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MICHAEL BARNETTE
GAMES DRAGONS PLAY

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A PHAZE FETISH HEATSHEET BY

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Also by Michael Barnette

Apocalypse Dance
Midwinter's Night
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GAMES DRAGONS PLAY

The slender blond man was on his knees, the handcuffs binding his wrists and the collar of black leather were the only things he wore. It was the fall of his corn silk hair that hid most of his sleek body from the critical gaze of the woman. Sable brown eyes narrowed as she drew closer to him. He could see the anger in her eyes as he peered at her through his hair.

He'd fucked up, badly, and she was pissed as hell at him.

"Hmm....what should I do with you?" Her initial vocalization showed she was displeased with him, and he felt a leaden weight settle in his chest.

Yes, he'd certainly fucked up.

He lowered his head, shoulders going back, trying to appease her with a show of submission. It wouldn't work, but it would keep her from getting angrier with him. Not that he thought she could get much madder than she was at the moment.

She circled him like a predatory creature, and he could hear the riding crop tapping into her open hand. The sound made him shiver in anticipation of its kiss. He'd earned the punishment and he expected she would lay into him at any second.

"Give me one good reason, pretty pet of mine." Her tone was harsh and he let himself flinch as if struck by the crop rather than mere words.

"Because Mistress loves her boy?" was the velvet toned response he gave.

He heard her laugh, felt the riding crop slide along his arm, the tip of the crop touching his thigh, making his aching cock jump. Would she give him what he wanted, or not?

She kicked a padded bench closer to him and his mouth went dry. But, instead of having him lean over it to be punished she placed her one foot—a foot beautifully encased in a patent leather, open-toed high heel shoe—on the bench. The shoe was so well polished he could see his own reflection in the dark surface.

He stared at the high heel and the foot it held for a moment. She'd painted her toenails bright red. Officer arrest me red. Come and fuck me blind red. He swallowed, struggled to be good. But he couldn't help it. Couldn't stop himself, his gaze following the shape of the spiked shoe up the perfection of her trim ankle, along the smooth curve of her calf, to the

graceful bend of her knee and onward to the firm creamy smoothness of her thigh.

A tremor went through him as his visual journey continued, his gaze reaching the end of the erotic trail, dusky curls of pubic hair that veiled the slit of her womanhood. He was heating, body going damp with lust-sweat.

He stared at the curve of belly over the patch of dark hair. He wanted to touch that soft belly but his hands were cuffed and he couldn't. His eyes moved higher, to her full breasts, the dark areolas of her nipples which jutted out sharply, showing how aroused she was.

The crop brushed along his shoulder, down his arm, and he shuddered, a soft needy moan coming from him. It lifted and came down on his shoulder sharply, drawing his attention where it belonged, on her crotch.

"Taste it!"

She didn't have to ask twice, his face pressing to her crotch, taking in the female musk of desire. He inhaled, taking the scent deep into him, exhaling, breath making the silken curls flutter and causing her to tap him with the crop just hard enough to correct him for being too slow. He kissed the damp curls first, then slid his tongue in for a taste.

The strong fingers of her left hand stroked his head, slipping through his hair before she gripped it tight, sending a bite of pain across his over-sensitized nerves.

He gasped and licked her, his tongue stroking her clit.

"Good boy," she purred as his tongue made another tentative foray into her wet folds.

So sweet. So potent. He couldn't help the soft cry of pent up desire that slipped from him. He wanted her, wanted to bury his face in her crotch and lick until she permitted him to pleasure her with the hard rod of his cock.

But he was being punished, and she might not permit him any pleasure.

He whimpered again.

"Shhh...All in due time," she murmured, then qualified the statement with, "if you're an exceptionally good boy, of course."

"What does Mistress wish of her boy?"

"Fuck me with your tongue."

GAMES DRAGONS PLAY

Obedient to her every whim, he thrust his tongue into her savory hole, his tongue going as deep as it could. He wiggled it inside her entrance, pulled the firm muscle out, and thrust it in hard.

She sighed, her hand releasing his hair to pet him, fingers brushing down the nape of his neck. "Good boy," she sighed and he took his tongue up, flicking across her clit. "Hmmm...very good."

He rolled his tongue across the labia, sucked them gently, then drove his tongue into her, thrusting hard, lapping at her flavorful juices.

She rewarded him with a soft moan and he delved deeper, her flavor, her scent winding through his awareness, settling as an ember of lust in his balls.

"Oh yes, such a good boy..." she whispered, "but you were very bad, so Mistress must punish you."

The crop cracked down on his back and he groaned, the vibration moving through him into her pussy. She sighed in pleasure and brought the crop down on his shoulder, starting the whole cycle a second time.

There was a cough from the other side of the door.

"Your Majesty?"

The blond sighed and sat back on his heels. "Damn it," he murmured.

"One moment, Hawk," she called, her voice shaky. "I'm sorry, my pretty one, but duty calls."

"Yeah, I know," he muttered, the mood broken. "But just once I'd like to do this without any interruptions."

* * * *

Nikki knelt and unlocked the handcuffs, touched her husband's cheek, and gave him a kiss. "We can play later."

"Yeah, later." His tone was sullen, her boy upset.

"Should I chain you up somewhere as a punishment?"

He shook his head. "No, I'll go with you to address whatever disaster has come up this time."

"You don't have to, Jason. I'm sure it won't take long," she soothed, her hand caressing along the hard line of his cheek, down to his sensual mouth, which she leaned in to kiss. She could taste her own juices on his lips and she wrapped a hand behind the base of his skull to keep him still. He shivered with need and leaned into the touch of her mouth on his, lips parting to give her entry. She delved her tongue into his hot mouth, tasting, exploring.

Breathless, she forced herself to break the kiss. "I have to go."

"I know."

She got up and started to pull a dressing gown over her but he stopped her, running his hands up her legs to grip her hips.

"Jason..." Her voice carried a warning, but he just looked up at her with the most wicked glitter in his sky blue eyes and drove his tongue into her, the stroke merciless.

Her knees went weak, and instead of pushing him away she stood there while he sucked and licked, his tongue striking her clit hard and fast, then sliding into her entrance.

"Oh...God..." she moaned, her hips rocking with the assault of his tongue. Fingers touched her slit, then the tongue retreated and slender fingers took its place while his tongue lapped and struck her clit. He finger fucked her, the strokes hard, going deeper than his tongue could.

