

The Dark One

Victoria Michaels

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Chapter One

Kaska of Artane slowed his stallion to an easy amble. Prince Britar's fortress lay a full day away, and he'd ridden poor Warbringer hard this past month. He knew the Prince awaited the intelligence he'd gathered as a spy in neighboring Trovan, but laming his horse would serve no purpose.

Particularly with war on the horizon.

Besides, the last time Kaska had come this way, he'd had to battle the local brigands. Two fell to his blade before the rest fled, but that left five. And they might be in the mood for revenge. *I don't care to ride headlong into an ambush.*

"Whoreson bastards!" A woman's roar of fury brought Kaska's head up. He drew Warbringer to a prancing halt.

Swords clashed, interspaced with male taunts and laughter. The laughter had a distinctly ugly note. The woman swore again, an edge of grim desperation in her voice.

The thieves had found a new victim.

Kaska set his heels to Warbringer's flanks and thundered up the road toward the sound. Rounding the bend, he saw five men fighting a lone female traveler they'd managed to unhorse. He recognized the dented, rusted armor and unshaven faces; it was indeed the same band of thieves.

But their victim was no common woman. Her armor and sword marked her as a follower of the Maid of Light -- a female warrior. She was tall for a woman, with a lithe, muscular build and pretty breasts barely contained by her intricately embossed breastplate. Long black hair swirled around her face as she spun and hacked at her tormentors with a slim sword designed for a woman's hand.

One of the brigands already lay dead at her feet, but four others remained, odds too great even for one of the legendary Battlemaids.

A grin of sheer, savage joy spread across Kaska's face. With a howl, he drew the blade sheathed across his back and kicked Warbringer into a thundering charge.

The nearest of the brigands whirled too late. Kaska took his head with a single stroke.

Another of the men jumped at him, hacking for his thigh with an axe, but Kaska spun Warbringer aside and thrust his blade into the thief's chest. The man tumbled off the lethal point, gurgling out his life.

Meanwhile, the third brigand fell to the Battlemaid's sword. His head tumbled from his shoulders.

The fourth man looked from Kaska to the thieves' would-be victim, calculated the odds, and took to his heels.

Kaska snatched a dagger from his thigh sheath and hurled it at the coward with an expert flip of his wrist. The man went down, the blade buried to the hilt between his shoulder blades.

Scarcely breathing hard, Kaska turned to the maid. "Are you well?"

"Well enough." She studied him, her dark eyes level. There was a sharp and elegant beauty to her face, with its broad, high cheekbones and square little chin. Her lush mouth could inspire a monk to carnal fantasies.

"My thanks, warrior," she said at last in a low, husky voice, pushing the long black hair out of her face. "There were too many of them for me to best alone." She considered him, appraising the width of his chest and the strength of his sword arm. Female appreciation lit her gaze, mixed with a warrior's caution.

She had reason for that caution, for he meant to challenge her himself. He worshiped the Dark One, and his god relished nothing as much as the moans of a defeated Battlemaid.

Imagining the tight grip of her virgin ass, Kaska felt his cock swell behind his loincloth.

Give her time to rest, and then...

Of course, the maid might well kill him instead, but looking at her long legs and full, sweet breasts, Kaska thought it a chance well worth taking.

As he opened his mouth to warn her of his intent, all color left the Battlemaid's face. Her eyes rolled up. Kaska threw himself from Warbringer's back as she collapsed in a heap.

Two long strides carried him to the maid's side. Dropping to one knee on the dusty road, Kaska began an anxious examination. He found no wounds on the front of her body, so he rolled her onto her stomach.

The maid groaned and lifted her head. "Wha --"

"Seems one of your cur attackers landed a blow after all," he told her grimly. "There's a stab wound in your back just under your backplate, over your left hip."

"Aye," she said, letting her head fall. "One of them had a dagger."

"'Tis not deep, but it bleeds still," Kaska said. "I can treat it, if you permit."

"Aye," the maid said, breathing now in shallow pants. "My thanks."

Kaska nodded and rose to retrieve his pack of battlefield medicines from Warbringer. *Well, he thought as he walked to his horse, I won't be challenging her any time soon. Not with that wound.*

Later, perhaps. When he'd examined her, he'd noticed she had a truly delicious ass.

He wanted it.

Matia of Ruza took another swallow of ale and held it in her mouth while her mercenary rescuer slid his needle into her skin. Pain lanced through her flesh as he tugged the stitch tight, but she managed to keep the groan between her teeth.

To distract herself, she looked up at the limbs of the great oak they sat beneath. The grass felt cool under her thighs. "So, Kaska, may I ask whom you serve?"

He hesitated, probably deciding how much to tell her. "Prince Britar of Renat."

She relaxed slightly. "The goddess must have guided me to you, then. I'm on the way to the Prince's fortress myself."

"Oh?" Another stinging stitch.

"The Daughters of the Maid in Trovan wish to offer him their support in his campaign against the usurper Svec. I am to offer him my sword."

Kaska hesitated again, the thread pulled tight. "He will be glad to hear it."

"The Elder Daughter at the Maid's convent told me Britar is a good man. Directly descended from Kral the Conqueror, which would make his claim superior to Svec's. Should he choose to press it."

"Aye."

"What manner of master is he?"

"I have found him just."

Obviously, Kaska was not a man to chatter of his leader's business. Matia nodded in approval. "I suppose I shall discover that for myself," she said. "Thank you again, warrior. Had you not come to my aid, I'd be raped and dying by now."

He grunted and slid the needle in again. "I have no doubt you'd have made them pay dearly. You're good with that blade."

"Not good enough to best them all." Grimacing, she took another swig of the ale and closed her eyes at the pleasantly yeasty taste.

A big, warm hand gave her shoulder a gentle pat. "That's it, my girl. Your wound is closed and cleaned."

Matia opened her eyes to watch as the warrior walked past to kneel by the riverside and wash her blood from his hands. He wore little but a loincloth, boots, and bracers. His armor must be tucked inside his packs.

Despite her Battlemaid's vow of celibacy, she'd have to be blind not to admire all that hard male strength. Muscle worked up and down Kaska's tanned, scarred back as he bent, bunching in his ass and brawny thighs. His long braid swung back and forth across his spine as he moved, reminding her of a panther's tail. For a moment, she let herself imagine how he'd look with all that dark hair tumbling around his shoulders.

His face was as comely as his massive body, with eyes a piercing blue against his tan. Deep dimples rode at either side of his mouth when he smiled, and his cheekbones

were broad and regal. That nose would have been too big on another man's face, but on his, it balanced a jutting chin and thick, dark brows. His mouth was her favorite of his features, wide and sensual, with even white teeth and lips that looked soft.

All in all, he made Matia regret becoming a Daughter of the Maid.

"Can you ride?" Kaska asked, turning to face her.

She considered the question cautiously. "If you help me on my horse, aye."

He nodded, his blue eyes lingering on her face in a way that made something heat deep in her belly. "'We'll travel to the fortress together, then.'"

Kaska's gaze rested on his companion's lovely face as he silently cursed his luck. He could not lay a single lustful finger upon her. Not only was she injured, she'd sworn to serve Prince Britar. Challenging her would deprive his leader of one or the other of his badly needed warriors.

The Dark One would not approve, Kaska thought, with a sigh of regret.

Then the wind picked up the long, black strands of her hair and tossed it around her slim shoulders. Her luscious ass rolled in the saddle with each stride of her stallion.

By the Dark One's Double Cocks, he wanted her.

Kaska's eyes narrowed in consideration. *We won't be in Britar's service forever. I could claim her after the Prince releases us. And in the meantime, I'll keep an eye on her and see she comes to no harm before I steal her from her goddess.*

Of course, eventually she would discover he worshiped the Dark One and realize what he intended. He'd be lucky not to take a dagger between the ribs for his temerity.

