

Witch Magic 1: The Binding

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Chapter 1

"I would rather marry a spider troll," said Rosemary Thorne. She stood in the Thornes' kitchen, the very place she'd learn to both cook a roast and create a hex, and faced her mother over the rectangular, rough-hewn table that had passed from mother to eldest daughter since the 1600s.

Sarah Mills had been the first owner of the table. She had lived in Salem at the time of the witch trials, but had been accused near the end of the madness. She'd escaped the gallows, and not long after, escaped the town. The Mills and the Thornes had been two of the first families to settle in California. Rosemary and her sisters had been born and raised in Nevada City, a small mountain town in the northern part of the state.

Rosemary's gaze lovingly traced the marks and age spots of the remarkable piece of history. As the firstborn daughter, Rosemary would be given the table after she married. Hah. A parting gift for pledging her life to that... *warlock*.

"Rose, dear..." Her mother sighed. Thea Thorne put down her cup of chamomile tea and waved a chair out from the table. The legs screeched across the wood floor. "Please sit down."

Rosemary marched the rest of the way into the room and sat, slapping onto the table the offending parchment that had just arrived. "It's bad enough I have to marry at all. But to spend the rest of my days as the wife of a man who practices the dark arts... it's intolerable."

"Another silly story spun by rumor mongers. Drake Dundrury is a very respectable warlock and one you seemed to like just fine a few years ago."

Rosemary remained silent. She had never told a soul about why she'd stopped talking to Drake. It was her pain. She owned it fully and wouldn't share it.

"It's our way, Rose. You are the eldest daughter. And that is your blessing and your burden. You are bound by laws of the craft and the traditions of our people. You've known for sixteen years that you belong to Drake and he to you. The spells are long cast."

Rosemary was on the verge of tears. Her mother held no sympathy. She had been the eldest Mills daughter who'd been Bound to the eldest Thorne son. They loved each other deeply and it was a relationship Rosemary had grown to appreciate and to envy.

When Rosemary was five years old and Drake seven their parents had signed the marriage accord and completed the spells that had weaved together her and Drake's future.

As part of the archaic rituals of the Binding between the eldest daughter and the eldest son of two clans, warlocks were allowed to practice seduction and to take physical pleasure as it suited them. Their brides-to-be, however, were expected to remain virginal and ignorant until marriage.

Oh botheration! Could she help it that she begrudged Drake the knowledge that would benefit her on their wedding night and every night after? Did it really matter? He had managed to break her heart before they'd even had a single kiss. Once, she had believed that she loved him.

How could the man who knew he would be her husband betray her?

It wasn't betrayal, reminded an inner voice that sounded too much like the dulcet tones of her mother. *It was no more than what is expected of a warlock before his Binding.*

Phooey. The horrible night when she'd found... oh who wanted to think about *that*? At her angriest, Rosemary had spent time researching ways to break her Binding to Drake. Since the spells cast by powerful witches and warlocks invoked love, she was screwed. Love spells, potions, and hexes were dangerous, if only because the purity of the strongest human emotion made them damn near impossible to break. No one in the history of the clans had ever successfully broken a Binding. *No one.*

Her diligence and desperation had forced her to dig through the most ancient of texts. In one dusty, crumbling book, she had found the only way possible to dissolve a Binding. And she would rather marry Drake than use that too terrible get-out-of-Binding card.

The Binding... Her throat knotted with dread. Once the final ritual had been completed, the couple was joined, in all ways, only to each other. It terrified her to think about being alone with Drake on their wedding eve, much less for the rest of their lives. She'd spent the last three years avoiding him.

In truth, she had thought more about the night she'd found him doing you-know-what to you-know-who in the last few days than she had in a very long while. She had begun to wonder about the veracity of her own memories. But she'd held on to her anger for too long to give it up now.

"The whole thing is archaic. *Barbaric*. We live in modern times," said Rosemary.

Her mother patted her hand. "We may exist alongside the modern world, but we do not live in it. You know very well that your powers will be intertwined with Drake's. The Binding is not only emotional, but physical. And it's permanent."

Rosemary slumped in her chair, her gaze on the creased parchment. "It doesn't seem fair to not have a choice in love."

"Your hearts chose each other long before your stubborn natures could interfere. The ritual is as old as time, Rose. You are meant for Drake."

Rosemary unfolded the crisp, thick paper and read again, with the same sense of longing and loathing, the words Drake had written:

I, Drake Darrius Dundrury, warlock-warrior, request the honor of the witch-maiden, Rosemary Selena Thorne, to Castle Dundrury to complete the Ritual of Binding that we may live as husband and wife in good stead and good faith until death do us part.

With a wave of her hand, Thea made parchment, inkpot, and quill appear. "He has made the formal gesture, dear. Send your reply." She leaned forward. "And stop muttering that spell, Rose. I refuse to allow you to hex the paper."

* * *

Drake Dunderury unfolded the parchment that had just arrived and smiled. Rosemary's hostility imbued her polite, formal response. Ah, had he expected forgiveness?

"She dinna wan' to marry you," said the elderly woman sitting like a dowager queen in a red-velvet wingback. She muttered toward the fireplace and flames erupted then crackled along the logs of cedar.

"True, Grandmother. The beautiful Miss Thorne does not want me as a husband." Drake sat in the wingback opposite Deandra Dunderury and looked at the fire. The tangy-sweet smell of cedar wafted into the air, bringing with it a sense of hope. His gaze traveled along the stone fireplace to the mantelpiece. Only one object was worthy of being placed on it -- the urn that held his grandfather's ashes.

His grandmother's bedroom was huge; it included its own large bathroom with sauna and Jacuzzi as well as a reading room that held his grandmother's beloved collection of books. A grin twitched his lips. She liked Danielle Steele best.

"The Dunderurys are no more," said Grandmother. "You're the last. You canna fail us."

No pressure there. He sighed and shook his head, the weight of the world, no the weight of being last in a dynasty, settling heavily on him. Drake looked at the tapestries that hung on either side of the fireplace. They were nearly as old as the castle, which had existed for 1,000 years on the craggy seaside cliff. They told the stories of the Dunderurys -- a long line of warlock-warriors who held honor above all things.

And now he was the only Dunderury male that lived. His parents had died when he was fourteen and his grandfather two years later. The wizened woman with failing eyesight and gray hair was the only family he had left. His heart clenched as he watched the slow rise and fall of her chest. She looked frail and wrinkled and pale. Father Earth! Would he lose her, too?

"Stop worryin' about death," she snapped. "I still breathe."

Drake laughed, even though he felt more like weeping. His marriage to Rosemary Thorne was more than just the completion of a sixteen-year promise, more

than just a witch and a warlock accepting the Binding, more than a man wanting the love of a woman. Marrying Rosemary would save the Dunderury bloodline -- and his very soul.

Chapter 2

Rosemary glared at her reflection in the standing oval mirror. She had spent the better part of the morning in her parents' bedroom bending to the will of her mother and sisters.

Thank the Goddess her mother had gone to see to other details. Unfortunately, her sisters had stayed to harass her. Given her druthers, she would show up to the ceremony in shorts, T-shirt, and flip-flops. *Might as well be comfortable as I hand over my life to Drake the Dark.* She sighed. *Yeah, right.* She wouldn't embarrass her family by doing something so uncouth. But when she was installed at Castle Dundrury as its mistress, she'd wear T-shirts and flip-flops, all day, every day.