Warmth filled her body, the spicy burn of impending orgasm filling her pussy, the heat rising through her whole body, staining her cheeks with a fuckblush.

"Come for me, my Queen," he murmured against the lips of her sex, his thumb taking the place of his tongue on her clit for the few seconds it took him to speak.

She gripped his hair and held on. "More, more..." she groaned.

Tongue and fingers obediently delivered what she needed, fingers thrusting into her as far as they could go, his mouth locking on her clit giving no mercy. Her legs were shaking, going weak, but his free hand guided her hands to his shoulders and she held on for dear life as the strokes of his hand and mouth drove her over the edge into a starburst of pleasure that left her gasping for breath, her mind reeling from the intensity.

Strong arms encircled her, drew her close, and she could feel him trembling. Love and desire burned in his gaze as she smiled at him.

"Feel good?" he asked softly as he nuzzled her neck.

"Always."

"I aim to please," he murmured as he kissed down the side of her neck.

"Your Majesty? I'm terribly sorry, but this can't wait." Hawk demanded her attention, politely through the closed door.

She sighed. "I'm sorry, Jason."

He let her go, shrugged. "I'll keep," he told her.

GAMES DRAGONS PLAY

She glanced down at the erection standing so beautifully amid the golden nest of curls and couldn't resist touching it, caressing it. He moaned, eyes closing. "You're an evil Queen, did you know that?"

"Umhmmm," she agreed as she kissed him gently. "And don't you forget it, or I'll lock you up in a tower."

"What, no poisoned apples?"

"Hmm... you might look lovely under glass at that," she murmured as she reached for her dressing gown, bending over as she did.

She smiled when she felt him grip her hips, taking the bait, his cock pressing to her bottom, sliding along the slit to nudge into the parted lips of her entrance. "Later baby, I promise."

"Tease."

She slipped on the gown and pulled it closed over her nakedness.

He sighed and picked up his jeans. "I hope this won't take long."

She brushed her fingers over the length of his cock before he could hide it behind his pants. "So do I."

He gave her a smoldering grin, "I think when we get back it's going to be my turn to be dominant."

She raised an eyebrow. "Oh, really?"

His grin didn't budge as he replied, "Oh yeah, I sure do."

Laughing, Nikki walked to the door, tying the robe shut as she did.

Jason, who was her husband and the love of her life, darted ahead and opened the door, bowing low. "My Queen."

She caressed his cheek. "My Prince."

The man waiting for them in the parlor was pacing, his booted feet silent on the carpet. The instant they stepped into the room he turned, took in the way Nikki was dressed—or rather the way she wasn't dressed, barely concealed by a sheer gown she wore—and bowed low.

"Oh, Hawk, for the love of..." she sighed. "Do you have to bow when it's only the three of us?"

"Sorry, Nikki, habit is hard for me to break," the man replied.

"What's up?" the blond man asked as he dropped onto one of the richly upholstered settees, his erection still visible under his jeans.

"Some of the dregs of society have been spotted near Danbridge. The report says it's some of Roderick's former troops up to no good."

Nikki frowned. "You're sure it's some of his boys?" After almost two years she'd thought the former soldiers of Roderick's army had given up their killing ways and taken up peaceful lives somewhere.

Hawk nodded. "Unfortunately, yes. It was the Danbridge militia that got wind of them, and there's a corroborating report from Sugarsprings that slavers are on the prowl looking for women to take south. They spotted a few of them in some of Roderick's old Ranger uniforms."

That knowledge made her heart sink. Roderick, the King of the Lone Star Empire, had been a horrible man who'd held Nikki captive to his every whim for months that had seemed more like an eternity. She couldn't think of the man without remembering the horror of what it had meant to be one of his concubines. Sexual slaves to do with as he pleased, when he pleased.

She shuddered and drove the unpleasant memories aside, her fingers curving over her belly, taking refuge in the present and her happiness.

Happiness once again broken by an outside threat.

A threat to the people who had elected her their Queen.

"How many slavers?" Nikki asked, her brow furrowing as the enormity of her duties came to rest on her shoulders. She paced to the window and looked out over her town, the heart of her Queendom: Fort Colby. Lights studded the snowy night, people awake, trusting their Queen—their Doc Nikki—to help them.

Trusting their Queen's Consort to keep them safe.

It was what her lover did. Kept them safe.

But it wasn't her Jason that did that.

It was the other part of him. His alter ego.

The killer.

Bells.

And the Dragon....

Married for almost two years now and she still didn't know much about her husband's past, other than there must have been a great deal of unpleasantness to turn him into something so hard and cold as the man he was when they first met.

She wondered, but she wasn't sure she ever wanted to really know the horrors he must have faced, the battles he'd fought to make him so hard and unyielding, to turn him into the man once known only as Bells.

But now he was Jason. Her husband. Her lover. The father of one bright and happy—and far too spoiled boy—who would soon have a baby brother or sister for company.

Nikki lay her hands over her stomach, feeling the baby moving. Their second child. Hers and his, conceived right on the heels of another problem that had brought out the killer, the Dragon. She wondered if it

made any difference that he'd been that cold hard killer when he'd fathered the child, or not. Which, of course, was a silly thing only a pregnant and overly emotional woman could come up with.

But, she couldn't totally reconcile Bells and the Dragon as the same man her husband had become in the months after Roderick's death. He was her Jason now, a quiet unassuming man that took care of their two-year-old and did whatever she wanted, in bed and out with no complaints or arguments. He seemed so far removed from the man she'd met in the middle of a field that fateful day, it was difficult for her to remember they were one and the same man. Devoted husband, father, and tender lover, and that merciless fighter she remembered.

The killer Nikki had to remember she'd fallen in love with so easily.

And now another threat. Not a terrible danger when compared to Roderick himself, an Immortal Dragon who'd been unstoppable. Unstoppable until Bells arrived from somewhere else—by means they really didn't understand—to bring Roderick's reign of terror to a very final conclusion. But the slavers were a problem that had to be dealt with before they started killing people to get what they wanted: namely slaves and supplies.

And if some of them were former Rangers in Roderick's army, they would present an even greater than normal problem since most of the Rangers had former military training—or were special people. People like Dal, who harbored the spirit of a Tiger in his soul.

"Nikki?" She'd missed Hawk's answer, lost along mental avenues that were never pleasant but were part of her job as Queen Nikki.

"I'm sorry. What did you say?" she asked, still staring out the window at Fort Colby's snow draped streets.