But, as he watched her throw back her head and laugh at some sally of his, Kaska decided claiming the little Battlemaid for his own was more than worth the risk.

Chapter Two

As Prince Britar took them to war in the months that followed, Matia discovered she'd found a valuable ally in the big mercenary.

The Daughters had schooled Matia in the arts of combat since she'd been five years old, and she had killed more than her share of thieves and murderers in the mountains of Trovan. Yet war was an altogether different matter, a scarlet-splashed hell of chaos and screams and gut-sickening terror. It was Kaska who kept her alive as he watched her back and helped her keep her courage in the bloody confusion. He held her head when she puked up her guts after her first battle and got drunk with her after the second.

Until, with Kaska by her side, Matia found herself falling into a cool, focused trance that allowed her to fight and kill and think of nothing at all. Much as the big mercenary did, judging by the way those beautiful eyes went cold and empty when he fought.

By her fifth battle, she was veteran enough to save Kaska's life, beheading a coward who'd been about to drive a sword in his back. Her new ally turned as the man fell, saw the weapon lying by his feet, and gave her that flashing smile again. She grinned back in pride.

So it was that Kaska and Matia became Shieldmates. Soon they were sharing a tent, platonic as brother and sister.

Until the day he told her he was a follower of the Dark One.

* * *

They were ranging ahead of the army as they often did, acting as advance scouts, when Matia reined in her white stallion and stared. "Sweet Maid shield us!" she whispered.

A great stone circle lay off to the left of the road, paved with fine black marble. In the center of the ring stood a towering statue of the same gleaming black stone.

At first Matia thought it depicted some warrior and his captive, until she looked closer and saw the standing figure was naked, with two massive cocks. The first looked thicker than her forearm, while directly above it was a shorter one. At the figure's feet crouched a nude woman, her wrists chained, her head bowed in submission.

Directly in front of the statue, a huge column lay on its side. Carved of the same black marble, it was shaped like an erect phallus.

"It's a shrine to the Dark One," Kaska said quietly.

"Aye," Matia said, swinging down from her horse. "The Daughters told me of such, but I never expected to see one!"

"Did you not?" he asked, in an odd tone.

Feeling wicked, Matia went to the edge of the stone circle, but didn't step onto it. She was quite sure she wouldn't care for the Dark One's revenge, should she offend him. "This must be where the Dark Warriors make their sacrifices."

"Aye," Kaska said, still in that strange tone. "They strip their pretty captives, bind them well, and bend them over yon altar. Then..."

Matia turned to look at him, feeling the rise of wicked heat. She knew it was dangerous to have such an erotic conversation with her Shieldmate, yet she could not resist. "Then?"

Instead of answering, he swung from his horse and strode to her side. "Are you a virgin?"

Matia laughed. "What a question. Nay, before the Daughters allowed me to swear my Oath, I had to take one of the men from the village. The Elder Daughter said it was best if I knew what I gave up."

He flashed those straight white teeth in a rogue's grin. "So how was it?"

"Less than memorable." She shrugged. "But you needn't fear you sully innocent ears, assuming anyone who has killed as many men as I could be called innocent. So, oh wise and wicked Shieldmate, what do the Dark Warriors do to their captives next?"

"Very well," Kaska said. Something dangerous glittered in his eyes. "Next the warrior plies a whip over his captive's naked rump to make her dance for the god. He torments and pleasures her by turns, until she is wet and begging."

Matia swallowed as her own wetness rose. "And then?"

"Ah, then..." He watched her face like a wolf. "The warrior carries her off to another chamber, where he greases her tight, virginal anus until she is slick and ready. He's hard by then, hard and more than eager. Usually that's when she starts to beg, knowing what comes next, but her pleas for mercy only inflame him more. He presses the thick, rounded crown of his cock to the sacrifice's tiny rose pucker, and begins to slowly force it inside."

Matia knew she should be shocked, yet she felt only rising desire. Her nipples rose tight and hard within her breastplate, and her swollen sex ached, slick with lust.

"He takes his time raping her ass," Kaska continued in that deep, velvet voice, "claiming her for the god in leisurely strokes while her whimpers of pain turn to moans of pleasure. Finally, he spends, roaring his thanks to the Dark One."

Never in the six months they'd been Shieldmates had he said anything so blatantly carnal to her. Heart pounding, she wondered what pleasures a woman would find as Kaska's sacrifice.

She'd felt the heavy erection behind his loincloth just last night, while they wrestled in mock combat. Imagining the sensation of that massive cock forcing her last virgin orifice, she licked her lips.

"How do you know that?" Matia managed when she could finally speak. "I thought the Dark Warriors' ceremonies were secret."

His gaze did not waver. "I am one of the Warriors, Matia."

"You --" Stunned, she gaped at him. Her hand fell to her hilt. If he challenged her...

Kaska's harsh laughter rang out. "Have no fear of me, Shieldmate. We serve the same master, remember? I'd not deprive the Prince of your sword." His lids dipped,

concealing the glittering, hungry blue of his gaze. "But if I'd met you on the field of battle, the Dark One would still be savoring the nightly sacrifice of your cries."

Praying the heat she felt didn't show, Matia tossed her head. "More like your god would be savoring the acid gall of disappointment."

His smile merely broadened.

"Ah!" she said, her arousal losing its heat as she remembered the amused looks the other warriors had given them. "No wonder the others laughed behind their hands. A Dark Warrior and a Battlemaid -- now there's a pairing rarely seen." Anger stabbed her, and she glowered at him. "You should have told me."

Kaska shook his head. "I feared you'd turn from me," he said. "I did not care to lose you as a Shieldmate."

Her anger cooled. Matia nodded, realizing she had no desire to lose him either.

He'd come to mean far too much to her.

They'd barely started back toward camp when they saw the woman on the road.

Matia's eyes narrowed as she recognized the girl's wheat blond hair shining in the sun. Vlasta, one of the camp followers.

But why was she walking *away* from the camp? Matia drew rein as Kaska did the same. "Well met, Vlasta," she called, keeping her tone pleasant. "Aren't you going in the wrong direction?"

The girl glanced up, saw the Dark Warrior, and stopped in her tracks. The blood drained from her face, leaving her sheet white with guilt.

"Why are you going in the wrong direction, Vlasta?" Kaska asked in a menacing rumble.

Vlasta squeaked once like a panicked mouse and turned to flee.

She might as well have saved herself the effort. They caught her in six galloping strides. Kaska snatched the girl off her feet, and she shrieked in pure terror. When she tried to fight him, he dropped her belly-first on his saddle and planted a big hand in the small of her back, pinning her flat.

"She runs like a spy," Matia growled as they drew rein with the woman struggling futilely across Kaska's thighs.

"Indeed she does," he said grimly. "Let's see if we can discover if she is one in truth."

They only had to strip her naked.

Matia found the small map of Britar's encampment rolled in a tight tube and sewn into the hem of Vlasta's skirt. It listed the number of his forces and the siege weapons they'd built -- deadly information in enemy hands.

"Who do you work for, and what have you told them?" Kaska snarled. The girl, bound and naked, shrank from his wrath.

"You'd best confess, wench," Matia told her coldly. She had no sympathy for a sneaking little bitch who'd betray them all to ambush and murder. "Kaska is a Dark Warrior, and you know what his kind do to captives. Especially..." She eyed the woman's nudity. "...spies."

Vlasta turned wide eyes on him. He gave her his best evil leer. "No!" she gasped. "I'll tell you everything."

And she did. Matia watched Kaska's grim face and wondered if her Shieldmate was disappointed. Her threat about the Dark Warriors' taste for rougher interrogation has not been empty.