Her gaze returned to the mirror. Her blonde hair had been upswept and bespelled with diamond sparkles, which flitted in and out of her hair like frenzied fireflies. They'd disappear by the end of the wedding ceremony. Her green gaze looked... well, *green* especially with the black kohl her sister Sage had used to outline her eyes. Her lips shimmered pink with regular ol' lipstick, but she eschewed any other make-up.

"Perfect skin," said Sage in a voice filled with envy. "You are a beautiful bride."

"Oh shut up."

"You have such a sweet temperament, too," said Ginger. She stood behind Rosemary, straightening out the cream-colored knee-length dress. Rose's bosom usually required no bra because, be-damned, she had small breasts. The dress clung to her curves and showed off what little cleavage she could muster. Underneath it, she wore a cream-colored camisole, matching thong, and thigh-high silk stockings that were, of course, the same cream color as everything else she wore, including the uncomfortable

high heels. Even her toenails and fingernails had been painted a pearlescent off-white. "I feel like an ice cream cone," she grouched.

"You're as cold as one," said Ginger tartly.

Sage elbowed Ginger in the ribs. "You look very pretty, Rose."

Despite Sage's compliment, *Ginger* was the pretty one. Rosemary eyed the middle Thorne sister. The nineteen-year-old had hair the color of her name, a gorgeous red mane that fell in glossy waves to her ass. She also had a Marilyn Monroe figure, all booty and boobs. The only physical commonality the sisters shared was the color of their eyes. All Thorne women had green eyes, which was a combination of genetics and an ancestor's beauty spell that had created unexpectedly long-lasting effects.

Sage was the youngest at seventeen. She had short hair, cut chin-length, as soft and black as a raven's wing. She was also the most innocent and naïve -- which had less to do with her age and more to do with her personality. She helped Rosemary put on five thin gold bracelets. They matched the small gold hoops, three on each lobe, jangling in her ears.

"Are you ready?" asked Sage.

"No."

"Oh the Goddess!" Ginger tugged on a curl that hung near Rosemary's cheek. "Would you stop your bitching and moaning? Drake is the most gorgeous man on the planet, not to mention the richest. You get to live in a castle in the lap of luxury and you get to play hide-the-wand with him every night."

"*Hide-the-wand?*" Rosemary laughed, genuinely amused. Truthfully, she'd probably enjoy making love to Drake. But the Binding of soul, mind, and heart for the rest of their natural lives? Ye gods! It terrified her.

"You two are lucky," she said, staring once again at her reflection. "Only the firstborn daughter must do the Binding. You can marry whoever and whenever you choose."

Sage squeezed her arm in sympathy. Rosemary's thoughts tumbled and twirled, a whirlwind of suspicions and hopes and realizations. She glanced at her sisters. "I need

you to do some research for me. Some quick research because I'll need it before uh... you know... tonight."

"What kind of research?" asked Ginger, her gaze narrowed.

"Just... research, okay? Trust me."

"We'll be happy to do this favor for you," said Sage, giving Ginger a look of censure. "Don't worry about your Binding. Everything will work out for the best, sister."

"I know. And I know I must do this. The bride-price Drake agreed to pay will save our family finances."

"We are not trading you for money," said Ginger. "We love you, Rose. I pray to the Goddess every day for you, that you will find comfort and joy in this Binding. Blessed be, sister."

"Yes," said Sage, kissing Rose's cheek. "Blessed be."

Rosemary smiled, though her heart felt heavy. She was being so persnickety, so whiny... but deep down, she was afraid. *What if I am not a good wife? What if Drake doesn't like me? What if the Binding spell cast so long ago was wrong about us? What if I was wrong about his betrayal?* She saw her sisters' gazes in the mirror, the worry and the hope in their eyes, and took each of their hands. "Blessed be, sisters. And may the Goddess grant us long lives and love everlasting."

* * *

The wedding ceremony was blessedly short and ended with Drake brushing a soft kiss on her cheek. She was too nervous to wonder why he avoided her lips. Rosemary's heart pounded the whole time, especially when she looked into the warm, dark eyes of Drake and pledged herself to him eternally. Repeating the spells and vows made by their parents sixteen years ago was nothing more than show. The true Binding was made permanent on the wedding night -- when the bride and groom shared their bodies and their magic for the first time.

At the reception, Rosemary stayed as far from Drake as possible and smiled at guests until her face went numb. She'd had only a few minutes alone to read over the

material her sisters had gathered for her, but what they'd uncovered confirmed her fears.

"If you keep downing champagne like that," whispered Ginger in Rosemary's ear, "you're going to pass out before you get to see what Drake is wearing under that kilt."

"Good point." Rosemary finished off the flute of bubbly and headed to the bar for a refill.

"Go dance with your husband." Ginger grabbed the empty glass out of her hand, spun her around, and shoved her into Drake's open arms. "Hey, D-man! Is it true what they say about a Scot's kilt?"

"Lassie, I'd offer you a peek," said Drake in a thick put-on Scottish brogue, "but your sister would cut off my wee bits."

"Shoulda snipped you years ago," said Rosemary, feeling a little dizzy as Drake deftly maneuvered her onto the dance floor. "Then you might not have used your wee bits on that... that... *you know*."

"Will you never forgive me, Rosie?"

She didn't respond. How could she? Goddess, she felt light-headed. And her heart seemed like it was trying to pound right out of her chest. It wasn't because she felt so good in her husband's arms. That he felt so strong and warm and virile. No. Being held by Drake was definitely not why she felt flushed and happy.

"I'm *not* happy," she said, to verbally counteract that teeny ember of joy.

"You're the one who ran away and refused to speak to me." Drake executed a spin and twirled her back into his embrace. "You're the one holding a grudge."

"At least I wasn't the one holding a *nymph*." Rosemary swallowed the knot in her throat. "You're a warlock. You can fuck anyone you want before the Binding. I'm the one that had to cross her legs and wait."

Drake stiffened and his eyes went cold. He whirled her off the dance floor then grabbed her arm and led her into her parents' house.

He'd spent many days of his youth in her home. Rosemary knew he was very aware which bedroom belonged to her. He hauled her upstairs then into the room that held only her stripped twin bed and packed boxes. He slammed shut the door.

"The only person I've ever wanted to fuck was *you*. I don't give a good goddamn what the outdated rules of Binding say... there was no one, ever, in my heart but you, Rosemary Thorne." His anger was palpable. Rosemary backed up a step and he followed her, an unrelenting shadow of rage.

Tears pooled in her eyes, but she blinked them away. "You don't have to lie to me. I haven't been with anyone else. I followed the rules of the Binding. You will have your virgin bride."

"What if I said I wanted your love more than your virginity," said Drake in a low, hot voice.

Confusion and champagne roiled in her stomach. She placed her palm against her trembling belly and tried to soak in the meaning of Drake's fury, of his words. "If you loved me so much, why did you screw that green-haired slut?"

His nostrils flared and a muscle in his jaw ticked. "I can't tell you."

