference between a man and a changeling. The way subtle magic can make your skin come alive with feeling, or the way it can amplify each sensation until your nerves scream for respite.”

His hands shifted, stroked over her shoulders and beneath her body to cup her hips and urge them higher against him. “I want to teach you how to hear the voices of a thousand choirs of fae singing songs of ecstasy and want.”

His tongue flicked across her nipple and the nub immediately swelled and tightened for him. Between her legs, another nub began to swell, this one coated in the thick, sweet honey of her need. “I want you to know that for the fae, arousal is not a biological imperative, but a spiritual one. I don’t need you because I’m hard; I’m hard because I need you.”

His thighs urged her legs to part, and Danice gave up pretending to protest. She spread her legs in wide welcome and wrapped her calves around his lean waist. She hooked her ankles together behind his back and fisted both hands in his hair, pulling the length of it forward over his shoulders. The scent wrapped around her as surely as his body did, redolent of sandalwood and clove, moss and man. She brought a handful to her face, breathing in the scent of him before rubbing the strands against her cheeks like a yard of living silk. He chuckled, but she decided he could laugh at her all he wanted. She was too far gone to care.

His chuckle rumbled into a moan when she rubbed the sole of one foot high against his inner thigh, and became a growl when she untangled one hand from his hair and closed it over one firm cheek of his ass. She raked her fingernail lightly over the inner curve, and he shuddered, yanking her hard against him and

positioning himself so his cock knocked against her entrance, trembling for a chance to be inside her. She could almost hear the way he gritted his teeth in a desperate bid for self-control, and it gave her a small sense of satisfaction. At least she wasn't the only one in this bed who would kill to be fucked right now.

Arching her hips to take the very tip of his cock inside her, Danice opened her eyes into narrow slits and looked up at him with clear demand. "If you want to do all those things to me," she said, her voice raw and low with need, "why don't you stop talking about them and start doing them!"

Digging her heels into the small of his back, she clenched her hands in his hair and thrust her hips up toward him, hard and fast, forcing his cock deep into her waiting pussy.

"Lady!" His hoarse shout sounded as if it had been ripped from his throat, but it didn't sound much like a protest. The way he threw back his head and braced her for the quick shove of his hips didn't feel like a protest either. It felt like heaven as he forced every last inch of himself deep, filling her until she thought she could feel his cock nudging against her heart.

"More." She breathed the plea, barely a whisper, but he answered with a slow, intense rhythm that wound her tighter and tighter with every driving thrust. Her hands abandoned his hair and gripped his shoulders for support. She could feel the mattress shaking beneath her and the slick sheen of sweat coating his muscles and hers. She expected to see sparks where their bodies rubbed together, especially where the base of his shaft massaged her clit on each stroke. When he grunted and adjusted his position to slide a fraction deeper, her eyes flew open, and she swore she *did* see sparks.

She cried out, and he grunted an answer.

"Now!" he roared, as his big body tightened above her, and Danice happily obeyed, her own muscles spasming, pussy clenching to milk the cock that poured a flood of heat inside her.

His weight settled on top of her in a hard, sweaty heap, but she surprised herself by not caring in the least. The man might be part of the weirdest experience of her life, but he made a damned good blanket. She could have fallen asleep right there, if not for the naggingly familiar voice that shattered her peace.

"Well, I see we're not the least bit unhappy with where we've landed, now are we?"

Chapter Five

The voice, male and mocking and very faintly accented, startled Danice out of her relaxation and left her more than a little grumpy. Especially since it didn't come from the man currently draped half-on and half-in her bare-assed naked body. She and Mac both turned toward the window, wearing matching scowls and each other.

"Who the hell are you?"

Danicewincd. The idea that she'd asked that same question of two naked men in the last two hours left her feeling about half a step from Slutsville .

Jack Green smiled and shook his head. "Ah, how soon they forget. And so ungrateful, too. After all I've done for them."

Daniceshoved Mac aside and yanked the sheet up to cover everything that needed covering. "You're that weirdo from the bar!"

"Now that's not a nice thing to call someone, fair Danice ," Jack said. "Especially not someone who had your best interests at heart. Didn't I give you exactly what I promised?"

She took in the pointy ears she thought had been prosthetics, the long, long pale hair, the too-pretty looks and swore. Then she looked again and swore some more. Louder. And more creatively.

Mac frowned. "What's going on? Seoc , what did you promise her?" He turned back to Danice and caught her by the arm. "What did he do to you?"

She shrugged him off and batted his hand away. "What did you say? Do you *know* this guy?"

Her eyes narrowed as she watched him weigh his response.