It was as they'd suspected. Vlasta confessed that King Svec had indeed sent her to join the whores of Britar's camp. For months, she'd watched and collected information about the Prince and his men, and now she was headed home to her master.

Vlasta swore she'd had no other chance to reveal what she'd learned, and Matia believed her. The bitch feared Kaska's feral smile too much. Besides, she'd been frightened enough to give them the name of another of Svec's spies, a mercenary both Matia and Kaska knew. The man was such a thoroughgoing bastard, neither was surprised to learn he was also a traitor.

Exchanging a look, Matia and Kaska silently agreed they'd attend to him later.

"Now," Matia said, looking at Vlasta as she lay bound and naked in the grass, "what shall we do with her?"

"Hand her over to the Prince." Kaska bent and picked the spy up as though she weighed no more than a bread loaf. "But in the meantime, I mean to make a sacrifice of her ass. It's been months since I've had a woman."

"What?" Startled, Matia stared after him as he carried the spy toward his horse. "Where are you going?" she demanded, striding in pursuit.

"The shrine is just around the bend," he told her, tossing his captive across Warbringer's saddle. "A bit of sacrifice should jar any remaining truth from the wench's tongue."

Heart pounding, Matia mounted and rode after her Shieldmate. A Battlemaid had no business watching one of the Dark One's rituals, yet she was reluctant to leave Kaska alone while she rode back to camp. What if Svec's men attacked him while he was...occupied?

So she rode with him, heat flaring through her as she watched what he did to Vlasta.

One of those big hands busied itself between the cheeks of the spy's pert ass, stroking some kind of oil deep in the hole he lusted to fuck. Kaska shot a look at Matia over his shoulder. "Being a whore, she's not the virgin I prefer," he said in a coolly offhand voice. "But this oil will tighten and sensitize her." He curled a lip. "She'll not forget my cock, I vow."

His captive squirmed, her expression mingling arousal and fear. His hand looked very big and dark against the pale flesh of her backside as he continued to torment her.

Matia turned her eyes away and licked her lips.

When they reached the Dark One's Shrine, she tried to idle by the horses as Kaska headed toward the cock altar with the spy across one brawny shoulder. He glanced back at her. "Come, Matia. Watch. Though you're a warrior indeed, this is one pleasure of conquest you'll never know."

She shook her head silently, telling herself she had no desire to witness such a wicked sacrifice.

But after he bound Vlasta to the altar with the shackles set in the stone around it, he started to strip off his loin cloth. That's when Matia discovered it would not be so easy to stay away. Bold as he was, Kaska had never let her see his cock.

So, heart pounding in guilt, she moved cautiously closer.

The sight of her Shieldmate naked was itself enough to make her nipples peak. He looked even bigger, broader without his armor, his shoulders wide as a broadsword's length, his long legs powerfully muscled.

His rod thrust, thick and curving, flushed dark with his lust. Beneath it nestled his balls, covered in the same thick ruff that decorated his powerful chest. Vlasta whimpered in fear and anticipation as he stepped behind her.

Matia half expected him to fall on the spy and begin thrusting like the bull his cock suggested, but she'd underestimated him. Instead, Kaska stroked the wench's pale, vulnerable ass, caressing the pink petals of her labia and fingering her bud until they began to glisten with reluctant passion. She moaned, tossing her head, fine blonde hair swirling around her pretty face.

A fine sweat broke out across Matia's upper lip. Her breastplate felt uncomfortably tight.

Kaska locked his crystalline blue gaze with hers. "There is a legend among the Dark Warriors," he said, in a voice as rich and smooth as heated mead. "When the Dark One made women, he gave them two openings. One, he told the first brothers, was for pleasure and the getting of children. But the other was forbidden to the common run of men. Do you know why?"

Matia licked her lips. "No."

Kaska's smile was dark and knowing. "Because he wanted to make sure his Dark Warriors would have tight virgin holes to enjoy after a conquest. To this day, the symbol of victory in our language is derived from the image of a kneeling bound woman." Using both big hands, he spread his captive's pale cheeks. "Look at her. So

lovely, so female. So helpless. She knows she's going to take my hard cock in her ass, and there's nothing she can do about it. It's my right as her conqueror." Extending a big forefinger, he touched Vlasta's tightly furled anal bud. Slowly, he began to press. She moaned as it sank in.

Kaska looked up and smiled into Matia's eyes, his own burning and bright. "The oil tightened her nicely. She's going to be a delicious fuck."

"Please, warrior!" the spy whimpered. "Spare me! Your cock will surely rip me open!"

His dark smile widened. Matia remembered what he'd said earlier: *her pleas for mercy only inflame him more*. "Spare you? Would Svec's men have spared any of us, had you succeeded in your treachery?" He put the thick head of his cock against her puckered opening.

Guilt and lust made Matia's heart thunder as she stepped closer to watch. Kaska entered very slowly, the tiny pink anus stretching desperately to accommodate his size as the spy gasped sobbing breaths. The muscles of his powerful belly laced as he forced more and still more of the thick rod into her depths. His eyes blazed with savage pleasure even as he gritted his teeth with effort, nostrils flared like a wolf's.

Matia knew she should turn away, yet she couldn't. She'd never been so aroused, certainly not with her own stripling lover all those years ago.

"Delicious," Kaska rumbled, when his hips were finally snug against the spy's. He looked up, meeting Matia's in unmistakable promise. "Though not so tight as another captive who begs in my dreams."

She stared at him in shock.

He drew out slowly, and his prisoner moaned, this time in shamed pleasure. "Tell my little Shieldmate how it feels to take my cock in the ass, Vlasta," he growled.

"It -- oh! -- It hurts!"

Kaska drove in a thrust that made her yelp. "I think she's guessed that. But how does this feel?" He began to withdraw.

Vlasta panted. "Good," she whimpered. "Oh, it's good."

"Aye," he growled, "it is." He rammed in to his balls again.

Matia watched in frozen fascination as Kaska claimed the spy for his god with brutally ruthless digs. But as he rocked in her, the tone of Vlasta's cries changed, taking on a note of helpless hunger. Finally she began to lift her hips for his entry, until she was thrusting onto the cock that reamed her. The little spy shrieked out her climax just before Kaska's bellow of triumph.

For a long moment, Matia could do nothing but stand frozen on the rim of the stone circle, shaking with arousal and guilt. Finally, unable to bear it any longer, she turned to stumble toward the horses.

"Matia," Kaska said in a soft, dark rumble. Automatically, she turned to look at him.

He'd withdrawn, and was holding his limp victim's cheeks apart. Her abused anus pouted, red and swollen from the hard fucking he'd given it, glistening with oil and pearly drops of male cum. "After we take Trovan's capital," he said, "the Dark Warriors in Britar's army will serve every pretty woman just like this." His gaze sharpened on her face. "Every one of them, Matia."

She whirled and fled toward her horse.

* * *

They rode back to camp in tense silence, Kaska holding his limp, naked captive in front of him. Matia could barely sit her stallion, remembering the way her Shieldmate's massive cock had spread the girl to splitting.

And, goddess forgive her, in the depths of her heart Matia envied the spy her brutalized ass.

Once back in camp, they met with Britar, then helped the Prince fall upon the traitor mercenary their captive had identified. Britar lost no time running the man through.

Vlasta herself he gave to Kaska as a slave.

Matia would have expected her Shieldmate to keep the little blonde for his own use, but when they left the Prince, he found another Dark Warrior in Britar's service

and sold Vlasta to him. The fellow gave Matia an odd, amused look as he took her away.

Matia had a feeling she knew exactly what the man found so amusing.

Kaska had said he would have challenged her when they met, had they not served the same master. But what would happen when they left the Prince's service?

She suspected the answer to that was obvious.

He'll challenge me.