"Hah. *Won't* is more like it." Rosemary allowed her own anger and hurt to erupt. "You wouldn't kiss me. Wouldn't touch me. Wouldn't put a little ding into your nobility, into your duty, into your *pride*. Was it so wrong to want you then? To love you? If we were to be Bound, why wait for the pleasures we could give each other?"

She saw the ribbon of pain in his eyes before his gaze shuttered. Now, she wondered if she had misjudged Drake. And *not* judged the nymph, a creature known as both wily and pitiless. *Has Drake ever given me a reason to not trust him?* After the Binding spell had been cast, they had spent a lot of time together as children and as teens.

When they were children, only two years different in age, she'd known him to be protective and kind. When she bloomed into a young woman, he gave her the attention a boy gave to a girl he liked. He never went beyond the bounds of propriety. If she teased him too long or pushed him too far, he'd whisper, "When the time is right, lass, nothin' and no one will stop me from making you mine."

The Scottish accent had always sent delightful shivers through her. She had believed him, trusted him, loved him... and then... she had witnessed him plunging his cock into the ripe pussy of that harlot nymph. Hurt ripped through her again and with it, the knowledge of what she'd tried to hide from her own heart.

Be-damned! I love him.

This time she couldn't prevent the tears; they rolled down her cheeks. Her chest felt like it was on fire, but she wouldn't give in to the sobs. Wails clogged her throat, suffocating her. She clenched her teeth together to prevent the childish, foolish urge to rail and rage and weep.

"You can't forgive me." Drake moved away from her. His fists clenched, but his expression was blank. "Verra well then. We have not completed the final act of Binding, Rosie. If'n you want to be released, say the word. I will break the pledge and give you freedom."

Chapter 3

Drake watched Rosemary struggle with her emotions. He saw the shock in her eyes, but her expression lacked what he dreaded most: relief and joy. Thank the Goddess! Maybe she didn't want to be rid of him.

"You know how to break the Binding." Her voice quivered. "And if so, then you know what will happen to the one who reverses the spells and revokes the pledge."

"The betrayer will be stripped of his magic, his property, and his ability to procreate."

"Sterilized," she said, her tone horrified. "With no money, no magic, and no friends. You would be shunned forever. An Outsider until you died."

"Aye."

"And you would offer this because... because... be-damned, I don't even know why. You hate me that much?"

He rolled his eyes, but truthfully, the insolent gesture belied the tightness of his gut, the breath stalled in his lungs. She sounded outraged, but not willing to condemn him to hell. "It is because I love you that I make the offer. How can I ask you to share your life with a man you don't respect?"

"I never said I didn't respect you," she snapped. "I said I was pissed off that you screwed a nymph."

"You didna speak to me for three years!"

"Well, I was *mad*."

"Father Earth!" roared Drake. "Are ye Bound to me or not, lass?"

"You know your brogue gets worse when you get all emotional?"

"*Rosie...*" His voice was rife with warning.

She wiped her eyes, smearing the kohl so badly she looked like a drunk raccoon. And he didn't care. His Rosie could be covered in mud and smell like a compost pile and she'd still be the most beautiful woman he'd ever known. She'd still be *his*. And nothing she did or said would ever break his trust, his love. Pain stabbed him true and deep. She didn't feel the same intense emotions for him, though. If she had loved him more, believed in him more... it would've made all the difference.

"I won't let you off that easy, Drake. I'm afraid you're stuck with me."

She attempted to sashay by him, but he wouldn't allow her the dignity of escape. He was tired of her running away from him. Running away from *them* and what they could have together. He gathered her into his arms and pushed back the loose tendrils of her blonde hair.

"My darlin' Rosie," he murmured. He lowered his head and watched her eyes widen in stunned anticipation.

Slowly, oh-so-slowly, he brushed his lips across hers.

He shuddered with the pleasure derived from that sweet touch. Her gasp feathered his mouth and he breathed in the essence of her. Champagne. Desire. *Rosie*.

Angling his mouth over hers, he tasted her again. Her lips were soft as the petals of a flower, still lightly slick from her lipstick. He kissed her until her mouth was swollen and ripe, the pink gloss rubbed away to nothing.

Her breathing was erratic, her eyes dazed, and her arms limp around his neck. His body was tense with longing, with need. And his cock was hard as an oak tree. Cupping her ass, he brought her close, slipped his hard length between the vee of her thighs.

"Drake. Oh. Uh... wow."

He smiled against her mouth then took her lips again, worshipping the contours, memorizing the shape, testing the sweetness that waited for him.

Hunger for his soulmate burned through him. He had wanted to wait for her. It shamed him that his first experience had been with Andromeda, the deceitful bitch. But

she had tricked him... *Stop thinking about it, you fool. The woman you love is finally in your arms!*

With his tongue, he traced the seam of her lips then broke through the slight resistance and dipped inside for a real taste. She moaned into his mouth, her sigh of surrender as heady as champagne. Her mouth was juicy, reminding him of just-picked strawberries, tangy-sweet and plump.

Her tongue met his, engaging in a teasing dance that mimicked another kind of penetration and motion. Joy sang through him and intertwined with the heat of his passion.

"Rosie," he whispered as he broke the kiss. His breathing was tattered, his heart raging. "I would take you right now, love. But you deserve that your first time be special. Rose petals. Silk sheets. Candles. And music." He had planned it all. They'd spell themselves into the honeymoon suite he'd created at their castle. He would show her how much he loved her, needed her, and wanted to Bind with her.

Rosemary blinked up at him. "Oh fuck that." She slipped out of his grasp and knelt, flipping up the edge of his kilt. "Hot damn! You are naked under your skirt."

"'Tis a kilt," he corrected, "and you shouldna be lookin' at the -- ooooooh." His eyes almost crossed as she went to work on his balls. She suckled one testicle then the other and kept switching... suckling, kissing, tormenting... until he lost all mental functions. "Now, Rosie, you shouldna -- aaaaaah." Her tongue wiggled up his cock, a snake of wet pleasure that impaired his ability to breathe. She drew the tip of his penis into the warm heat of her mouth then she... oh Goddess... she kept going. *An' goin'*. Until she'd taken all of him.

Ravenous, she was. She practiced taking his full length over and over. Her eagerness outweighed her inexperience and soon she managed a rhythm that included not only suction and movement, but the unbelievable sensual laving of her tongue.

"Rosie, stop!" He yanked away from her devilish mouth and glared down at her. "You're going to make me come."

"Oh good." She crawled under his kilt, dug her nails into his ass and took his cock again, her rhythm doubled, her tongue flicking fast and furious... and oh damn!

The orgasm ripped through him with an intensity that almost buckled his knees. His hands fisted into Rosemary's silky hair as he came, pumping into her mouth. She drank from him, a purr in her throat. Her tongue soothed and licked until the pulsing of his cock receded and, unfortunately, so did its hardness. She kissed the tip and leaned back to look up at him.

He met her gaze and grinned at her self-satisfied expression. He knelt next to her and cupped her face. "Thank you, Rosie. That was... amazing. A beautiful gift from my bride."

"Hmmm. When do I get a gift?" Her smile was mischievous and sent an arrow of lust right into his groin.

"No worries. I plan to reciprocate, darlin'."

He leaned down to kiss her, but she reared away. "Drake! I just... uh, you know."