"I said, according to the reports there are a couple dozen in this pack of curs."

Nikki faced Hawk. "That many?"

The man nodded in response and glanced at her Jason. "Luke thinks they've got a tracked vehicle."

Luke was the man in charge of the Danbridge militia. If he thought they had such a vehicle, then the slavers had it. The man didn't make mistakes about things like that. Not with the training he'd gotten from her boy regarding military hardware. If he said tracked vehicle, then he'd seen the evidence to back it up.

"Armored personnel carrier, or something worse?" Jason asked.

"APC most likely. But they've got to be hurting for fuel. There hasn't been a whole lot of diesel to go around and most of the towns have it locked down and well protected. Too well protected, even for a group with muscle like that to take on."

The hard lines were already forming on her Jason's face and Nikki felt a pang of sorrow. They'd thought he could put aside Bells the killer, put away the gun and the sword forever after Roderick was dead and his army was sent packing. But, they'd discovered that Roderick and his men were only the tip of the iceberg when it came to problems. Like the mythical Hydra, cutting off one head only led to another growing in its place. They'd cut off the head that was Roderick, but new heads kept growing. There were random bands of slavers, and cutthroat killers wandering the countryside, people her lover referred to as *Wasters*, interested in nothing but the kill and take common to outlaws in any era. They didn't come near their territory often because the stories about Roderick's demise made most outlaws cautious, but when such men did arrive to wreck havoc her boy was the one to go and deal with them. Eight months had come and gone since the last incident, but here she was seeing that coldness forming, the gentle warmth that had filled his eyes changing to blue-steel hardness.

Jason sat forward on the chair, eyes gone cold as glacial ice. "Causing trouble or moving on?"

It was difficult for her to watch that hard man resurfacing, taking her gentle lover away, and she had to chastise herself for being so foolish. Jason was Bells and Bells was Jason, and the Dragon was the core of the man's very soul.

But, it hurt to see that emotionless mask, the killer's presence resurface.

"They shot up a trader's rig, took what they wanted, and left him with two broken legs."

"He going to live," Bells asked.

"Yes, thankfully."

"Is the Danbridge militia going to run them off or is there something you haven't told us yet?" Nikki wanted to know. The look on the older Immortal's face was too grim for it to be something as simple as the story seemed.

"Well, that's just it. They went out looking for these guys on the snowmobiles but they were already out of range. Gas is getting really scarce down there and they're doing everything they can to conserve until

GAMES DRAGONS PLAY

spring. We won't get any fuel until those folks with that refinery can drive that tanker up here, so we can't spare them any either." He looked from the Queen to her husband. "The supply is pretty tight if we expect to run tractors come spring planting."

Bells cold blue eyes regarded Hawk, the set of her husband's face showing her he knew there was more to it than a tight fuel supply keeping the Danbridge militia from running the slavers off.

"Spit it out, Hawk. What aren't you telling us?" Bells asked, his normally velvet voice gone harsh.

"They've got some heavy weapons. Machine guns, possibly an anti-tank gun."

"That's bad," Nikki said, her hand absently rubbing her stomach. The baby was restless and she wondered if it had something to do with her own agitated state.

"And?" prompted her husband.

"Luke thinks they're heading this way."

Nikki watched as her lover surged to his feet, so graceful, anger and dangerous intent showing in the movement. He was heading for his own room which was next to Nikki's bedchamber.

It was where he kept his gun and katana under lock and key.

"I'll take care of it then."

Nikki went after him. "No you won't!" She already knew she wouldn't win the argument, couldn't begin to change his mind.

He turned to regard her with eyes like cobalt flame, a hint of the Dragon surfacing under the threat to what he loved and protected. Her. Fort Colby, Danbridge...their child. "Do you want them to come here and kill the farmers down the valley from us?"

"No, but can't we just send Dal and his crew to deal with them?"

He shook his head, his gaze softening. "No, Nikki, we can't. Or rather, I won't risk seeing them killed." A hand brushed along her cheek and he met her gaze squarely. "Nikki, you don't have to worry about me. Short of another Dragon, nothing's going to kill me."

She relented, nodding, knowing it was true. Nothing could kill him. Leaning into the arms he wrapped around her, she laid her cheek against his and held him, her eyes closed. "I know. I'm not being rational. You're Immortal like Hawk, and I'm sorry for acting like a lunatic."

"Hey." He took her chin in his hand and made her look at him. "You aren't a lunatic. You're pregnant and that's my baby in there," he told her as he pressed a hand to her belly.

"And don't be sorry for not wanting to see me hurt. I don't want to get hurt either. I don't like pain..."

"Since when?" she asked.

Color stained his cheeks and he gave her a sheepish grin. "Well, not the kind you get in a gunfight anyway," he amended.

"But it's better for me to get shot than someone that can get killed, right?"

Nikki nodded, reluctant to see him go, but knowing he was right. If he got shot he would hurt but it couldn't kill him. Nothing could except another Dragon, and there weren't any other Dragons now that Roderick was dead. If Dal and his team were shot full of holes they might not live to complain about the pain, but her lover, her boy, would.

He kissed her. "I won't be gone very long."

She smiled ruefully, "Long enough."

"Don't start bitching," he teased and pulled her close to whisper in her ear. "You're the one that came, and I'll be thinking about that the whole time I'm gone, too."

"You will?"

Ummmmmm..." he murmured as his lips brushed over hers.

"I'll just be heading off to make preparations. I'll be going with him, Nikki."

"Thank you, Hawk," she told him.

They both heard the door close as Hawk slipped out of the room to give them a few moments of privacy.

She wrapped her arms around her lover and enjoyed the kiss. "You're sure?"

"You can count on it," he murmured as he placed series of light kisses over her lips and face. "And what I'll be thinking about is how Mistress plans to punish her boy when he comes home."

"Thought you wanted to dom it over me."

"Nah," he replied, lips against hers, the kiss light, teasing. "You know I love being on my knees at your feet."

"Umhhmm..." she acknowledged, their lips touching, tasting, "and that's where I like you. Or on your knees letting me fuck you with that toy we've got."

* * * *

He pulled her closer a shiver of anticipation making goosebumps on his skin. "You promise?"

"Umhhmm..."

GAMES DRAGONS PLAY

"When I get back we can play."

"Promise?"

They were still kissing gently, enjoying one another, her hands sliding down his back to grip his ass and pull him as close as her belly would allow.