In their tent that night, Matia watched him as he worked with his knife, carving a piece of fine ebony wood. As his long, strong fingers turned and shaped the thing, she realized it was a dildo.

And she knew full well what he meant to do with it.

"I cannot let you simply take me, Kaska," she told him softly. "Not and keep my oath of celibacy to my goddess. I will kill you if I must."

He looked up at her, his eyes very blue. "I know."

Chapter Three

The night slid past as Kaska worked on the dildo, his cock hard and aching as he imagined Matia bent over the Dark One's altar. His Shieldmate said nothing more as she sat on the other side of the tent, watching him with brooding eyes and drinking from a skin of mead. Finally she put the skin aside and lay down on her pallet, sliding quickly into sleep.

By the Double Cocks, he hungered for her.

But taking her would be no easy thing. True, she was smaller than he and no match in strength, but her skill and growing ruthlessness had allowed her to kill men every bit as big.

More than that, though, he feared hurting her. He couldn't stand the thought of that.

Kaska took another deep draft of his own skin of mead and eyed her backside as she lay curled in sleep. When had she become more to him than a virgin ass to plunder?

Though the Dark One knew he still dreamed of that burning pleasure.

With a soft sigh, she rolled onto her belly, thrusting her tight little rump in the air. Her loin cloth slid aside with the motion, baring her tanned cheeks. Her skin looked like satin. His fingers itched to touch it.

Why not?

Still, Kaska hesitated, knowing he'd likely had too much mead.

Then she rolled her slim little hips and moaned. Lust surged through him. Before he knew it, he was across the tent and sliding a knee onto her pallet.

With shaking hands, Kaska flipped her rump cloth up, baring her sweet backside completely. Her thighs flexed, thrusting her ass up at him. He smelled a hint of female musk.

Unable to resist, he reached between her slim thighs and stroked a finger along her velvet labia. The seam of her lips was richly wet.

His cock kicked violently against his loincloth. He licked his lips and pushed one forefinger deep inside her.

Double Cocks, she was tight. That lover of hers must have been thinner than a nun's toothpick.

Swallowing, Kaska slid the finger out, then in again, slipping easily in her thick, rich cream. She whimpered in pleasure.

He hardened even more. Unable to resist, he withdrew his hand and spread her firm cheeks. Holding his breath as guilty excitement rose, he touched her anus with the finger she'd dewed with her arousal. Slowly, he began to slide it in.

Her tiny anus resisted, then opened suddenly to let him in up to the knuckle. She was so deliciously tight, Kaska had to bite back his own groan.

With his free hand, he drew his cock from his loincloth and began to stroke himself as he explored Matia's tight, virginal ass. He knew no other man had touched her this way.

Sliding his finger in and out, watching the way her rectum pulled and sucked at it, Kaska imagined her bound and waiting for his cock.

"Kaska," she whimpered.

He froze, abruptly cold sober as guilt seared through his lust. *What in the Dark One's name am I doing? I have no right. She doesn't belong to...*

Matia lifted her hips with a low groan, driving his finger even more deeply into her ass. "Kaska," she whimpered. "Oh, Kaska, harder."

Me, he realized, stunned. She's dreaming of me!

Maddened, he straddled her hips and pressed his erection against her ass, not entering, but teasing himself with her silken flesh. She moaned. He began fingering her ass in earnest, rubbing her clit with his thumb while he stretched her with long strokes, first one finger, then two, then three, jerking hard at his cock while he watched her anus struggle to take him.

She pumped her hips, taking his fingers and groaning.

"Are you awake?" he asked softly.

Matia only sighed, her breath carrying the scent of mead. *Double Cocks, she's drunker than I!*

He should stop. He should...

Her anus suddenly tightened and pulsed around his invading finger. She groaned in wanton pleasure, tossing her head until her hair whipped across her pillow.

She came, Kaska thought, surprised and unbearably aroused. Her first anal orgasm. "It won't be your last, girl," he growled, and began to work his own cock in a frenzy of lust.

Withdrawing his fingers, Kaska held her cheeks apart so he could look at her swollen anus as he climaxed. He made sure he hit that tiny pink virgin target with every single jet of sperm, until his cum ran down her crack in a white stream.

When it was over, Kaska cleaned her thoroughly and staggered back to his own pallet. He fell asleep to dream dark dreams of enslaving Matia and bending her over the Dark One's altar.

He woke the next morning with a roaring hangover and a case of gnawing guilt. Though he watched Matia anxiously, she showed no sign of remembering the night. He had no intention of reminding her. He had the ugly feeling she'd call him out.

It was probably no more than he deserved, but he had no wish to fight Matia in a killing rage. He was too likely to lose, or worse, have to hurt her to win.

That's when he knew.

When did I fall in love with her?

* * *

Taking Trovan's capital city three weeks later was no easy matter. King Svec fought like a cornered fox to keep Libuse, for he knew if he lost it, his throne, too, was gone.

But Britar would not be denied, and soon Kaska and Matia entered the city in the company of the Prince and his five thousand men. Svec tried to flee, but they all thundered in pursuit. He died in his futile bid to escape.

Libuse, like the country around it, offered Britar no more resistance after that. The people of Trovan had suffered so long under the tyrant's yoke that Britar's just hand came as a vast relief. The new king and his army settled in for a little welcome peace.

But for Matia and Kaska, the peace only provided more opportunity for the tension between them to grow.

When she learned the Prince planned to pay off his mercenaries, Matia knew her time had run out. Kaska would challenge her the moment they were free, and she had no desire to fight him. Distasteful as the idea of running from a duel was, the thought of killing him was worse -- yet surrender simply was not an option.

So without telling her Shieldmate where she was going, she took her leave of the Prince, mounted her stallion, and started back to the convent.

Matia was barely an hour outside the city gates when she heard the thunder of hooves coming from the woods beside the road. She turned Stormheart and drew her sword as her soul cringed. She knew there was no more point in running. Kaska would chase her to the edge of the world.

Warbringer burst from the forest in a surge of velvet muscle, Kaska on his back, his expression grim. She watched him draw rein with dread in her heart. "I can't let you leave, Matia."

She sighed. "Kaska, don't make me do this."

He studied her face, his gaze level and intent. "Is it the sacrifice you fear?"

Matia shook her head. "Nay. In truth, if it were not for my oath, I would take pleasure in submitting to whatever you choose to do. But..." She made a helpless gesture. "I have given my oath to the goddess. I will not break it, no matter how my body burns for yours."

"I love you, Matia." The glitter of his blue eyes demanded her belief. "I'll give up the sacrifice. Indeed, I'd give up my god himself to keep you. Just stay."

Her spirit leaped, then collapsed into a tight, miserable ball as she realized how hopeless it was. "Ah, Kaska, my heart is yours. Perhaps it has been from the moment you saved me from those thieves. But what would either of us be if we threw away our oaths?"

"I will not give you up, Matia." His gaze went grim. "Even if I must steal you from your goddess to have you."

She winced, though she'd expected no less. "I will not be so easily taken, Kaska."

"I know." He drew his sword, swung a leg over Warbringer's neck, and slid neatly off his mount to land in a battle stance. "If I lose, kill me. Better that than living without you."

Matia dismounted more slowly, dread clutching at her heart with sickly claws. Kaska was not the kind of opponent she could fight casually; it would take everything she had to best him. It was possible she could wound him seriously enough to allow her escape, but such a wound could also kill him.

She ached to simply throw down her weapon and let him do with her as he would, but she knew she'd come to despise herself for it. If he defeated her cleanly, there would be no stain on her conscience. The goddess would be satisfied.

But nothing less was acceptable. If she fought him, she could not hold back.

So as she lifted her sword and stepped to meet him, her belly laced itself into a sick knot of fear.