"I dinna fear the taste of my seed on your lips, Rosie. Let me kiss you." The second time he leaned toward her, she opened her mouth for him and he kissed her fully, his tongue gently warring with hers. He trailed kisses across her jaw, behind her ear, and down her neck. He nipped her collarbone.

"Drake, I'm ready for the rose petals and candles and music."

"Anything for you, Rosemary Dundrury."

Her eyes were soft and wet, but this time with lust and, yes, he recognized the love there, too. She loved him. Maybe not as much as he loved her, but as long as she was his wife, he would be happy.

But would his Rosie be happy... or miserable?

Chapter 4

Rosemary sat at the edge of the humongous four-poster bed and watched Drake wiggle off her heels. She'd taken a few minutes to wash her face and would've undressed, too, except Drake insisted on de-clothing her. Soft, wordless music drifted in the air; the rose petals sprinkled on the bed and floor were fragrant; and the many lit candles gave the room a romantic glow.

Drake's fingers drifted across her ankle and cupped her heel. Then he massaged the arch. She groaned in pleasure. "Oh Goddess, that feels good."

"I give really good foot," he said with a wicked grin. He applied his magical hands to feet, calves, knees, thighs. The tension in her muscles melted, but with his hot hands stroking her flesh, another kind of tension built in her. His hands traveled under her dress, following the sleek line of hose to the lace edging.

"What do we have here?" He slipped his forefinger underneath the silk perimeter. "Stand up, love."

She did as he bade, raising her arms and allowing him to take off her dress. The intense desire in his gaze made her flesh tingle.

"You're beautiful," he said, his brogue thickening.

Most of the time, his accent wasn't that noticeable. Much to Rosemary's disappointment, Drake managed a cultured, formal tone when conversing; it gave her no small amount of pleasure to realize he lost his civility with her. He'd been using thick brogue nearly all day. That accent was almost enough to give a girl an orgasm.

"I want to see your breasts," he said with an ache in his voice.

A glimmer of uncertainty sliced through her ribboning desire. She stalled his effort to take off the camisole. "I'm afraid you'll be disappointed. I'm not... big."

"Really?" He rubbed his chin. "Not big, eh? Well, we can always find a spell for breast enlargement."

"What!" Outrage bubbled through her. "You would use magic to fix my lack of cleavage?"

"I dinna know. I have to see the specimens to make a decision." He stripped off the camisole. His gaze went dark, she noted happily, and he seemed to lose his ability to talk. Then he said hoarsely, "I need to feel them and taste them. Test 'em out. Determine how much bigger they should be."

Rosemary was onto his game now. Spell for breast enlargement, indeed! Drake didn't seem inclined to do more than look. Granted, his expression suggested he was a starving man gaping at a feast.

Biting back a grin, she cupped her breasts and squeezed. "Size of oranges. See? Pitiful." She jiggled them and Drake moaned. "And my nipples... inadequate, I fear." Using her forefingers, she flicked the nubs into turgid points then twisted them. Pleasure zinged through her at the slightly rough treatment. "Oh wow. That felt really good."

"*Argh-ugh!*" Drake dove forward; they fell onto the bed. Rosemary laughed and tried to wiggle away... but not too much. He grabbed her arms and raised them above her head. "Palms flat on the headboard, love. And don't you move until I've examined your luscious *oranges* in detail."

Rosemary flattened her palms against the smooth wood of the headboard and waited. Drake was patient. Too patient. He seemed to want to savor her when all she felt was the insatiable need to gobble him up. He nuzzled the space between her breasts, kissing the soft flesh thoroughly before veering right. With his tongue, he encircled her small pink areola. Her nipple was hard, the point aching for his mouth. But nooooo... he tortured her with small, sweet kisses and quick stabs of his tongue.

"Drake... please."

He looked at her as his mouth hovered over her nipple. "Please what?"

"Are you *serious*?" She looked from him to her breast. "Do you need a map?"

Chuckling, he flicked the peak with his tongue. She gasped at the enjoyable torment. Still, Drake showed no mercy. His tongue encircled her nipple, occasionally stopping to torture the tender peak with licks. Then finally... *oh finally...* he took the nipple into his mouth and suckled.

Her hands threaded through his soft, thick hair. She pressed him closer as delight skittered through her. Goddess, the sensations he caused were intense. Heat settled between her thighs; her pussy felt slick and swollen.

Drake spent his time on her other breast, torturing it in the same manner, driving her insane with lust until she was writhing underneath him. "More," she begged. "More."

"Aye," he whispered. His lips paid homage to her ribcage, his tongue trailing every line of bone. He tasted her navel, circling the flesh around it. His breath heated her skin; his thorough exploration of her body left her quivering and needy.

Then he attacked her hips. One wet, hot nip for each side.

She wasn't prepared for his sudden invasion of her cunt. He pushed apart her thighs, threw her legs over his shoulders, and penetrated her with his tongue. Just like that. No gentle insistence... no whispered warning... *nothing*. He thrust deeply, tasting her, moaning so loud she felt the vibration in her pussy. The patience he had shown, the skill of his sensual persecution dissipated like the sparkles of a finished magical spell. Now, he was a beast with a voracious appetite.

Thank the Goddess!

Her lungs stalled, her heart tripled its beat, and her eyes rolled back into her head. Her body felt afire, gloriously blazing, and she reveled in the heat of their passion.

His tongue licked the crease of her pussy lips, delving into the wetness with eagerness. The fast, hungry glide ended at her clitoris. He drew the sensitive nub into his mouth and suckled, his tongue rapidly flicking.

The bliss that trembled in her belly built into a powerful crescendo. "Drake..." she whispered. "Oh Drake!"

The orgasm burst and scorched her with endless, blissful waves. As her pussy convulsed, Drake rose above her, gathered her close, and quickly pierced her vagina. She felt the giving of her maidenhood under the demand of his cock and bit her lip to keep from crying out. Be-damned! *That hurts!* The pain of his penetration could not be hidden even within the orgasm rippling through her.

"I'm sorry, love," he whispered. "It is the way of the Binding."

"I know." She wrapped her arms around his neck and pressed a kiss to the sweat-beaded flesh of his throat. "I'm ready."

He thrust inside her, hard and fast. She mimicked his motions with her own hips, trying to relax, trying to accommodate the odd sensation of something big and hard breaching her womanhood.

"My beautiful Rosie. You're so tight, so wet."

His words caused desire to flutter anew. He slid his arms under her and cupped her shoulders. Following a primal instinct, she put her legs around his waist. Doing so changed the angle of his entry, and she felt her overwrought clit begin to tingle.

"Faster," she demanded. Drake complied. She met his thrusts, moaning as her clit bumped against his quick-moving body. He fucked her wildly, all growls and sweat and motion until she felt the burble of another orgasm. She sucked in a breath, wanting desperately to have one more taste of that incredible thrill. "Drake... please... make me come. I want to come with you."

"Yes, darlin'. Yes." Drake pressed his lips against her temple. "Being with you is everything I ever imagined. 'Tis you I've wanted, Rosie. Only you." His words made the tight feeling in her core curl and pulse, a coil of erotic tension waiting to be released. He buried his face in her neck; his breath tickled her ear. And his cock... oh his wondrous, hard cock... pumped ferociously, bringing her closer and closer to paradise.