"Oh yeah, Nikki, I promise," he agreed, his kiss going from the light teasing to a deeper kiss that had their tongues touching, exploring. "Mistress can do whatever she wants to her misbehaving boy."

"Good thing, because you've been so bad." She brushed her fingers over the erection under his jeans.

"Have I?" he groaned, the pleasure making him want to stay and find out exactly how she'd planned to punish him.

"Oh yes. Very bad."

Her hand was a lure, a distraction from what he was supposed to be doing. It felt so incredible and he had to stop himself from stripping off his jeans and kneeling at her feet to await her commands. It was a game. A wonderful game that they played almost every night.

Breathless, he pulled away, shuddering. The Thing at the core of his being awakened. He held it in check, felt the hammering of his racing heart pounding in his cock, making his balls ache in fierce need and the Dragon strain for freedom.

And he didn't dare take the time to satisfy himself, much less It.

He took her hands in his, gazed into the beautiful depths of her sable eyes, seeing the Roe Deer at the center of her soul. He bent down to press a kiss to the mound of her belly. He had to go...now, or he wouldn't be able to drag himself away from her, or from the children. "Be good while Daddy's gone," he told the baby inside her, feeling the child move under his lips as if it heard him.

He touched her, heart warming, filling with such an intense pride, so much protective joy and fierce love that he thought his chest would burst. The flood of emotion leaving him struggling to breathe, shaking with the wonder of it, the triple miracle that was Nikki and their children, one already born, the other still growing in her womb.

He put his arms around her, cheek to her stomach, eyes blurring. She was everything. Love, hope, happiness. Everything. "I love you, Nikki."

Gentle hands stroked his hair, love in her touch, in the tenderness filling her voice. "I love you, too, Jason."

He would have stayed there with her forever, but the outside world always had to rear its ugly head.

"I should go."

"If you have to, then go."

He pulled from her embrace, let her go. "I have to go, Nikki. They can't be allowed to hurt anyone else."

"Then go, Bells," she replied, addressing him as the killer he had to be. It was her way of letting him go, of showing him she understood. He had to protect what was his, and nothing and no one would be permitted to bring danger close to those he loved.

"We'll be here waiting for you when you come home," she promised, rubbing her belly and the child that was growing to fill it.

He smiled, but the hardness, the cold strength of the killer he'd been, was already turning his face and gaze to ice.

* * * *

So high in the mountains it was bitterly cold, the early February wind pulling snow from high piled drifts that made travel almost impossible. A full moon painted the land in stark contrasts of black and white, and showed them the camp below in sharp-cut relief.

There were a few crates piled up on the ground near a battered APC that had a makeshift canopy over the troop carrier section. A tent that had seen better days—patched with a mixture of mismatched fabric—was set up beside the APC. A man bundled up in layers of clothing and wearing a pair of ski gloves stomped and prowled around the camp, ostensibly on guard detail, but it was of limited use as he never left the circle of dim firelight.

Bells' breath streamed like smoke in the wind, reminding the men with him of a dragon's breath. Fitting since that was exactly what lay at the center of his soul.

Dal crept through the brush, moving at his left, the Tiger that lay in the middle of his soul manifest as a ghostly form surrounding him. Tough and strong, Dal, ready was for the impending danger they were approaching so stealthily.

Bells hadn't wanted Dal to come, but the man with a tiger's soul wasn't about to be left behind, even though he could well be killed if the men they were coming to kill got off a shot. Tigers were strong, tough and fast, but they could be killed.

To his right was Hawk, the Fenyx that lay in the midst of the man's soul as visible to Bells as Dal's Tiger. Another Immortal, he moved with

Bells the pair scanning their surroundings for any sign of anti-personnel mines or other devices that could injure them, or kill their companion.

Hawk hadn't wanted Dal to come along either, but the man was adamant that he be included since it was his job as head of the Colby's fighting forces which, he'd reminded them, he'd been put in charge of by Queen Nikki.

That had ended the argument and the pair of Immortals and the Tiger had gone off into the night on the mission to find the men they were now watching from the cover of the winter bare trees.

"What do you think?" Hawk whispered, voice kept very low to prevent it from carrying in the frigid air.

"I want to scout them out more and see if we spot any trace of those weapons Luke warned you about," Bells told them. "You two stay here, I'll go by myself."

Hawk didn't bother to argue, and though Dal looked as if he wanted to, he kept his mouth shut also. They both knew by now that it wouldn't get them anywhere: Bells was the most stubborn SOB they'd met. At least, that's what they'd told him often enough.

Moving without making a sound, the blond man—whose hair was now up in its usual tangle of braids—crept off to get a better look at the enemy camp. There were few people moving around in the open, and no sign that the slavers had put out any sentries. It made him cautious of claymores or other anti-personnel devices. While getting nailed by one of those wouldn't kill him, it did hurt like a bitch and would render him incapacitated for some time.

Being torn to bits and lying in agony while he healed had never been a highlight of his existence, so he was cautious as he made his way around the camp. But they'd found none where they'd first spotted the camp, and he found none as he moved around the perimeter which said they either didn't have any, or were hoarding them. Either way it left Bells and his companions in the clear.

He had reached the far side of the camp and was coming through a thick tangle of trees and underbrush when he heard a gasping cry and stopped to peer into the blackness beneath a stand of evergreens. The sound was repeated and he moved forward, the first taste of anger rising inside him.

The cry was that of a woman, and only pain caused the sharp stridency he was hearing.

They were slavers.

And one of them was sampling the goods.

His lips twisted into a snarl of fury.

Dim light filtered to him through the snow laden branches of a fir tree, he slipped through the boughs and found a well concealed tent, dim light from a lantern making shadows on the wall.

The shadow was horizontal, a cot and two occupants, one on top of the other. The top shape rose up, and the Immortal's eyes narrowed, rage twisting his face into something not quite human as the Dragon awakened and a misty nimbus of aqua and emerald surrounded him.

He stalked forward, reaching over his shoulder to draw the katana he'd brought. It was a single fluid stroke, the draw and cut as the blade slashed through the tent and took the man through the spine, killing him with no more sound than the tearing fabric.

The dead man shuddered, shock setting in instantly, face paling, pupils dilating, the damage so severe he was probably dead before he even felt the pain. Bells kicked the corpse off of the captive woman, flicked blood from the blade of his katana and sheathed it.