They began slowly, each too familiar with the other's skill for overconfidence. Matia circled Kaska, intensely aware of his size, the muscled power of his tall body. It had always been so comforting having him at her back. She wondered now how much of her courage had been born of the knowledge that he'd die to protect her.

Now, facing him, she felt the sweat of dread roll cold down her spine.

Kaska did nothing to signal his first attack. His grim expression did not tighten, his eyes did not narrow. He simply blurred into furious motion.

She parried more by instinct than conscious thought. The jar of his broadsword against her slimmer blade jolted all the way to her shoulders. She was so rattled by the impact she almost didn't parry his next attack in time. It was all she could do to hold onto her sword as his slammed into it.

Matia scuttled back as he charged, throwing attack after attack at her, each more thunderous than the last. Steel rang in the brutal percussive music of combat as she labored to block his blistering swordplay.

She knew she should mount her own attacks, but he simply didn't give her time. Her skill might be equal to his, but his speed, reach, and sheer brute strength were far greater. She did not dare let any of his blows get through.

Then came the attack she'd known would come -- hard enough to knock her sword so far from her torso, Matia knew she'd never be able to parry his next attack in time. She winced, waiting for the pain of steel sliding into flesh.

Instead his broadsword slammed into her blade again, almost knocking it from her hand. And she finally saw his strategy.

He wasn't attacking her. He was attacking her sword.

Matia cursed beneath her breath. It was a solid technique if you meant to take a smaller opponent alive. His broadsword was so much heavier, it might well shatter her thinner blade. Even if her weapon held, he could catch it and flip it out of her hand. If that failed, he could simply wear her down until she'd be unable to mount a proper defense.

Suddenly she remembered what he'd told her months ago, after she'd fought a man almost as big as he was. "When you battle a man my size, lose no time going for the kill. Otherwise, you cannot win."

It was painfully clear he was right.

She saw his broadsword flashing toward hers. Instead of trying to parry, Matia circled her weapon around his and drove straight for his upper arm. He saw it coming and twisted aside, but still she felt her blade cut into flesh.

Despite herself, she winced.

Kaska flicked a glance down at the long slash across his biceps. Though it was not deep, blood poured from it. "I wondered how long it would take you to catch on," he grunted. "Didn't I tell you not to take chances with an opponent my size?"

She would have liked to snap a reply, but she didn't have the breath.

He swung at her torso. Matia didn't dare miss that parry. Her muscles protested at the savage impact as she beat him off and retreated.

Her arms ached, and her sword felt like a length of solid lead in her hand. She'd thought to inflict shallow wounds designed to incapacitate through blood loss, but now she realized that plan wouldn't work. Her body would fail long before his did.

She'd have to maim Kaska with her next attack, or she was lost.

Panting, Matia watched him, blinking as sweat burned its way into her eyes. She didn't dare lift a hand to wipe it away.

He dropped his guard ever so slightly. Matia reacted, lunging for the opening on sheer instinct before her brain had time to process what she was doing. At the last instant she realized that she was about to drive her sword into his chest. Heart leaping in terror, she jerked up her blade, trying to miss...

Kaska brought his sword around, neatly entangled hers in its quillions, and jerked. The weapon flew from her hand.

She watched numbly as her sword pinwheeled into the brush beside the road. "Trap," she wheezed in realization.

"Yes." A muscled arm circled her waist, jerking her against his body. His skin steamed with heat and sweat, contrasting with the cool steel of his blade against her throat.

Dragging her head around, she looked up into his eyes.

"I claim you for my god, Matia," he said softly. "And myself."

Then his mouth came down on hers in a kiss that stole the last of her strength with its passion. She sagged into his arms as joy boiled up, guilt in its wake. "Kaska," she moaned.

"Hush," he said, scooping her into his arms. She could feel his muscles tremble with effort, and felt a pale satisfaction. At least she'd made him work for his victory. "You defended your oath, Matia. I'm fortunate you had no wish to kill me, or this might have ended differently."

He walked to the roadside and went to his knees, laying her on the cool grass. Panting, she looked up at his handsome face as she tried to catch her breath.

"You said earlier that you found pleasure in the thought of me sacrificing you to the Dark One," he said abruptly, his blue gaze searching hers as he sat back on his heels. "Did you mean it?"

Matia swallowed, remembering the way the spy's asshole had gaped as he fucked her. "Yes. When I watched what you did to Vlasta, it made me burn." She paused to gather her courage. It was hard to admit just how the raw sight had aroused her. "I have never felt that way."

His smile was white and very male. "Good."

Then he flipped her onto her belly.

"What --" She jerked up her head as he gathered her right wrist in one hand and reached into one of his belt pouches for a length of rope. "What are you doing?"

"Binding my captive," he said, wrapping the cord around one wrist before serving the other the same. "If you have no objection to dancing for the Dark One, it will be my great pleasure to see to it."

Matia closed her eyes and shuddered with need as he proceeded to rope her ankles with the same ruthless skill.

Then he flipped her over onto her back. His mouth dropped down to hers again, and he kissed her, hard, deep, hungry, a kiss of conquest and ownership.

"How many nights have I dreamed of this moment." His gaze burned hot with weary triumph. "How many nights have I watched you as you slept, staring at your high, round breasts, your long thighs. Watching you roll over, seeing the way your muscular little butt curved in sweet invitation. And I'd grab my cock and fist it hard, dreaming of this..."

"You...pleasured yourself thinking of me?"

He laughed, the sound a little wild as he pulled her up into his arms. He lowered his head again. "Oh, aye. Many nights. Especially once I realized how you dreamed of my possession."

Helpless with desire, Matia opened her lips and let him take her as he would, accepting each deep thrust of his tongue, moaning as he bit delicately at her mouth. All she could think about was the image he'd created -- Kaska, masturbating as he planned to take her captive and ream her with that huge cock.

When he rose and bent to throw her over his shoulder, Matia wasn't hypocrite enough to struggle.

She rode back to Libuse draped over his saddle as he caressed her bottom and thighs. Matia shivered in pleasure with every brush of his fingers, too dazed with lust to do anything else. Finally she roused enough to ask, "Where are you taking me?"

"There's a Temple of the Dark One here. The Brethren in Britar's service have appropriated it for our own use."

At that she shivered again. It was said that any woman who went into the Dark One's temple came out as a warrior's slave. She considered, briefly, putting up a fight. Then he caressed her again, and the feeling of his hand on her skin sent such lightning arching through her, Matia knew there was no point.

Kaska had enslaved her long ago.

Chapter Four

The Dark One's temple lay in the Temple Quarter, a brooding, black marble building with thick stone columns topped in rounded capitals. Gazing at them, she realized they resembled nothing so much as erect cocks. Still, it was a surprisingly sedate building, for such a den of sex and blood.

Kaska swung down from the saddle, then reached up for her. As he met her gaze, he asked suddenly. "Are you sure? Once I begin the sacrifice, I fear I'll be unable to stop. My need runs hot, Matia."

Indeed it did. She could see it blazing in his eyes and bulging against his loincloth. Swallowing, she whispered, "I want to experience your passion, Kaska. In full."

Male triumph flashed in his eyes, and he grinned savagely. The next minute she was in his arms, and they were striding into the Dark One's temple.

As he carried her through the great building's halls, it quickly became all too obvious just what kind of god the Dark One was. Near the entrance the black walls were sculpted and brightly painted with scenes of battle; depictions of warriors hacking their way through the ranks of lesser men, splitting skulls and ripping bellies. In the center, they stormed a great city and rode triumphant through its gates.

From there on, the walls depicted raw sexual conquest; bound women writhing under the cane, having their nipples tortured, being fucked and sodomized, submissively sucking hard warrior cocks.