"The spell," he muttered tightly. "We must say the words."

Together, they spoke the words of the binding.

The spell long cast

Now comes to pass

Heart, soul, body... I give to thee

For eternity I Bind you to me.

Rosemary found rapture with Drake. As their mutual orgasm took their bodies, the spell weaved its final charm. The white energy of Drake and the yellow energy of Rosemary emerged from their bodies and melded into one power, pulsating waves of yellow and white, forever bound into its own magical tapestry. As the enchantment rolled over them and through them, the four tenets of the Binding engraved their hearts: love, truth, loyalty, faith.

They collapsed against each other, exhausted and happy.

"Forever Bound," whispered Rosemary.

"Forever Bound," repeated Drake.

He held her close, murmuring sweet nothings into her hair, and Rosemary snuggled into the arms of her husband, and drifted toward sleep. How could she have ever thought about the Binding as a sorrowful burden? It was a rare, joyous gift. For the first time in her life she felt... whole.

"I love you, Drake," she murmured as she fell into dreams. She barely heard him whisper, "I hope 'tis enough, Rosie."

Chapter 5

Drake... oh Drake-a-licious. C'mon, lover. It's time.

Drake blinked awake. As he lay in bed, wondering what woke him, he heard the lyrical voice again in his mind.

Drakie poo. Draaaaaaakie pooooooooooooo.

Be-damned! He sat up and looked down at his sleeping wife. *Wife*. How long he'd waited for this day. He and Rosemary married and Bound. His joy was short-lived as apprehension clawed through him. *Rosie*. Swallowing the knot of dread in his throat, he slipped out of bed. Rosemary sighed and shifted, her arms clutching his warm pillow. He waited. Soon, she slept deeply. He drew on a white robe and hurried out of the room.

Drake went to the small garden on the left side of the castle. A month after his parents passed on to the next realm, he'd spent nearly every hour of every day planting and crafting and weeping. He'd commissioned the brass fountain, too. The artist used a picture of his parents at their last anniversary party. The two shining figures, a man and woman both laughing, were in mid-dance, forever celebrating life in a garden created by their son.

It was here the nymph had found him three years ago.

Sexually frustrated, aching in body and soul for Rosemary, he'd been an emotional mess -- an emotional mess with a hard-on. Hours before, he'd nearly kissed Rosie. And even a chaste kiss would have been the first domino falling... one kiss, and all his reasons for not making love to her would've fallen like lined-up dominoes.

He had wanted to wait for her, for the Binding. He loved her. Had always loved her. He'd learned to stave off his baser needs by fantasizing about his wife-to-be and masturbating. Be-damned! Imagining intimacy would never match reality. Soon, his

memories and his hands weren't enough to satisfy his lusts. He spent too much time with his Rosie. She smelled good. Her skin was silky soft, her hair glittered like finely spun gold, her lips the color of rosebuds... If he tasted her just once... he'd break.

That night, he'd sought solace in the garden. Usually the green space with its fragrant flowers, soothing fountain, and oak benches gave him comfort. He spoke to his parents there, sought their wisdom. They never answered, of course. But he always felt their love.

Brooding about the past in general and that long ago evening in particular, Drake sat on one of the oak benches and let the burbling water in the fountain calm him. Yes, he remembered it all too clearly. He'd been too involved in his own thoughts to notice anything awry. He had only thought about Rosie. She had never understood his noble intentions. She teased him because he let her see his desire without ever acting on it. She was just as frustrated as he. Yet, he'd been a man of twenty. And she had just turned eighteen.

There was a reason a woman committed to the Binding had to wait until her twenty-first birthday to have sex. It was unfair, too -- a quirk of gender. A warlock's magic was solid, complete, and strong from birth. A witch's magic reached its peak in her twenty-first year. The Binding had to be consummated when the witch's and warlock's powers were strongest.

Drake, you're such a bloody fool.

No, he hadn't noticed the faint hint of magic in the garden.

But he had noticed the woman.

Because she had been the very woman he'd been thinking about... the woman he loved... the woman he desired...

Rosemary.

Only later, after he'd lost his sanity and his inhibitions, did he realize he'd sacrificed his virginity and slaked his lust not with Rosemary... but with a nymph. Goddess in Heaven. To his everlasting shame and regret, he'd fucked Andromeda.

And Rosemary had seen him do it.

In a way, it had been a blessing. Andromeda's deception had prevented him from taking Rosie, from risking a premature Binding at a point where her magic was not yet fully gifted.

"Fond memories, lover?" the nymph cooed as she sparkled into solid form next to him. The look in her sky-blue eyes promised untold delights, but a man who chose to partake of Andromeda's charms paid a heavy price.

"There is no fondness in my memories or my heart for you," he said. "Why did you summon me on my wedding eve?"

"I was bored." She trailed her fingers up his thigh. He slapped away her hand and stood. She giggled -- the sound as pretty as wind chimes -- and shook out the mossy green locks of her waist-length hair. "Oh Drake. I'm not going to bite you." She smiled and revealed her sharp, white teeth. "Much."

Like most nymphs, she eschewed clothing. Her beauty was ethereal, dangerous. Her naked perfection would tempt the most principled of men. "I want payment for services rendered, Drakie poo."

"The conditions of your bargain have been met. Rosemary chose to Bind with me even though she believed I betrayed her."

Andromeda *tsked tsked*. "That was not the bargain struck, lover. Rosemary must choose her love for you above all else. No matter what she hears, no matter what she sees... she must believe her heart. Submitting to her duty as eldest daughter is not love."

"Witches and warlocks who Bind are in love. It's a condition of the spell."

"So is love real?" asked Andromeda, her eyes wide and beguiling. "If you can make someone fall in love with a few words and a smattering of herbs... then the whole world should be in love."

Drake clenched his teeth. "It doesn't work that way and you know it. The souls choose each other before the spell is cast."

"Funny how that works. Parents put a pinch of quintessence from their oldest daughters and sons into a big ol' pot and hold a love lottery. What if you were meant

for another Thorne sister? Or another witch who wasn't yet of age to be considered for the Binding? What if..." She sauntered toward him and dipped inside his robe to run her palm over his chest. "... you were meant for me?"

"No mortal man is meant for a nymph, Andromeda."

She shrugged. "I am drawn to sexual energy. No man in this world had ever been as frustrated and aroused as you, lover. I could practically drink from the need that pulsed around you." Her fingers stroked his neck. "I presented myself as I was. You saw what you wanted. Your greed cursed you, Drake."

"No," he said as he pushed her hand off him and backed away. "You did."

"You're so stubborn!" Andromeda flounced away and plopped down on the bench. She spread open her legs and gave him an unrestricted view of her pussy. The mossy green pubic hair was neat and trimmed. *There lay a garden of poisoned delights.* He shuddered, repulsed by her sexuality. She smiled at him as she pushed a finger inside herself. "Remember what it was like to fuck me?"

"I will regret touching you for the rest of my life," said Drake. "If I had not believed you were Rosemary --"

"Oh! Shut up about her! She will fail you, Drake. She doesn't love you enough. She is weak-spirited, weak-minded, and weak-willed. She is not worthy of you." Andromeda cupped her breasts, playing with her nipples until they hardened. Her breath shallowed and her eyes glazed. "C'mon, lover. Want me. *Love me.*"

Drake felt the pull of her magic, the strength of her desire weave around him. He shook off the spell's wilting tendrils and crossed his arms. "I am Bound. You cannot compel me to betray my wife."