Several sets of eyes watched him. Wide, fear-filled eyes regarded him from the heaps of tattered and dirty blankets they were huddling in. Four women, all of them battered, abused and half starved, one girl that stared blankly at nothing.

The woman on the cot was badly beaten, one eye swollen almost shut, her breasts covered in bite marks new and old. Blood covered her torn mouth and painted her slender thighs. Both wrists were cuffed to the metal frame of the camping cot.

"Oh, God..." she moaned.

He reached down to snap the handcuffs off of her wrists with his bare hands, hands that had an overlay of a dragon's taloned forepaws that was invisible to most people.

Apparently this unknown woman wasn't 'most people.' However, she stared at him as if seeing—well, a Dragon.

"You're him..." she whispered in awe.

He shook his head and the tiny bells in his hair whispered soft music. "If you think I'm Roderick you're mistaken. That bastard is dead."

Her deep green eyes regarded him, but there was no fear. "I know that bastard's dead. But you're the one I've heard about. The one they call Bells. You're the one that killed Roderick, aren't you?"

"Yeah, that's me," he agreed as he pulled a blanket around her shivering body.

GAMES DRAGONS PLAY

He heard a sound, the crack of ice, the snap of a twig.

"Stay low and wait here. You'll be free of these jackasses soon."

"Where's the rest of your men? There's a lot of those bastards here," the woman warned.

"I don't need any help to kill vermin," he replied as he stepped out of the tent.

Ice burned in his veins and he ducked, a rifle butt missing his head by such a narrow margin that his braids twisted around the wood as he spun into the attack, driving fist into the sentry's chest.

Bone cracked loud as a gunshot in the freezing air.

The man crumpled to the snow with a grunt, eyes wide as blood ran from his mouth. He tried to suck in a breath, but more blood poured out instead. He fell over, dying in the snow. Bells was already walking toward the APC, his revolver in his left fist, the katana gleaming in his right.

"Happy Valentine's Day, mother fuckers," he announced as he jumped into the APC and opened fire, aqua and emerald flame seething around him, the Dragon raging and awake.

It was over in under five minutes, thirty corpses cooling in the winter's chill, Bells standing in the moonlight, spattered in blood, breath streaming in the air.

Hawk—a maelstrom of violet and red flame, and the phantom shape of a huge eagle-like bird surrounding him—holstered his own pistol and checked one of the former soldiers. Finding no sign of life he got up. "I knew that guy. He was one of my brother's right hand men. A real pig. He was probably leading these shitheads," Hawk stated.

Dal joined them from the other side of the camp. He was limping slightly, but didn't seem to be injured seriously. Bells raised an eyebrow and Dal blushed. "Stepped in an old wolf trap. Hurt like hell, but my boot saved my ankle."

"Did you get those two that ran?"

"Yeah, I got them," Dal replied, the Tiger overlaying his human form was still visible to the two Immortals.

"I checked the APC. The reason they camped here is because the track slipped and they couldn't get it back on. It wasn't going anywhere and they couldn't slog through this deep snow with those women and their gear so here they are," Bells told them.

"Now what, your Highness?" Hawk asked.

MICHAEL BARNETTE

Bells leveled a cool stare on the other man. "What have I told you about calling me that?"

"Hmmm...as I recall you told me you'd kick my ass if I didn't stop," Hawk replied dryly as he met the other Immortal's gaze, a slight smile on his face.

"Remind me to do it when we're done here," Bells told him.

"As your Highness wishes."

Bells turned to Hawk, "One of these days..."

Hawk laughed. "You've said that, too."

"Yeah, I guess I have."

"Come on, let's get these girls out of here. I figure we should take them to Danbridge since it's closer," Bells stated. "Dal can help those girls find some clothes, the two of us will fix the track."

"You sound very confident we can fix it," Hawk said as he followed the smaller man.

"I can, I just can't do it without help."

True to his word, Bells soon had the track back on with some assistance from Hawk to apply additional brute force when it was required. They bundled the girls up into the vehicle, Hawk in the back with them armed with an assault rifle just in case they ran into stragglers.

With Dal riding shotgun and Bells driving, they started the heavy vehicle toward Danbridge.

* * * *

When they got back to Fort Colby it was early evening. The only stop Bells made was at the small gift shop at the heart of a slowly revitalizing downtown. He brought some homemade cookies in a heart shaped tin, a card, and some silk flowers scented with gardenia oil because there were no live flowers to be found at this time of year.

He hurried to the big stone building that was both house and seat of the government and raced up the steps to the front door, passing the sentries on guard, the men nodding to him and bowing.

Reaching out with his inhuman senses, he found Nikki and ran up the stairs. He had time for what he wanted to do because she was with Nikkolai, putting their firstborn child to bed.

He set the artificial flowers and the tin of cookies on the bed and stripped, donning the collar. Taking the flowers and cookies off the bed he put them on the floor and knelt, head down, facing the bedroom door and waited.

* * * *

GAMES DRAGONS PLAY

The first thing Nikki saw was her boy on his knees, his head bowed. He hadn't taken his hair down, the wild tangle of braids with the grey feathers, cobalt glass beads, and the small silver bells that made such a sweet sound whenever he moved still in place. Then she noticed the silk flowers and the gift tin and smiled.

He was trying to make up for what he'd done that resulted in the punishment she'd started to give him before they were interrupted three nights ago.

He'd forgotten it was Valentine's Day.

She nudged the silk flowers with her toe and gave a disparaging sniff. "Gardenias again?"

He lowered his head, her tone showing he'd made a blunder with his choice. "Yes, Mistress Nikki."

"No imagination," she said making her tone harsh, showing displeasure. With his head down he couldn't see her delighted smile, and she did her best to banish it from her lips. It wouldn't do for him to notice that she was surprised at the way he was trying to make up for his prior blunder. It had been why she was punishing him in the first place, though she suspected he'd 'forgotten' deliberately just to give them an excuse for the games she loved playing with him. Many of the things her lover did were meant as a gift to her, and she loved him for it. Not once had he ever made her feel anything but loved and worthy of being loved. And he'd never treated her like an object, a thing to be used and abused as he pleased.

"And I suppose those are cookies again, too?"

His head was almost to the floor when he answered. "Yes, Mistress Nikki."

She gave a put upon sigh, unable to keep the grin of delight off her face. She'd craved cookies the first time she'd been pregnant, and this time it was just as bad. Sugar cookies were her weakness, and she couldn't get enough of them. Love warmed her right to her soul as she pressed her foot between his shoulder blades forcing his head to the floor.