"Yeah," he sighed. "I know him. He's fae ."

"Friend? Relative? Drinking buddy?"

Mac snorted. "None of the above. More like notorious pain in the ass. I said I knew him, not that I liked him."

Jack/ Seocclutched his heart and put on a wounded expression. "I'm cut to the core, McIntyre, that you would so cruelly deny me."

Daniceraised an eyebrow at Mac, crossed her arms over her chest and pursed her lips.

"Give me a break," Mac said. "You can't take him seriously, baby. He's just trying to make trouble. Again." He paused to glare at the fae , and Danice's foot began to tap impatiently on the carpet. " Seocis the nephew of the Queen of Faerie. He's a celebrity. Everybody knows him. Just because I know who he is doesn't mean I'm involved in whatever stunt he's pulled. That would be like me assuming you know Prince Charles personally just because you mentioned his name."

The foot stopped tapping, but her arms stayed crossed. "So, do you routinely address royalty as if you know them? And have the right to scold them?"

Mac snorted even louder. "When it's Seoc , I do. The Queen herself has encouraged people to call her nephew a moron. She thinks it might help it sink in if she's not the only one calling him that. Well, as long as you don't do it in front of her. Then she feels like it's her duty to defend him."

Danicerolled her eyes. "Sure. Great system."

"Hey, don't blame me. I didn't make it up. I don't even live in Faerie, and I've only ever been a couple of times. Traveling between the worlds is...discouraged. You need more than just a passport to get

through.”

“Then what is *he* doing here?” She jerked her chin at Jack/ Seoc.

“That’s exactly what I want to know.” Mac glared at the blond fae . “So why don’t you explain what you’re doing unsupervised in Ithir , Seoc . I’d really love to hear it.”

Seocwidened his eyes and tried to look innocent. For some reason, even Danice could see through the act.

“I have no idea what you’re talking about, McIntyre,” he said. “Technically, I’m not in Ithir . I’m in limbo, which is not restricted at all.”

“Start talking before I restrict your airflow,” Mac growled, pushing off the bed and stalking toward Seoc with a decidedly malicious glint in his eyes.

He got about two steps before Seoc jumped backward and waved a graceful hand in front of him. Before Danice’s disbelieving eyes, Mac froze in place, still in mid-step, with one big foot hovering a few inches from the floor.

“What the—?!”She watched while Mac’s face furrowed in a frown before it smoothed out into an enraged glare. “You little bogle -lover,” he hissed, looking ready to rip Seoc limb from limb, even as he balanced frozen on one foot. “Release me. *Now.*”

“No.” Seoc scowled and threw himself down into the room’s single armchair. “If I let you go, you’ll try and hurt me.”

“You’re damned right I will,” Mac growled. “I’ll make you hurt in ways you didn’t think were possible. And then when I’ve calmed down, I’ll hurt you some more.”

Danicecleared her throat. “Um, Mac, I don’t know if that’s quite the best way to persuade him to, uh... let you go.”

His eyes shifted sideways to include her in his line of fire. “And here I thought I was being so diplomatic,” he said, his voice going dangerously silky. “After all, I didn’t tell him what I’d do with his worthless little dick afterI —”

“You see!” Seoc threw his hands up in the air and turned to Danice . “You see what I have to deal with? This is why I’m always leaving home and skipping out on Faerie!Because I get absolutely no respect. I am the nephew of the Queen. I’m a prince! But does anyone ever treat me like a prince? Nooo-oooo. No one even calls me prince, and it’s my bloody title!”

Daniceblinked at the sudden burst of frustrated anger and took a wary step backward. “Um, wow. That... er, that is tough.”

“You bet your extremely attractive ass it is,” he grouched. “It’s intolerable! Even my aunt treats me like an irresponsible fool, and I won’t stand for it!”

“The Queen treats you that way because that’s the way you act,” Mac growled.“Maybe if you’d actually grow up and start taking an interest in doing something constructive, your aunt would start to treat you like a grown fae .”

Seocsneered. "What would you know about it, changeling? You're not even of pure blood. You might as well be human!"

"Hey!" Danice snapped. She might be in way over her head, but that didn't mean she didn't deserve a little respect, damn it!

"Sorry," Seoc mumbled. "It just gets me so upset. Imagine how you'd feel in my position. Every time you turn around, someone is there, just waiting for you to make a mistake so they can say, 'I told you so.'"

"Have you tried not making any mistakes?"

Daniceglared at her petrified lover. "Mac, everybody makes mistakes. Be fair."