"Maybe not," she said. "But I can do much worse."

Andromeda rubbed her hands all over her body, from breasts to ribs to thighs. Then one hand serviced her pussy while the other tweaked a nipple. She moaned, loud and long, and Drake looked away in disgust. His gaze traveled to the window that overlooked the garden. In his bedroom, no, *their* bedroom, his wife slept. How he wished he could be next to her. But he had to rid himself of Andromeda and make sure

her curse was lifted. In the window, he saw a flicker of light and a soft yellow glow appeared. What the --? *Oh no!* Rosie must have awoken and found him gone.

“Andromeda! Stop it right now!”

She fucked her own pussy with two fingers, her thumb rubbing her clit. Her breasts were engorged, the nipples distended. The damned woman wouldn’t stop moaning, wouldn’t stop pleasuring herself. Then she seized, her eyes rolling back in her head. As she came, she screamed, “*Drake! Oh my darling Drake!*”

Chapter 6

Drake saw Rosemary look out the window. Their bedroom was on the third floor of the castle. While the garden was visible from that vantage point, it was still a good distance away. And at night... chances were good she couldn't see much. But she would know he was here. His robe was a white beacon in the darkness.

Andromeda looked at him with malicious satisfaction. She stretched like a cat arising from a nap. The ripe smell of her come overpowered the garden's sweet floral smells and made his stomach curdle. Leisurely, she left the bench to walk toward him. He turned away, tried to run, but she whispered a string of words. A root broke through the ground and wrapped around his calves. Another snaked up his back and secured his arms.

"The curse is broken," he said, even though he wasn't sure it *was* at an end. "Rosemary is Bound to me. She loves me. I'm free of you."

"Drake, Drake, *Drake*. You really should pay attention to the fine print of a curse. I agreed to leave you alone until your wedding eve. She must be willing to sacrifice anything to free you. Given her lack of trust and faith in you, you might as well start puckering up... to kiss my ass." She patted his cheek. "And various other parts."

"How do you expect her to meet your challenge if I am forbidden to tell her of our bargain?" He couldn't prevent the desperation that crept into his voice.

"It wouldn't be much of a challenge if you tell her why you're in this mess. How easy it would be for her to do something self-sacrificing because she knew in her heart of hearts that you fucked me because you wanted *her* more than your next breath."

"Why do you want me, Andromeda? You know I don't desire you. Not really. And I could never love you. Even if Rosemary doesn't honor the tenets of the Binding, I always will. She is my heart."

Andromeda scowled. "You will be mine because I say so. I've been patient and I've been extremely generous. I'm tired of waiting."

Drake's gaze strayed to the window. The yellow glow and Rosemary had disappeared. He knew she was looking for him. She would come down here, find him with Andromeda, and believe that he had betrayed her again. Pain stabbed him. *No, Rosie. No!* He looked at Andromeda. "And you wouldn't care that breaking the Binding will strip me of everything? Even the ability to have children?"

"Poor warlock. So much has been lost to time. The Binding is a very old ritual. Passed down orally from parent to child. There is one other way to break a Binding."

"How?"

"The faithlessness of one Bound."

"There's no such thing. Never in our history --"

"Oh poo! Sometimes the souls who choose each other are weak -- like your *Rosie*. The Binding, for whatever reason, just doesn't work. Do you truly believe that every Binding throughout all time has led to perfect relationships and forever love? You really are a fool."

"Drake? Are you out here?" Rosemary's voice filtered into the garden. Goddess help him! His heart tripled its beat as fear pounded through him. "Be right there," he yelled.

"Aw. You want me to go away, don't you?" she whispered. "Okay, lover. I will leave you... with a gift."

Andromeda reached between her legs and plunged her fingers inside her pussy. She undid his robe and grabbed his cock then rubbed her essence all over it. Anger roared through him. "Bitch! Keep your taint off me!"

She brushed his lips with sticky fingers. As he spit away the residue of her come, she sparkled out of sight. The roots that held him slid into the ground and the holes in the earth closed over them.

"Drake?" The yellow ball of light drifted into his line of sight. Rosemary entered the square on the left side, the very same place she'd entered from three years ago.

Then, she had caught him sitting on the bench, ecstasy holding him hostage as Andromeda rode his virgin cock. Tonight, he faced her with Andromeda's defilement on his body.

She saw him on the other side of the fountain and stopped. "I thought you might be down here telling your parents about our wedding and our Binding." Her laughter was soft, sweet. "I hope you didn't tell them too many details, though."

"No," he said, his voice hoarse. "Of course not."

She came around the fountain. Her smile faded as she took in his appearance.

"What happened to you?"

He shrugged, unable to tell the truth and unwilling to lie.

She frowned. "And your robe is open because...?"

"Oh. That." Be-damned, he was nervous. Nervous and afraid. He loved her so much. And he believed in her... though she could never believe in him.

"What's going on, Drake?"

He heard the suspicion in her voice and knew she was thinking about the last time she'd been in the garden, when she'd caught him with Andromeda. "What do you think I would've done, Rosie, if I had found you with another man?"

"You would've knocked him out and asked me to explain myself."

"And why didn't you do the same for me?"

She looked as if he'd punched her. She reeled back, stunned. "Why didn't I... do *what*?"

"Fight for me. Knock out Andromeda and ask me to explain myself."

"I was scared. I saw the man who I knew -- didn't hope or wish or think -- but *knew* would be my husband make love to another woman. I felt so betrayed, so mortified, so angry." She paced in front of him, obviously struggling with the burden of her roiling emotions. "I saw how well she... uh, pleased you and feared I could never do the same. What if you wanted her more than me? What if, by the time we were to be Bound, you loved her?"

"'Tis not the way the Binding works, Rosie."

"So every Binding throughout time has been perfect? Maybe no one records the Bindings that went wrong, but there had to be a few."

Drake felt dread deep and low in his belly. Rosie's words echoed Andromeda's. Goddess. *What if she doesn't really love me?* "Three years passed... and not a word from ye."

Her frown deepened. "I was furious with you. Furious because I thought you loved me... for real. And not because of the Binding."

"I do love you. And not because of the Binding. You're the only woman I've ever wanted. That's the truth."

She shook her head, as if denying his words. "I know I've been hard-headed about everything. It just got to be so easy to stay mad at you. It was better than admitting that... be-damned! That I still wanted to Bind with you. And that horrible nymph Andromeda --" She stopped, apparently unable to articulate the rest of her feelings.

"Rosie..." He sighed, sadness wrapping around him. "Sometimes, you must believe with your heart and not your eyes."

"You are seriously weirding me out. See with my heart? We're Bound. We love each other. We will honor the tenets. What's in the past is in the past." The yellow light floated above their heads. Rosemary looked at him closely, her expression tight.

Silently, he watched her take in his disheveled form. Dirt clung to his open robe and, at least to his own nostrils, the faint scent of sex was still present. Rosemary had to trust him no matter what. If she did not, there was no point to trying to cover up Andromeda's attempt to make him look bad. If Andromeda was right and his sexual greed for Rosemary had caused the curse to befall him... then maybe he deserved punishment.