"No imagination whatsoever," she chastised as goosebumps rose on his skin. She was silent a moment, giving him time to contemplate what might happen next aware of how his breathing had changed. This excited him, and she felt herself getting wet in response.

Roderick had abused her, raped her as he chose. Jason let her dominate him and had done so from the start to show he'd never hurt her the way the other Dragon had hurt her.

Her heart was so filled with love for Jason that some days she wondered how she'd ever lived without her boy, the man she knew she could never live without.

She also had the comforting knowledge that he'd never abandon her, never leave her for another woman—or a man, either. His 'I love you' was for life.

Her life, at least.

And that was fine with her. More than fine, it was wonderful.

She leaned down, bracing her hand between his shoulders to keep her balance.

"You just stay right here, just like this. Don't you dare move," she ordered.

"Yes, Mistress Nikki."

The silken tone of his voice coiled as lust in her belly. A wicked thought flitted through her mind and she slid her hand downward, following the line of his spine to the crack of his ass. She slipped her finger into the crack and heard his breath catch as she teased him.

"You've been such a bad pet..." she considered, then said, "Bells."

"Yes, Mistress," he agreed.

She felt him shiver as she moved her hand over the curve of his butt, touching, teasing, enflaming him further.

"You need to be punished, don't you?"

"Yes, Mistress."

She flexed her hand quickly, limbering it up, then brought it down on one golden butt cheek as hard as she could without hurting herself.

She might be a Queen, a pregnant one at that, but she hadn't gotten soft, either, and her hand came down with enough force to draw a gasping breath from him.

"You stay right there," she commanded.

"Yes...Mistress Nikki." His reply came out as a breathless gasp and she knew he was painfully hard without even looking. This was a game for them, but it was a game he relished because being dominated was a complete turn on for him. And the pain was an added spice she used the way spice should be used—in moderation. While she liked dominating him, she found it difficult to hurt him because of the terrible things Roderick had done to her, but she was overcoming her reluctance

GAMES DRAGONS PLAY

because her Jason actually liked a taste of pain mixed into his pleasure. Seemed to crave it the way she craved his cock inside her.

Stifling a pleased giggle at the red handprint she'd managed to create, Nikki hurried to the trunk where the toys—including their special costumes—were stored. She got out her leather Domme outfit, including the high heels. It was getting hard to stand or walk in them, but she wasn't going to go far, or be on her feet very long.

Not if she had her way, and Mistress Nikki *always* got her way. She debated putting on the fishnets and decided against them. She only wore those when her boy had done something especially good. And he was being punished, not rewarded.

Finished dressing, she shoved the padded bench into the middle of the room and put her foot up in the same pose she'd been in when Hawk's arrival had ended their game.

"Come here," she snarled.

He moved quickly to obey, crawling across the carpet and bowing his head low amid the soft ringing of the bells in his hair.

"Do you remember what you were doing when Hawk stopped our game?"

"Yes, Mistress."

His voice was so soft, a velvet caress across her senses. Submissive. Yielding to her will. Willing to give her anything she desired.

"Kiss it," she ordered.

And her boy obeyed, his face pressed to her crotch, lips touching the lips of her cunt in what would have been a gentle, almost chaste kiss had it been delivered to her mouth. She smiled. He was being 'bad' again.

"I said *kiss it!*" she demanded and pulled his hair.

He gasped, his mouth pressing firmly to her crotch as she'd ordered.

So far he was playing by their rules, keeping his hands off of her but she wondered if he'd continue to obey that rule or whether she'd be forced to use the cuffs as she normally did.

He had a tendency to touch when he wasn't handcuffed, and there was just something about him in cuffs that really got her hot. Whether it was because she knew he could break free of them, or because it just excited her to have that much control of him she wasn't sure but either way it got her juices flowing.

But so did having him on his knees, face first in her crotch.

"Taste it."

His tongue darted in, delving into her entrance, flicking across her heated clit. She wrapped her hand into his hair, gripping the braids and pulling his head closer to the center of her need. And she *needed* him, desired her man with a depth of passion she wasn't sure she could keep in check long enough for the prolonged 'punishment' she'd had in mind a few nights ago.

His mouth was eager, tongue turning her lower body into liquid flame that boiled through her blood and turned her knees to water so that, when his hands closed on her hips, she didn't object. She needed that support to keep from falling as his tongue thrust and flicked, swept her clit, and parted her labia as he suckled the tender flesh.

Nikki groaned, hips bucking against his face, responding to her boy's lovemaking skills as her hands locked in his braids. Holding him where he was, demanding more and getting what she wanted in a mind bending flash of heat that scorched across her skin hot as a fire.

Her legs buckled, but she wasn't aware of anything but the touch of his tongue as it probed into her, inciting another wave of temporary madness as the pleasure burned through her a second time, her whole body shuddering, hips bucking as his tongue stroked her clit, the pace merciless.

She came back to herself with his hands bracing her upright, his tongue slipping gently across her slit. Nikki knew what he was doing. He was savoring her taste, taking in the scent and flavor of Its female, the Dragon reveling in the presence of his mate.

"I love you," she told him, forgetting that she was Mistress Nikki, and the Mistress was angry with her boy.

"This boy loves Mistress Nikki," he replied in an adoring whisper, lips brushing across her, his breath warm enough to send an echo of her recent orgasm vibrating through her body.

Her legs were starting to hurt from the strain of her pose and the weight of the baby. She debated her next command. She could order him to get on the bed, or she could demand he put her in bed. Nikki chose the latter which would give her the leeway to order him to get the toys they'd be playing with, rather than try and do it herself. She had to keep herself from giggling because this way she could keep on her Domme footgear which he liked so much. "Put me on the bed," she ordered.

He got to his feet and she stopped him with the grip in his hair just long enough to press a hot kiss to his Nikki flavored mouth, enjoying the smell and taste of her love for him on his lips and tongue.

GAMES DRAGONS PLAY

She broke the kiss and raised an eyebrow at him. "Well?"

Strong arms swept her up. Pregnant she weighed more than he did, but that hardly mattered to a man with the spirit of a Dragon at the heart of his soul. The Dragon was incredibly strong and that strength powered her lover.