Then they stepped into a massive central room with a huge statue of the Dark One at its heart. Carved in black ebony, he stood naked and massively muscled, his twin cocks thrusting outward, one set below the other. In his right hand he carried two severed male heads. In the other, he held two ropes, each tied loosely around the neck

of a naked female captive. The first knelt beside him, staring up at him in supplication as she lifted her bare breasts to him in offering. The second crouched with her head down and her curving ass in the air, holding her rump spread with her hands, looking over her shoulder at him with a pleading expression.

Yet the idol's attention seemed focused on the altar before him, where a living woman lay, bound bottom upward.

Charmar, one of Kaska's Dark Brothers, slowly drove a double-headed dildo in and out of the woman's anus and pussy. Her buttocks were striped, as though he'd just finished whipping her. Yet she moaned in shamed pleasure with every stroke of the dildo, writhing helplessly in the grip of an approaching orgasm.

"Well met, Charmar!" Kaska called.

The Dark Brother looked up and grinned at the sight of Matia slung over her Shieldmate's shoulder. "Well met, indeed. I see you finally took the little warrior. And wonder of wonders, neither of you lost a limb in the process."

Kaska nodded. "The Dark One was with me." His tone was serious. "I was afraid she'd force me to hurt her."

"Good fortune indeed. I'll admit I didn't see how you'd ever capture the little Hill Cat in one piece." He drove the dildo deep, and his victim gasped out a strangled cry. "That's it, my captive," he crooned. "Come on the Dark One's cocks."

She screamed and climaxed, her eyes squeezed shut, her face contorted.

"Finally!" Charmar pulled his knife and cut her free, leaving the double dildo in place. Dragging it out at last, he pulled her to her feet, then guided her over to kneel at the statue's feet. She looked dazed and well-fucked. "Say the words as I've taught them, little prisoner."

Swaying, the naked redhead licked her lips and looked up at the Dark One's idol. "Your Dark Warrior, Charmar, has taken me captive, but it was my own torment and pleasure that made me his slave. With my every moan and scream, I will thank you for giving me to such a master."

Charmar grinned up at the idol. "My gratitude for your lush gift, Dark One. I hope my sacrifice of her gave you as much pleasure as it gave me." Catching his captive's head by the hair, he pushed it into the idol's stone groin. "Show him your submission now, Amria."

Obediently, the girl opened her mouth and sucked first one and then the other of the thick marble cocks. Then Charmar pulled her to her feet. "Come, slave. It's time to get your ass split." Picking her up, he swung her over his shoulder and rolled his eyes at Kaska. "I vow, I'm hard as the Dark One's marble rods. She rolled her rump most delightfully under her flogging." He grinned suddenly, eyeing Matia's butt as she hung over Kaska's shoulder. "Yet I find myself envying you."

Kaska laughed. "Go ream your slave, Charmar. I'll take care of Matia." He didn't even wait for Charmar to leave the room before he lowered her to the cock-shaped altar, cut her bonds, and started tying her spread-eagle to the rings that hung from its side.

Once she was securely lashed, he went to work on her leathers, cutting away her breastband and loincloth until she lay naked. The air was cold on her nipples, and she shivered. The Dark One's idol stared down at her, its carved features wearing an expression of lustful enjoyment.

The look on Kaska's face matched it. "My gratitude, Dark One," he said softly. "At first I didn't understand why you'd send me such a prize, knowing I'd be unable to take her for so long. Yet the pleasure of this moment would have been so much less had I enjoyed her a year ago, and I would never have known the courage that lies under these ripe breasts. Surely you have never gifted a warrior with a captive so lovely...or so tempting."

His blue eyes narrowed. "Tonight I'll thank you properly for your gift, Dark One."

Breath caught in a combination of desire and anxiety, Matia watched as he untied a large pouch from his belt. From it he drew a familiar length of wood, topped with three strands of braided silk, each no more than three feet long. She licked her lips, recognizing it.

He'd made the thing about the same time he'd made the dildo, whittling the butt and braiding the silk in the tent they shared. She hadn't bothered to ask what use he intended for it.

She'd known. And she'd dreamed hot dreams about it.

Kaska stripped off the loin cloth that was all that hid his glorious nudity. His cock sprang free, bobbing and violently flushed with hunger. "It's time to dance for the Dark One, Matia," he said softly, in a voice like dark velvet as he lifted the wooden butt.

She licked her lips. "I'm ready."

"I know." He snapped his wrist. The braided cords swished out to curl around one of her stiff pink nipples in a stinging bite. With a gasp, Matia arched her back. A second snap, this one hitting the other hard point. "Kaska!" she cried, writhing.

"That's it," he rasped. "That's a dance to make even a god hunger."

With that he began to torment her in earnest, cracking the light little whip at each breast in turn, painting fire over her skin. The lashes were so thin and delicate they didn't break the skin, but the sting was ferocious, and she twisted and moaned.

All the while, Kaska's cock rose hard and red, bouncing with every snap of his arm.

As Matia writhed, her attention fell on the idol's stone face looking down at her. Its black eyes were no longer empty, but burning red. As her stiff, pointed nipples swelled under Kaska's whip, she sensed a presence in the idol, something powerful and dark and alien. And very, very male.

Kaska paused to admire her breasts with a conqueror's satisfaction. "The night I worked on this whip, you were wearing that loose cotton tunic of yours, sitting between me and the fire, kneeling as you polished out a spot of rust on your armor. The firelight silhouetted your pretty breasts, and they bounced as you worked. I braided the lash and imagined the way they'd jiggle when I whipped your nipples."

Then, lips curving into a dark smile, Kaska proceeded to make them jiggle indeed with a series of skillful snaps that took Matia's breath away. Only her warrior's

discipline kept her from screaming as he tortured the pointed red peaks. Yet each sting of pain only stoked her arousal higher.

At last he tossed down his whip and moved to stand between her thighs. Before she knew what he was about, he lowered his head and thrust his face against her mound. Matia jerked. A hot, wet tongue pushed between her lips, stroked the tender flesh.

Then, as her nipples stung from his skillful torment, Kaska began to suck and nibble her sex. Each lick teased the pleasure into a breathtaking spiral of delight that rung pleading groans from her lips.

At the same time, his big, rough hands stroked her thighs, her belly, her hips. Finally they found her aching breasts and soothed them with gentle caresses. Soon she was writhing with pleasure so great, even the burn of her abused nipples was nothing but a luscious counterpoint.

It seemed the idol's eyes glowed even brighter.

Kaska gently inserted a big finger into Matia's cunt. It slipped through the hot cream of her arousal, stretching the swollen, eager flesh in time to her helpless moans. Twisting his hand, he began to screw in and out with a penetration that kicked her delight even higher.

Then he slid in a second finger -- but this one went up her ass.

"Ah, Matia," he purred. "How sweet and tight you are."

He stroked deep in a burning possession that only hinted at what she'd know from his cock. Matia arched her back and screamed with the first waves of orgasm. Kaska caught her clit in his mouth and sucked hard, simultaneously thrusting his fingers in and out of pussy and ass until she convulsed. Locking her gaze with his, he jammed deep and hard inside her, holding his fingers there as she shook and screamed.

In the aftermath, Matia was barely aware of being untied, lifted, turned bottom upward, and retied. This time the whip Kaska pulled from his pouch was much heavier, and his target was her helpless rump.

The first hard blow bit even through her languid pleasure, and she howled in shock. But her Shieldmate showed her no mercy. Again and again he struck, painting first one cheek and then the other with molten stripes.

Still, even in the chains of heat Kaska forged for her, Matia remained a warrior. She knew pain, knew how to embrace or ignore it or use it as she pleased. And so she turned the tables on her Shieldmate to inflict her own kind of torment while he flogged her burning ass. Deliberately, she slowed the instinctive plunge of her hips, turning it into a seductive roll that kept time with his lash.