"Oh no," she said, her gaze full of angry tears. "On our wedding night?"

"No, Rosie. I dinna do what you're thinking."

She pointed a finger at his chest and said, *"What transpired in this garden dear; Make apparent to those standing here."*

Andromeda's dried fluid glowed green on Drake's lips and cock. He met Rosie's gaze without shame. He didn't do anything wrong. Either she believed her heart or she believed her eyes.

With his fear clutching his insides, he awaited her judgment.

Chapter 7

"Where are you?" yelled Rosemary as she entered the forested land around the castle's grounds. "Andromeda! Show yourself!"

She heard the nymph's laughter seconds before a green shimmer appeared. The sparkles coalesced into the very lush and very nude Andromeda. "What do you want, human?"

"Your head on a pike," said Rosemary. "But I'll settle for you leaving my husband alone."

"I come only to those who want me."

"Oh puh-lease. I've done my research, sister. I read some very interesting information about you and your kind. Nymphs are selfish and willful and vain and liars. They trick and they deceive and, did I mention, they *lie*."

"If Drake uttered one word to you... just one about the bargain he made with me, he's mine forever."

"He didn't tell me anything," said Rosemary, stepping within the nymph's space. To her satisfaction, the tart moved back a step. "He is, in fact, standing in the garden where you left him. I put him under a sleep spell so he'll be there a while."

"Clever." Andromeda fluffed her hair and looked bored.

"You feed off sexual energy. Your little radar pinged Drake that night. My guess is that you sashayed into that garden looking like me, seduced him, and then lied to him. Did you give him the speech about how he wanted *me* so badly his own greedy nature took over? Did you tell him that you offered yourself as you were and he saw you as the one he wanted?"

Andromeda's expression darkened. "So what if I did?"

Rosemary rolled her eyes. "You've been doing that same song and dance for centuries. You've done it so often and to so many men, it's written down in histories and mythology and novels. I don't know why Drake didn't figure it out."

The nymph's lips curved into a cruel smile. "I'm afraid that any time he searched for nymph-related information, a little spell I cast prevented him from finding it or, if he accidentally happened upon a text, from reading it. He delved into a number of books; many of them dealt with dark magic." She shrugged carelessly. "Not that it matters. You see, once a bargain with a nymph is struck and sealed, it must be honored. It doesn't matter if I lied or I deceived to get the bargain."

"Why don't you tell me about this bargain?" asked Rosemary. "Lord it over me if you like. Go on. Make me jealous."

"You should be jealous," said Andromeda. "I am more beautiful than you. More clever. More intelligent. Men *love* me."

"I'm all tingly inside." Rosemary waved a hand at the nymph. Gold and white magic flowed from her fingertips and surrounded the woman. "I bid you, Andromeda, by nature, by light, by Goddess, by might, to tell me the words uttered true to oblige the warlock Drake to you."

"Damn you!" She pressed her lips together, but the spell was cast. Forced by the magic, the words were pulled out of her mouth:

*Cursed by your greed, my darling Drake
So a vow to Andromeda you will make
I promise on this night to leave
And return not 'til your wedding eve
If to Rosemary you do not Bind
Then forever, warlock, you will be mine
Bind with her then I tell you true
She must be willing to sacrifice all for you
This bargain is made and made well
Forfeit your love to me if you ever tell.*

The magic faded and Andromeda shook free of the residual sparks. She looked pissed off, but Rosemary didn't care. Now she knew the burden Drake had carried for

so long. *And all because he wanted me as much as I wanted him. But he was stronger than I was. He was right about waiting for the Binding.* Andromeda had caught him at his weakest... and he had paid the price.

"That's some spell," said Rosemary. "Use it often?"

"Often enough." She said it with a viciousness that set Rosemary's teeth on edge. "He tried to get out of his promise tonight. Said you were Bound and that you loved him. I told him he needed to read the fine print of his curse." She wiggled her fingers at the ground. Roots sprung up and, within a minute, had weaved a chair for her to sit in. "I suppose you're here to offer something for his freedom?"

"I'm willing to give you anything you want to free him."

Andromeda pursed her lips and looked up at the trees as if consulting their wisdom. "So you're saying that you love him above all else. And that you will sacrifice whatever I ask in order to release Drake from his obligation to me?"

"I am willing to give up anything at all to save my husband. Check with your tree friend if you don't believe me."

Andromeda rolled her eyes. "I sense you are telling the truth. Very well."

"Is his curse lifted?"

"Your sacrifice frees him, Rosemary Thorne. He is no longer committed to me."

Rosemary felt a snap in the atmosphere. Ah. Magic released. The nymph was right, then. All bargains must be honored. Drake was free. She turned to go, but Andromeda rose from the gnarled-branch chair and grabbed her shoulder.

"Where are you going? You haven't heard what I wish you to sacrifice."

"Wish all you want, babe." Rosemary plucked the nymph's hand off her shoulder and turned, trying a second time to walk away.

"Halt!" A tree shot up in front of Rosemary, thick and solid and fully grown. She cast a glance over her shoulder and whistled. "That's a neat trick."

"You will stay. You must honor your bargain."

Rosemary spun around and didn't stop moving until she was two inches away from the nymph's beautiful, perfect face. "First, my name is Rosemary *Dundrury*.

Second, I haven't made a bargain with you. Third, you really should invest in a breath mint. It smells like you've eaten moss."

Andromeda reared away, her face a mask of outrage. "You said you would sacrifice anything for Drake!"

"I said I was *willing* to sacrifice anything for Drake, which meets the condition of your curse, oh intelligent one. I am willing. You know it's the truth. However, nothing in your spell said I actually had to make a sacrifice." Rosemary grinned in triumph. "You really should read the fine print in your own curse."

Chapter 8

When Drake awoke, he was sitting chest deep in water. Water filled with pink bubbles. He blinked the sleep out of his eyes. Okay. He was in his own bathroom, the one attached to his bedroom. The white-tiled bathtub could easily seat four people. It had curved seats and water jets. However, it'd never had the ability to create pink bubbles that smelled like roses.

"I borrowed bubble bath from your grandmother," said Rosemary as she walked through the door. She held two flutes of champagne. "You look really cute with your hair all wet and curly."

"You are not naked," he observed, looking at the short yellow robe that hid her body from him.

"That can be remedied." She put the champagne on the ledge near his head and shimmied off the silk cloth. Drake felt a lurch in his stomach. Goddess, his wife was beautiful.

He watched, dry-mouthed, as she slid into the warm water and crawled onto his lap. His cock came immediately to attention. He wanted to make love to her, but not until he figured out what the hell was going on.

"So... what the hell is going on?"

Rosemary nibbled his neck, her breasts pressing nicely against his chest. "Short version, okay? Because I'd really like to have sex with you."

"Short version," he agreed as he slid his hands down to her buttocks and squeezed. "Hurry."

"I put a sleep-spell on you in the garden, found Andromeda and broke your curse, went back to the garden and put a motion spell on you. Essentially you

sleepwalked all the way here. Undressed you, put you in the bath, scrubbed you. Went for champagne. You woke up."