* * * *

He carried Nikki to the bed, crawled onto it with her cradled in his embrace and lay her down in the middle of the king sized mattress, smiling as he remembered the old joke they shared about the bed. When they'd been presented the bed by Hawk and Dal the day they'd moved into the governmental building the men had proclaimed it the "king-sized bed fit for a Queen," and it had turned into a joke between the two of them.

It was also a bed fit for the Mistress of a dragon-boy.

Sable brown eyes regarded him, her expression calculating. Nikki was plotting out what she wanted to do to him as 'punishment'. A shiver of anticipatory reaction swept through him, making his cock twitch, a few beads of precum sliding from the slit in the head.

Those beautiful eyes noted the event and Nikki's hand closed on his cock, the pad of her thumb sweeping over the weeping head. He groaned and arched into her touch with a softly moaned, "This boy loves his Mistress."

"Hmmm..."

The hand let go and he sighed at the loss.

Yes, he was in for some punishment if the initial teasing was any indication of her intent.

The same hand that had touched his erection was lifted to his face, the thumb caressing his lips much the same way it had brushed over the head of his cock. He could taste his precum and he was debating licking it off when her thumb pressed between his lips, Nikki *forcing* him to taste himself.

His tongue wrapped around her thumb and she raised an eyebrow.

"You're such a bad boy that I'm having trouble deciding your punishment," she confided. "So, that being the case, I'm going to send you over to the chest and make you pick out your own punishment. I'm very angry, so you'd better make your decision carefully. If I don't think it's good enough you'll be punished twice."

"Yes, Mistress." She wasn't making this easy on him. His favorite punishment was for her to fuck him with a strap-on, but he was pretty

sure that wasn't going to be enough of a punishment to satisfy his Mistress tonight.

"Well, what are you waiting for?" she prompted, shoving at his shoulders.

He left the bed, glanced at her as if seeking some kind of reassurance. He loved this game, loved the woman he was playing it with so much sometimes it was hard for him to come to grips with the fact that he wasn't dreaming, wasn't imagining how happy they were.

He'd lost Kimi—his long dead first love—but Nikki was real and he'd never let anything happen to her that he had a way to prevent.

"You're really asking for trouble, aren't you?"

"No, Mistress Nikki. I...can't decide."

"Standing there staring at me won't help you decide. Go look in the chest."

"Yes, Mistress," he replied, lowering his head. He always enjoyed letting her control him, order him around, letting her Domme it over him. It felt good to let her do what she wanted to him and he enjoyed the freedom it gave him. He didn't have to make decisions, didn't have to make choices.

He made enough of those every time he had to go out to kill people.

"Jaaaaason..." She was showing her displeasure in how long this was taking him by drawing out his name the way a parent would when confronted with something a child had done wrong.

He looked into the chest. So many choices. Whips. Restraints. Ropes. An assortment of dildos and strap-ons. Gags and blindfolds.

Too many choices and he couldn't decide.

"If I have to come over there you're going to be in a lot of trouble," Nikki warned him.

He knelt by the chest and debated what would be the best thing or things to appease her displeasure with him. It was a game to her, a game she played to show her love for him and satisfy his need to relinquish control and just let go.

It was a game she was getting really good at playing.

"One...."

She was giving him to the count of five to make his choice and get back to where she waited. If he failed to arrive by the end of her count he'd face more punishment. He couldn't help the smile that pulled at his mouth. He loved it when she got this way, demanding, harsh with her commands.

GAMES DRAGONS PLAY

He dug through the box of dildos looking for the one he wanted.

"Two..."

He reached in and quickly chose a few items. Leather restraints, a pair of butt plugs, a dildo and a strap-on and a soft suede cat of nine tails.

"Three...."

He jumped up off the floor.

"Four..."

He leapt onto the bed, dropping to his knees beside her and offered her his choices as she said the dreaded, "Five."

She surveyed his selections with disdain, picking up the suede whip and examining it critically. "You chose this knowing how angry I am with you?"

"Yes, Mistress," he replied and lowered his head more to hide the smile ruining his subbie-boy apology.

She snapped her fingers and he was quick to get onto his hands and knees, the suede smacking his ass before he'd gotten into position. She'd swung it hard enough to give him a hint of pain, pain he wanted, often needed to get him aroused enough to cum.

"What am I going to do with you...Bells?"

He let his head drop between his shoulders, showing dejection, contrition and his acceptance of her punishment. "Your boy doesn't know, Mistress Nikki."

"You've been bad over and over the last few days. First you forget Valentine's Day, then you leave me to go play in the snow..."

He glanced at her, one gold eyebrow raised at that accusation. "Is that where I went, Mistress?"

The suede struck. "How dare you question me!" Her eyes actually flashed with wicked amusement as she snapped that out at him. He had to drop his head to keep from smiling.

"Forgive your boy, Mistress Nikki."

"Not this time. Now where was I? Oh yes, then when you've been told to select the method of your punishment you bring me this pitiful suede thing and some toys meant for your pleasure!" She used her hand on his ass, smacking him hard enough for it to sting. His cock, already hard and aching, twitched.

"This boy is..."

"Shut up. Don't tell me you're sorry. You've been so bad I don't know if I should even keep you!" The hand came down again, stinging,

hurting as if she were really angry. She wasn't, but she was giving him what he wanted.

He spun around and pressed his face to her thigh. "Please, Mistress! Please don't get rid of your boy."

"Give me one good reason to keep you!"

"This boy loves Mistress. This boy will be good."

"I've heard this before," she countered. "But you were bad anyway, weren't you?"

"Yes, Mistress," he agreed, lowering his voice to a bare whisper. He could smell her arousal with his face so close to her crotch, cheek pressed to her firm thigh. He considered it, then licked the soft skin.

"Trying to get out of being punished, are you?"

How to answer? He debated for a second, then said, "This boy wants to prove how much he loves Mistress Nikki." He kissed her thigh, touched it with his tongue, tempting her to either let him taste her sweetness or punish him for being so impudent.

"Do you now?"

"Yes, Mistress."

She grabbed him by the hair and pulled his head away from her thigh. "On your knees!"

Her voice was sharp as the crack of a whip and his whole body jumped when the suede cracked down on his shoulder as he obeyed, sitting back on his heels, waiting for her next command. She didn't get this domineering very often, and was rarely so hard to please it left him wondering what she was planning to do. A thrill of anticipation jolted through him when she reached for the things he'd brought for his punishment.

But her hand moved past the toys, closing on her dressing gown which lay across the foot of the bed. She pulled the silky belt free and regarded him silently before wrapping it around his head, covering his eyes, using it to serve as blindfold.