Kaska had said he loved her backside, and she made sure he had a good look, lifting it high as she flexed her thighs, knowing the pose would spread her labia. She heard him growl in lechery. Slowly, she lowered her pelvis, though the whip stung her skin like a wasp as if to spur her on.

Deliberately, she began to grind up and down, side to side, feeling the tip of the lash strike faster and faster as he plied it in a frenzy of lust. Though pain danced along her nerves, Matia shuddered with pleasure, imagining what he was thinking, imagining his hunger.

A fitting sacrifice indeed.

She blinked, breaking rhythm, as the dark male voice rolled through her mind.

In all the years since my race came to your world, I have never seen a captive embrace her fate with such eager heat. Nor have I fed so well on a sacrifice.

It was the god.

You might have, Matia thought, a little dazed, had any other captive had such a captor as Kaska.

An unusual warrior, the Dark One agreed. I find myself admiring his self-control. See how you tempt him...

Suddenly she saw a gloriously naked woman lying belly-down over the Dark One's cock-shaped altar. With a sense of shock, Matia realized it was herself. She could see her own ass, spread by her posture to reveal her labia, visibly wet with lust. Her anus looked impossibly small and pink, tightly puckered.

In his mind, Kaska was imagining watching that hole slowly dilate as he drove his cock into it -- the way the strong muscles would fight him at first, then yield slowly as he worked his way deeper. He could almost hear her gasps...

She could see the memory of other lush prisoners, lying bound and helpless in a variety of positions as he fucked them, celebrating his victories in tight assholes.

To Kaska there was no pleasure like chasing down and capturing some lovely maid, binding her tight and well, then savoring each slow, grinding thrust into her anus while he brought her to reluctant orgasm. Yet never had he felt such hunger, such violence. Kaska wanted to ram Matia's asshole, fuck it mercilessly while he listened to her helpless cries of pain and desire.

He'd fantasized about taking her for months, even as his love for her grew. Now his mind was such a confused tumble of lust and tenderness, he was afraid he'd draw blood in his madness. She could feel the whip vibrating in his hand as he fought his darker impulses.

"Do it, Kaska," she cried. "Take your pleasure..."

His control didn't so much break as explode. An instant later she felt the whip crack hard against her anus, and she yelped in true pain. Twice more he struck her there, then again and...

She heard the whip hit the opposite wall with a clatter. Out of the corner of one eye, she saw him stride to his pouch and pull out the double-shafted cock that symbolized the dark god's. He smeared it with butter, turned -- and drove it into both her cunt and ass like a twin-blade knife.

It should have hurt, but such was the lust he'd built in her that the shafts slid in smoothly under his strength. At the same time, he sought Matia's clit with the thumb of his free hand and circled it as he ground the double dildo in and out. She whimpered at the brutal pleasure-pain.

She'd never felt so hot for a man.

"Enjoy her cunt and ass, Dark One," he growled. "I promise you, I will."

The shafts slid faster and faster in and out as her clit flamed. The dildo in her cunt was delicious, but though the cock in her bung was much smaller than Kaska's, it still felt huge, overwhelming, a brutal, tunneling presence.

"The one in my ass," Matia moaned, her thighs constricting with the first waves of orgasm, "it feels like a broadsword..."

"Good," Kaska said. "You need the stretching -- because you're going to get something a lot larger than this." And he rammed it in.

She came.

Dimly she heard the god say, his rumbling mind-voice amused, *I think it's time to lubricate you for your new master...*

Deep in Matia's ass, the shaft representing the god's cock began to spurt gush after gush of thick oil. A lecherous miracle -- the dildo was solid wood.

Matia was scarcely aware of being untied, lifted, and deposited on her knees before the Dark One's idol. "Say the words, Matia," Kaska rasped, as though fighting for control.

She blinked hard and tried to remember what Charmar's slave had said. "Dark One..." She had to stop to clear her throat when her voice cracked. "Dark One, your warrior Kaska has defeated me in battle, bound me, and sacrificed me on your black altar..." Those weren't exactly the slave's words, but Matia didn't care. "But it's my own lust for him that has made me his slave. With my every cry of submission and delight and anguish, I will thank you for sending me to defeat at his hands."

"Dark One," Kaska said hoarsely, "I do not know what I have done to deserve Matia, but my thanks for guiding me to her."

You're welcome, the god said, in rumbling amusement.

She bent forward without being told and took the idol's smaller cock in her mouth. Rolling her tongue around it, she sucked the cold marble as though it were hot flesh, caressing the thicker cock below it with her fingers. Then Matia drew back and

lowered her head for the second flesh blade. She had to tilt her chin to accommodate it, but she took it as deep as she could. Finally she sat back.

"I hope you suck my cock that well, slave," Kaska growled, as he reached down and pulled Matia to her feet. He swung her onto a broad, hard shoulder and turned toward one of the doors off to the side. "My thanks, Dark One!"

For a moment she could only lie limp, watching the gleaming, sweat-slicked muscles work in his back as he carried her. Her ass burned ferociously from his whip.

She would be sore tomorrow, probably from injuries she did not yet have.

"By the Dark One's Double Cocks," Kaska grumbled. "Never have I had so much difficulty controlling myself before the Dark One's altar. It was all I could do not to ram right up your little ass after that flogging."

Matia smiled. "I know."

"Gloat now, slave," he said, giving her a stinging slap on her well-whipped rump. "You'll sing a different tune when you feel my big shaft splitting your virgin pucker."

"Where are we going...conqueror?" She gave the last word a note of mocking servility.

"Why, the Fuck Chambers...captive."

Matia realized what he meant as he carried her into a long hallway lined with closed doors. Even through the thick wood, she could hear gasps and cries of pleasure, surrender and pain.

"The Dark One's Warriors are busy this night," she muttered.

"The rewards of conquest." There was laughter in his voice. "Speaking of which..." A door banged open under his kick.

Chapter Five

The room was not large, but it was opulent.

Kaska carried her to a strange platform in the center of the room. On it was a wooden bench set before a small idol of the Dark One.

He put her down and told her to kneel on the padded projection that ran between the bench legs. Urging her thighs apart, Kaska circled each of them with a tough leather cuff before roping her hands behind her back. Then he bent her over so she was draped across the bench's padded seat.

Barely long enough to support her hips and lower torso, the bench was inclined so that her rump was lifted higher than her head.

Matia suddenly noticed two thin chains hanging from a pair of rings in the idol's hands. Each chain was no thicker than a lady's necklace, and ended with a narrow metal wire looped in a circle.

Kaska picked up the loops and caught her nipples in them, pulling the metal circlets tight enough to bite. The chains were so short they pulled her stiff points out from her breasts, exerting a pressure just brushing pain. Matia didn't dare struggle; she knew the chains would jerk her breasts brutally. She was completely immobilized.

Ready to have her ass violated by Kaska's big cock. Even in her nervous anticipation, she couldn't help but admire his burnished masculinity -- the broad, sculpted muscle of his chest, pelted in curling dark hair, the bulging strength of his arms, the long powerful legs -- and his cock, a thick, rosy truncheon of flesh visibly throbbing with his heartbeat. His balls were drawn up tight to his shaft, swollen with the seed he was so hungry to pump into her.

And his eyes...Matia didn't need his god to tell her what he was thinking. She'd never had a man look at her like that, with blue eyes flaming with such unrepentant lust

and anticipation. The bones of his face stood sharply etched under his tanned skin, as though with starvation.

And she was the only meal that could sate him.

Matia was glad for the bench. Without it, her powerless knees would have dumped her in the floor.

"Are you afraid of me, Matia?" he asked softly.

"Yes." It was something she'd never thought to admit to a man.

He smiled.