"Exactly!" Seoccried, bursting into a grin so charming, Danice felt her own mouth begin to curve. "Is it any wonder I wanted to give you something special? I knew as soon as I saw you that you were the sort of human who might be able to understand things greater than yourself and your humdrum little human life. That's why I offered to give you your fantasies."

The smile slowly morphed into an expression so opposite that she even saw Mac's eyes widen in the periphery of her vision. "That's what this is about?" she asked carefully. "You used some sort of freaky magic power to whisk me out of my apartment and strand me in limbo in bed with a man I've never met and who could have turned out to be a rapist or a serial killer or something, and you think you did it because you liked me?As a favor to me?" She could feel herself shaking with the power of her anger. "Are you out of your teeny, tiny little faerie mind?"

And he even had the nerve to look shocked. "What? How can you say things like that?" he asked, practically whining. "I saw your fantasy when I was sitting next to you in the bar. You wanted a lover just like McIntyre. All I did was make your dreams come true. You should be thanking me!"

She drew a deep breath and waited for her rage to dull. It didn't, so she took a menacing step forward. "The day I thank you will be several lifetimes after I rip your entrails out of your stomach and use them to tell the future. You are beyond stupid. How dare you presume to poke uninvited into my mind!"

Seocpaled and drew back a hair. "But I gave you your fantasy!"

"No, you played an irresponsible game with my safety and my psyche, you nasty little imp."

She heard Mac's low whistle. "Ooh, that's low, baby. Imps are second-class citizens in Faerie. Actually, they aren't even that well liked. They're more like slug slime."

She smiled grimly. "Good. Then I made a fitting analogy." She took another step forward. "You know nothing about humans, except for your own prejudiced opinions about us, and you presume to tell me you were giving me a gift? What if I never wanted that fantasy fulfilled? What if you read mewrong, and I had actually been thinking of something I found personally distasteful? What about that, huh? Would you have cared? Would you have even noticed?"

Seocopen his mouth to protest, but she never let him speak.

"You are the most morally reprehensible person it has ever been my misfortune to meet," she hissed,

leaning forward until her braids fell over her shoulders and almost brushed against the hands he had clenched on the arms of his chair. "I ought to use my amusing little human mind to devise a fitting punishment for you, but I'm afraid the only ones I can think of now involve a lot of pain and bloodshed, and I have a delicate stomach!"

The fae's eyes had gone wide as dinner plates as he squeaked out a protest. "If you try and harm me, I'll freeze you just like I did the changeling. O-o-o-or I'll t-turn you into a...into a toad."

"Go ahead," she said, her lips curving in a snarl. "At least that way you'd have a kindred spirit around."

He lifted his trembling hand and Danice braced herself.

"Seoc! Try it, and I'll take a few minutes to beat you senseless before I bring you back to your aunt."

The deep, menacing and decidedly unfamiliar voice came from the door of the theoretical hotel room and had both Danice and Seoc jerking their heads around in surprise. A ridiculously tall, ridiculously well-muscled man stood just inside the door with one hand still poised on the knob and one hand on the hilt of a sword that was probably almost as long as Danice was tall. He had eyes greener than the color green, pointed ears, long, dark hair and a furious expression on his handsome face.

Danice straightened up and turned on him like the new target he was. "Oh, just what I need. *Another* strange man to see me naked. I've always wondered what it would be like to make it three in one night."

The green eyed, sword-wielding newcomer blinked at her, his glower changing to a look of confusion. "You're not naked," he pointed out, even gesturing with his sword. "You're wearing a—is that a bed sheet?"

"Um, she's a little sensitive about the whole clothes, no-clothes thing," Mac said from his immobile spot behind Danice. "I wouldn't dwell on it, if I were you."

Danice's head turned very slowly around until her gaze locked on Mac and made his eyes widen. "I'll deal with you later."

Before she could open her mouth to say another word, Seoc leapt up from his chair to face the newcomer with a childish look of defiance.

"I won't go back," Seoc said, planting his hands on his hips and putting his chin in the air. "I'm sick of the way everyone there treats me. No one gives me any respect, and I'm tired of it. I'd rather stay in Ithir. At least the humans don't try and tell me what to do."

"That's not an option," tall, dark and well-armed said. "The Queen sent me to fetch you—again—and that's what's going to happen. If you don't like it, you can take it up with your aunt."

Seoc's defiant pose crumbled, and he stomped his foot and whined like a three-year-old. "But she never listens! Last time you brought me back to her, she confined me to Faerie for months! I wasn't allowed to go anywhere interesting or do anything fun."

The other fae's eyes narrowed, but he sheathed his sword, which made Danice relax a little. "You'll be lucky she doesn't make it years this time," he said. "But if you try and run now, I'll only come after you. And when I find you, I'll make sure the Queen feels even less charity toward you than she does right now."