Her hands had found his balls. She cupped them, squeezing lightly, and he sucked in a breath. "Uh... maybe you could expand a little --" One of her hands wrapped around his cock and stroked while the other continued exploration of his testicles. "I appreciate your interpretation of the request, lass. But I was talking 'bout the story. What do you mean, you broke the curse?"

She sat up, but didn't, thank Goddess, removed her eager hands from his nether regions.

"I asked my sisters to do research on nymphs. After I let go of most of my anger, I thought about what happened and finally figured out that Andromeda had tricked you." She looked at him, her green eyes filled with sorrow. "Never in all our time together did you give me cause to question your love or your loyalty. You were always kind, always patient. I'm ashamed that I looked at you and Andromeda in the garden that night with my eyes and not with my heart."

Her tears fell and his heart clenched. She loved him... more than he had hoped for. Guilt flickered. Maybe he hadn't believed in her enough, either. Even though he doubted her love for him, she'd proven him wrong. She'd gone after Andromeda and freed him.

"Och, lass. Dinna cry." He wiped away her tears. "How did you break my curse if you dinna sacrifice anything?"

"Who says I didn't?"

His heart stopped beating. "Did you?"

"Well... no. But I would have." She kissed him lightly. "I was willing to do whatever was necessary to save you. That's all took, Drake. My willingness."

"Thank you, Rosie. For believing me. For loving me."

"Hmmm. I feel gratitude should be expressed physically. Actions speak louder than words."

He lifted her and she guided his cock into her pussy. He shuddered at the sensation of heat and wet and Goddess... so *tight*. They sat joined, unmoving, and stroked each other's bodies. Hands and mouths created fire, passion, need. Drake cupped her breasts and paid homage to those delicious mounds, suckling her nipples until she panted and moaned and begged for more.

Then... slowly, Rosemary began to move. Drake shuddered at the sensations created by the sloshing water and the hesitant efforts of his wife. Sliding one hand into the water, he sought her pussy; he parted the fleshy lips and stroked her clit.

Her rhythm quickened.

He watched her breasts; they jiggled erotically, teasing him. Hot pleasure surged through him. Ye gods! Unable to resist, he suckled one taut nipple then the other. She tasted so good... felt so good. Her breath left in a rush. Her eyes were closed, her mouth open in a silent cry as she sought gratification.

Grabbing his shoulders for leverage, she fucked him harder, faster. He knew she was close to bliss. He increased the movement of his thumb against her clit. "Come for me, love," he begged in a low voice.

"Oh Drake!" Rosemary's cry of release ricocheted through him. He groaned as she arched against him, her pussy contracting fiercely around his hard, sensitized cock.

"Sweet damnation, Rosie," he said roughly.

She opened her eyes. Those green orbs were glazed with passionate fervor. In an instant, she scrambled off his lap, stood up, turned, and bent over. She grasped the edge of the tub and wiggled her luscious ass at him.

"What are you doing?"

"I might've been a virgin, but I am not ignorant. Take me as you wish, husband."

Drake looked at the pale roundness of her perfect buttocks. Pink bubbles rolled down the reddened flesh, making delicate splashes into the scented water. He nearly swallowed his tongue. He had never been with a woman in that way. Other than taking the edge off his own pleasure, his cock had only known the vile joy of Andromeda's cunt... and now, the sweet ambrosia of his wife's pussy.

With trembling hands, he parted her buttocks and looked with longing at the puckered star of her anus. Devastating need made his cock jerk. Oh, was it ever eager to try this temptation. "Rosie... do you know what you're askin'?"

Her answer was simple. She pushed her ass toward him and wiggled it again.

"I... I have no lubricant."

"Are you not a warlock with magic powers?" She sounded both amused and impatient. "We are Bound, my love. Let us explore all the ways of pleasuring each other."

With a muttered spell, a tube of lubricant appeared in his hand. He wasted no time uncapping it and inserted the tip into her anus. After squeezing out nearly half the small tube, he tossed it to the floor.

Slowly, carefully, he pushed the head of his cock into the tight hole. As he quivered with anticipation, with pure wanting, he waited for her to adjust to the feeling of his penetration.

"Are you okay?" he asked, his voice hoarse.

"Goddess, yes." She sounded out of breath. Was she, too, enjoying this exploration?

He slid further and further inside her ass. Intense lust shuddered through him, balls to bone, as he slid the last inch of penis into her ass.

The feel of taking her this way was different than taking her pussy, but the warmth, the tightness was nearly the same. She clenched around him and his cock trembled with near release. Father Earth! If he moved now, he might lose consciousness.

When he failed to try even one stroke, Rosie clenched around him again.

And again.

And again.

"Goddess above!" He slid out and back in, as slowly as he was able, building a careful rhythm. Watching his penis plunge into her ass was stimulating beyond all reason. He felt the tension coiled in his cock burst. As the orgasm rushed through him,

he thrust deeply and spilled his seed. For a long moment, he was only light, sound, feeling... then he returned to his senses.

He withdrew and helped Rosie to stand. When she turned to face him, she was flushed and quivery. He realized she was on the cusp of bliss. Ah, his beautiful Rosie had enjoyed their anal play. *Thank the Goddess.*

Kneeling in the water, he wrapped his arms around her thighs and licked her pussy, flicking his tongue rapidly against her clitoris. Seconds later, she tensed and came, her thighs shaking as she orgasmed. He plunged his tongue into her cunt to feel its erotic pulsing then he drank from her, a thirsty man, until she pulled away.

He drew her into the water, where they sat on a curved seat. He gathered her into his arms and enjoyed the feel of his wife snuggled against him. "You are an amazin' woman, Rosie. I dinna deserve you."

"We deserve each other," she said. "I am glad we are Bound, Drake. I love you."

"I love you, too, lass."

Then he kissed her breathless.

As his Rosie said... actions spoke louder than words.

The End

Witch Magic 2: The Shining

Ginger Thorne gladly shares her psychic gifts with any who ask -- any except the family of Nigel Brubre. Lying about his identity, Nigel ever-so-lovingly took Ginger's virginity. It was the most amazing night of her life... and the most humiliating. Not only had she slept with a Brubre -- she had slept with an *engaged-to-another-woman* Brubre. The last thing Ginger wants to do is track down the man who broke her heart...

Witch Magic 3: The Mating

When Sage Thorne finds an enchanted locket, she finds herself the new master of a handsome man named Ravin Cross. He claims to be a warlock trapped for five centuries inside the locket, his only purpose to grant his rescuer three carnal wishes.

Sage's sweet innocence beguiles Ravin, but he craves freedom from the curse that made him sex slave. He realizes it will be easy to seduce this little virgin and at the end of their lovemaking marathon, she will beg to sacrifice her soul...

Michele Bardsley

Multi-published in several genres, award-winning author Michele Bardsley spends her days creating fictional worlds because, let's face it, reality sucks. A prime example is that no one has yet to figure out how to make calorie-free chocolate. What's up with THAT? Michele lives in Florida where she is held hostage by her two children, her husband, and four cats. Occasionally they remember to feed her, but mostly she's forced to nibble on copy paper while eking out her next story. The manacles make it difficult to type, but she manages. Email her at michelebardsley@yahoo.com or visit her website at www.MicheleBardsley.com