Slowly, Kaska moved toward her. She jerked in her bonds, wincing a little at the resulting yank to her nipples. He stretched out a big hand, brushed his fingers down the sensitive small of her back. Matia shuddered, her mouth dry as sun-burnt leather.

"Luscious Matia," he whispered. "Do you know how hard I'm fighting to keep from ramming my cock up your ass?"

She nodded, unable to speak.

His rough fingertips drifted down to her bottom, then ghosted down the sensitive cleavage, not pushing between, just teasing. They traveled lower until they slipped between her trembling thighs. Dipped between her lower lips, gently sampling.

"You're wet, Matia," Kaska said. "And you're shaking. Are you remembering what I did to Vlasta?"

"Yes," she croaked.

"What were you thinking when you watched me take her?"

The feeling of those fingers pumping inside her pussy was slowly driving her mad. "I was thinking...how big you were. How you stretched her. I thought she wouldn't be able to take your width. I wondered if you'd stop if she couldn't..."

"And?"

"I think...I think you would have made her take it. You would have made her love it. Even that."

He smiled. "But can you take me?"

"It doesn't..." She had to stop to whimper. "It doesn't matter whether I can or not. You will."

His smile grew darker. "You're right."

With that he abandoned her dripping pussy and sought the hole the Dark One had so thoroughly oiled for him. She felt him part her. For several long moments he did nothing, just staring until she could feel her very anus start to burn. Then, finally, he spread his fingers and put his thumbs on either side of her anus. Exerting pressure, he forced her rectum open. Again he studied it as she quivered in helpless anticipation.

At last he slid his thumb inside, rotating his hand to screw it in. He gave it several slow, leisurely thrusts. She squirmed as her bung began to burn in protest.

"Do you feel like a slave, Matia?" he asked suddenly.

"Yes, master," she moaned.

"You aren't. I have no wish to enslave you," he told her. Then his smile darkened. "Except in this room."

He pulled out his thumb and ruthlessly pulled her open as far as he could, then caught his cock in one hand and aimed it for her tortured bung. He entered her like a burning sword, a slow, endless, hot impalement. Matia jerked, only reduced to stillness by the pressure on her captive nipples.

"By the Dark One's Double Pricks, Matia, you're tight..." he growled.

And he was bigger than anything she'd ever felt, slowly stuffing her to bursting. So slowly.

Kaska took his time with his anal conquest, only working his way forward by molten fractions as though intent on enjoying each bit of rectal territory he invaded.

Matia had never felt so fucked, so overcome by male strength and male flesh. His cock burned like a column of solid fire inside her. She could only surrender.

Yet even after her muscles relaxed, Kaska moved no faster, keeping his invasion slow and relentless as he slid inside, stretching her wide.

"That's it, Matia," he purred, when he was all the way in at last. He bent to find her clit with his rough fingers. "Yield to my big cock. Taste the pleasure of enslavement, the dark delight of submitting to your master's rod. And here, I am your master."

"Yesssss," she moaned.

He drew out, sending pleasure scalding its way up her spine. She whimpered. "You've been dreaming about this for months, Matia, about the pain and ecstasy, about being vanquished and tied and reamed..."

She gasped, "Yes..."

"And I've been dreaming about it too." He began to thrust, slowly at first, then faster, deeper. "Dreamed of laying you on the cock altar, of seeing you dance for the whip, of bending you over and forcing your virgin ass with hard strokes. Just...like...*this*."

He was fucking her now far more brutally than he'd taken Vlasta, as if too heated for any thought of mercy. But Matia didn't care. His stroking fingers teased pleasure from her clit, and his every withdrawal was a dark delight to match the pain of his inward thrusts. She lifted her hips for him, savoring it all, ecstasy and agony in equal measure.

"Am I hurting you, Matia?" he growled.

"Yes..." she whimpered.

"And you love it anyway."

"Yes!" She could feel her thighs begin to twitch. "Oh, yes! Harder, Kaska!"

"Yes!" And he began driving hard, fucking her ass deeply and mercilessly, until all she could do was buck and scream. Her orgasm rolled over her in burning waves that matched each pitiless thrust, and she convulsed, her scream spiraling into a screech.

"Now..." he gasped, "now I'm going to...pump...you...FULL!"

Dimly, Matia felt him ram to his full length. With a roar like a hunting Hill Cat, he began shooting jet after jet into her violated rectum.

When at last they could breathe again, he freed her from the bench with hands that shook. He went in search of clean water and cloths and cleaned them both, his hands tender on her flesh. Then, spent, almost limp from the violence of their passion, they staggered together to the bed that stood on one side of the room and tumbled into it.

"Are you all right?" Kaska asked hoarsely, as he drew her into his powerful arms.

"Aye," she sighed. "Oh, aye."

Despite the weals on her ass and the ache of her anus, she tumbled into a blissful sleep to the sound of his heartbeat.

Big, rough fingers traced the lines of fire striping her backside, jolting Matia awake. She lifted her head and blinked at the morning sunlight pouring through the window grate. "Oh, gods!" she groaned, and dropped her head.

"I have hurt you." The note of guilt in Kaska's voice made her lift her head again and frown at him. He was anxiously studying the weals he'd left with his whip. "What demon possessed me?"

Matia yawned hugely and turned over, wincing a little at the fierce ache. Hot as it was, it was somehow satisfying. She smiled. "I think its name was lust, M'Lord. And it had its lovely claws just as deep in me."

He sat up, combing his big hands through his hair, a deep frown on his face. "Where did I leave my saddle bags? I think I have some salve that should..."

"Oh, come, Kaska," Matia said lightly, dropping a hand on his powerful shoulder. "Think you I've never had a flogging? Sweet goddess, the Elder Daughters took a whip to me every time I missed a parry. And I must say, I enjoyed yours far more, as they never brought me to climax afterward."

He studied her face, grim doubt in his eyes. "I was rough with you."

She grinned. "Aye. And 'twas most exciting. I rather enjoy driving you to such extremes."

"Matia..."

She sighed, for his expression had not lightened one jot. "I am a warrior, Kaska. I rather like being taken as one. As much as you enjoyed taking me, I might add."

"But..."

With a sigh of exasperation, she rose, flung a leg over his hip and settled down across his thighs. "It strikes me, master, that your slave's cunt has yet to know your cock. And..."

Now his gaze burned fierce into hers. "I told you, you're no slave, Matia. You are my Shieldmate. And, if you wish it, my wife."

She smiled slowly and let her hands trace the ridges and hollows of his big, muscled body. His nipples rose to tight peaks as she thumbed them. "Oh, aye, Shieldmate. I do wish it, most sincerely."

As his great cock stirred and rose against her belly, she bent to taste his firm mouth. "By the Dark One's Double Cocks, Matia," Kaska groaned, "I do love you."

At that, a wild heat rose in her. "And I love you, Kaska, master of my heart."

Then, angling his cock into the air, she rose and took him deep in her creaming cunt. Her ass stung as she sank onto the big shaft, but she barely noticed. She was too entranced by the feeling of his thick, satin width so deep in her.

Slowly, moaning in pleasure, she began to grind down on Kaska's cock as his hands lifted to tease her nipples.

From the corner of one eye, she thought she saw the black marble eyes of the Dark One's idol.

They glowed bright red.

Riding her lover, Matia smiled.

THE END

Victoria Michaels

Victoria Michaels has worked as a comic book writer, a newspaper reporter, and a novelist. Her stories have won several awards, including the South Carolina Press Association award.

Her first writing love has always been romance. In 1996, she discovered the small press publishing and realized her dream when her first Romance was published.

Victoria is now multi-published, as both an author and a cover artist, and enjoys success under several names, but that success would be hollow without the love and support of her friends and family. It's no surprise Victoria Michaels considers herself a profoundly lucky woman.