Danice could almost see that warning sink in to Seoc's thick skull. She watched his face sour, his posture relax and his shoulders sink before he shuffled reluctantly forward until he stood next to DangerMan.

"Fine," he pouted. "If that's the way you're going to be, then let's just get it over with."

The stranger grunted and put his hand on Seoc's shoulder to steer him toward the door.

"Hey! Are you forgetting about something?" Mac called, sounding seriously peeved. Not that Danice could blame him. If someone had paralyzed her for a good ten minutes, she'd probably be pretty anxious to get back to normal, too.

Seoc looked back at them and frowned. "Oh, right. Sorry about that. The spell holding you here will expire in a couple of hours, and you'll be back in the human's apartment. The halt spell I can do now." He snapped his fingers, shot the stranger one last disgruntled glance and they both left. Not through the door, because that would have been much too normal for the day Danice had been having. They walked *up* to the door, paused, and then just disappeared.

Chapter Six

Danice was still staring at the spot where they had been standing when she felt a pair of newly familiar hands settle on her shoulders.

"So, uh, are you still mad at me?"

"I haven't decided." Shrugging off his hands, she gathered up the trailing ends of her sheet and headed toward the door.

"Where are you going?" he demanded, and the genuine fear in his voice gave her a certain sense of satisfaction.

"Into the bathroom. I want to take a shower."

She stepped into the surprisingly spacious bathroom, turned on the water, dropped her sheet and began counting to ten. She made it to four, maybe four-and-a-half, before Mac pushed the door open and stormed inside.

"I was just as much a victim in this as you were," he said, glowering down at her. "I had no idea what was going on until this morning. Last night, I thought—hell, it felt so incredible to touch you that I didn't think at all. Go ahead and hate me for not being able to stop making love to you, but I want you to realize, you have no right to blame this on me."

She pushed the door closed behind him, then stepped into the shower. "I know."

“Maybe I should have made sure I wasn’t dreaming when I reached out and felt you curled up against me, but you were so—” he broke off his tirade and stared at her through the spray of steamy water. “You know?”

“I’m not stupid. I got that when Seoc confessed.” She picked up a paper-wrapped bar of soap, tore it open and threw the wadded up paper at Mac. It bounced off his chest while he stared at her, dumbfounded.

“Then why are you still mad at me?”

She almost felt sorry for him. Men could be so thick sometimes. “I didn’t say I was still mad at you. I said I hadn’t decided whether I was or not. But now I have. And I’m not.”

He blinked. “You aren’t?”

She rubbed the soap until she worked up a thick lather and began to massage the suds into the skin of her shoulders and chest. It took all her willpower not to grin when she saw his eyes follow the motions. “No. Oh, I’m still a little ticked, but not at you. You, I forgive, though I can’t pretend I might not bring this up occasionally in the future when you piss me off.”

He stood rooted to the spot, almost as if he’d been paralyzed again. Danice chuckled and shook her head, holding her hand out to him. He stared at it.

“Come on,” she encouraged. “If I’m not mad at you any more, that means we get to have make up sex.”

He stepped into the shower with her, wearing nothing but a dazed expression. She had to bite back a laugh.

“Make up sex?”

“Absolutely. Don’t tell me you’ve never heard of it.” She pressed her slick, damp body against his and tilted her face up so she could see him. “It happens right after the fight, but before the adrenaline has all burnt off. It can be quite an adventure.”

His laughter burst out of him, as if he’d just been released from another spell, and she felt his arms wrap around her to squeeze tightly and lift her straight up off the floor. “Is that right,” he rumbled. “Sounds intriguing, I’ll admit, but I think you’d better demonstrate. Just so I know what you’re talking about.”

She grinned and wrapped her legs around his waist, feeling his erection growing until it prodded against her insistently. “Well, normally I don’t give seminars, but I suppose in this instance I might be persuaded to make an exception.”

He captured her mouth with his in a consuming kiss. Tongue licking, teeth scraping, lips sucking, he kept at her until just that kiss was enough to make her body melt and ache for him. When she felt her moisture well up and rain all over him, she moaned. He pulled back with a grin. “I’d really appreciate it.”

Danice narrowed her eyes, licked her lips and shifted her weight so his cock prodded firmly against her entrance. “In that case,” she said, gathering herself up and then allowing herself to sink slowly down onto him, savoring the tense, relentless pressure of his penetration, “you’d better brace yourself.”

She heard him moan, then felt his arms shift to allow her to sink even further onto his cock. He thrust his hips up against her until he was buried inside her so deeply, she swore she could taste him in the back of her throat. She moaned softly and pressed her cheek against his shoulder, fisting her hands in his long, silky, dampening hair while the water beat down over them and her heart beat in a rapid, unsteady rhythm. She used the grip of her legs around him to raise herself up, shuddering at the reluctance of her own flesh to give up its grip on him. Then, unable to bear even that much separation, she let herself sink back down, enveloping his thick cock with a moan of relief. He let her repeat the motion once more before his hands clenched tight on her hips and jerked her hard against him.

“No,” he grunted over her breathy cry of pleasure. “I’d rather brace you.”

And he did, right up against the cold tile of the shower wall.

She yelped in shock and tried to squirm away, but he pinned her in place with the weight of his torso, grabbed her thighs to hitch them higher up around his waist and began thrusting.

Danice threw her head back, not even noticing when her skull thumped back against the tile hard enough to raise a lump. The only raising she cared about was the way tightening the grip of her thighs allowed her to raise herself higher up off Mac’s cock, because that made the return thrust that much longer and sweeter. She clutched him with arms and legs and moaned helplessly as he quickened his rhythm, pounding harder and faster against her.

“Mac! Ah!”

She heard her cries from a distance, just like she heard his grunts as he pistoned inside her. His hands loosened from her thighs and slapped dully against the tile beside her head as he braced himself there and fucked her even more strongly. Danice could feel her throat growing raw from the harsh, strangled cries he tore from her, but she didn’t care. All she cared about was the feel of him inside her and the climax she could feel looming ever closer. She screwed her eyes tightly shut and lifted her face to the water, feeling the droplets sting her face, the hot water almost tepid against the burning heat of her skin. The tension was unbearable and she wondered if she would be reduced to begging for release.

It never happened. She came on the next hard thrust, bucking and shuddering between the wall and Mac’s body, her ears ringing with the intensity of her pleasure and the roar of Mac’s ecstatic cry.

When she could hear the patter of the water again, Danice realized she had survived the climax. It had been touch and go there for a couple of minutes, but apparently she hadn’t died after all. When she wiggled her fingers and toes, she discovered all her parts still worked as well. Things were looking up.

Mac moaned and shifted against her, reaching over to turn off the shower. She clung to him like a barnacle while he stepped out of the tub and reached for a bath sheet, wrapping it around her back as he carried her into the bedroom.

They tumbled onto the bed in an exhausted heap and cuddled together, the huge towel wicking away most of the moisture.

She chuckled. “If I’d bothered to walk into the bathroom, I’d have noticed immediately this place was magic.”

He grunted, but in a questioning sort of way.

“The towels,” she said. “No real hotel has towels this big.”

He snorted and rolled them over until he lay on his back with Danice curled up along his side, her head pillowed on his shoulder. “See, magic isn’t all bad.”

“Yeah. I may have you magic up some of these towels when we get back to my apartment. I could learn to like these.”

He stiffened and opened his eyes to look down at her. “Does this mean you want me to stick around once we get back to reality?”

She grinned. “Of course. I’m not stupid enough to let you get away now.”

His grin was instant and enormous and beautiful. “Good. Because you couldn’t get rid of me if you tried.”

They shared a kiss that was sweet and tender and hungry all at once, and when it ended, Danice snuggled back against his shoulder with a sigh. “It’s going to be weird to be back in the real world,” she said. “It took me weeks to adjust to the whole vampire and werewolf thing. I imagine it’ll take at least a few hours to process the fae /changeling thing.”

He hugged her. “Well, at least you know you’ll be able to talk to your friends about it, and they won’t think you’re crazy.”

She laughed. “True. Because if I have gone around the bend, they’re already there waiting for me.” She ran her fingers over his gloriously muscled chest, and her mouth curved in a wicked smile. “Of course, I might have to tell them I’m out of town for a few days first.”

“Oh? Why’s that?”

She rolled onto his chest and grinned down at him. “Because as much as I love my friends, I can think of a thousand things to do over the next little while that will be a hell of a lot more fun than talking to them.”

Mac’s mouth curved in a matching smile and he ran his hands down her back, cupping her bottom in his palms and squeezing. “Is that so?” he purred. “Why don’t you go ahead and show me what those are.”

She wriggled against him and felt his cock harden against her belly. “All of them? Because there are quite a few...” She leaned down to nip at his mouth.

“Start with the first one that pops into your head,” he instructed, guiding her hips until he could slip back inside her welcoming pussy. “And we’ll work our way down the list.”

“Perfect,” Danice moaned, as she felt her body and heart overflow with Mac. “That’s just absolutely perfect.”

And it was.
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