Unable to see, he felt her make sure it was tight enough to keep him from seeing anything but not tight enough to hurt. Now he was in the dark, unable to see what she was doing. His heart beat sped up, eagerness for what she was doing, what she might do, heating his body.

Her fingers stroked down his cheek, followed the line of his neck to a shoulder, slid along his spine to the crack of his ass and cupped one butt cheek. She shoved and he moved to his hands and knees. He

GAMES DRAGONS PLAY

swallowed, excited by the control she'd taken by the simple act of denying him sight.

He felt her move, her awkwardness hidden from his eyes, but not from the motion that traveled through the bed. A fingertip touched his ass and he felt goosebumps rise on his skin a shiver passing through him at the cool touch of her fingertip to sensitive flesh.

"You've been so bad there's only one thing I can think of to punish you properly."

"This boy is sorry, Mistress."

"Not yet you aren't, but you will be," she replied.

Something cold, wet, and hard touched his behind and he relaxed as the anal plug was inserted. He shuddered as it stroked across the internal spot that felt so good, groaned as she seated it firmly inside him.

The suede cracked down on his hip and he jumped, not because it hurt that much, but because it startled him. He couldn't see what she was doing, could only feel.

"Lay down on your back."

He felt the butt plug shifting around inside him as he complied.

"Hands over your head."

The restraints were put on his wrists. She fastened them to the headboard rails.

Fingers touched his left nipple, pinching and he gasped at the hint of pain.

"Maybe I should just leave you here for a while to contemplate your mistakes and behavior."

"Please, Mistress, I'll be good."

"No, you won't. You always act up." Warm breath tickled through the hair on his belly as she spoke this time and he swallowed, tense with desire.

Her teeth grazed his stomach, nipping his skin.

She was so close to his cock, close enough that he could feel the warmth of her breath flowing over the head, along the shaft. He groaned as fingers caressed through the hair at the base of his erection, slid down his inner thigh. Her hair touched him, brushed across the head of his dick and he groaned again and shifted on the bed, the anal plug moving, sending a warm heat through him that curled into his balls, claws of desire digging into him.

"I wanted to enjoy riding your cock, but you've been so bad I don't think I'm going to do that now."

"Oh, please...Mistress Nikki," he gasped as she kissed along the opposite thigh, the very edge of a fingernail grazing along the underside of his prick.

She was really punishing him. Making him crazy with desire.

Waking It up, the Beast at the core of his soul was awake and aware, coming to the surface.

"You beg so prettily," she purred, and he felt a wet, warm something that had to be the tip of her tongue flick over the tiny slit in the head of his cock.

The groan turned to a pleading whimper.

"Ohhh....yes, you want it don't you?"

"Please, Mistress...please..."

He really did want it, and if he didn't get it soon he'd make torn bits out of the leather restraints she'd used on him.

* * * *

Nikki couldn't wait. She'd wanted him inside her and she was going to have what *she* wanted. She straddled him and lowered herself down, feeling his hard rod of flesh slip into her hot center. From the first slow stroke she was lost, tensing her thighs, lowering herself as his flesh filled her.

He groaned, hips coming up off the bed. She shoved him down by lowering herself farther and staying there because she didn't want him to move.

"Bad boy!" she snapped, "Don't you dare seek your own pleasure!"

He cried out, frustrated and wanting what she'd just denied him and Nikki smiled knowing he was probably enjoying what she was doing, the orders, the harsh sound of her voice as much as he enjoyed the feel of her body encasing him.

She rode him, the pleasure heating her insides hot as chili powder, filling her with spice that flowed outward to warm her whole body.

Flakes of snow hissed across the windowpanes, as she sought her pleasure, her lover groaned under her as what she was doing for herself brought him closer to orgasm.

Just a little more...

And she was there, bucking and rocking harder, carried on a wave of pleasure that burned deep inside her, coiled around their child wrapping the baby in love.

Silvery notes rose into the air as her lover struggled with the restraints, body rocking, cock hard and wanting inside of her. He wasn't

exerting enough force to free himself, but the way he moved under her showed he was striving for his own release despite her prior order.

"What were you told?" she asked him, breathless from her own climax. She rose off of his rigid length and dropped onto the bed beside him. "You are such a bad boy."

"Please...Nikki..."

No 'Mistress' this time, just her name and the need raw in his voice.

"Shhh..." she soothed, leaning down to suck a pale pink nipple.

He gave a wordless cry, cock bobbing in the air, her own juices drying on the purpled skin. She ran her hands over his body, touching, caressing places she knew gave him pleasure, teasing him without any sign of mercy until he was gasping and moaning, begging for more than the teasing.

She pulled on him, urging him to turn over and he complied, immediately trying to thrust his aching cock into the sheets.

Her hand came down on his ass with a stinging crack that burned through her own palm and caused his ass cheeks to go tense which in turn pushed the anal plug into him. She watched what happened, and saw his reaction as his entire body tensed and he started to thrust into the covers, body and need stealing reason, lust taking over.

Her hand cracked down again and he thrust harder into the bed.

"Stop that!"

He went still, breathing hard, a shudder passing through him. "Please..." it was almost a whimper, her lover begging for what she'd already had: release.

But Nikki wasn't done with him. Not quite.

"Much better," she said as she pressed her hand to the anal plug and shoved it in and out, moving it, making him cry out and grip the bars of the bed's headboard.

"Mistress..."

"Will you try and be good?"

"Yesssss..." the answer was hissed out through clenched teeth.

Her hand came down again, just as hard and she knew she'd pay for it in the morning with sore fingers, but she didn't care. This part was for him, to make him feel good.

"No more gardenias and cookies on Valentine's Day?"

"N...no." The hitch in his voice showed it was working, he was almost ready.

She pulled the plug free, picked up the much longer dildo and thrust it into his anus hearing him gasp. She drove it in and out, her lover writhing beneath her as the thing stroked the nerves surrounding his prostate, pleasuring him, turning his brain to mush.

He was moaning, crying out, shaking with the need to cum. And she wasn't about to tell him he was allowed. Not just yet.

She pulled the dildo free, replaced it with an even longer butt plug and rolled him over. She freed his wrists and drew him close, pulling him on top of her. The blindfold stayed where it was as she reached down between them.

"Fuck me like your life depends on it," she demanded.

His cock sank into her, his whole body shaking, trembling with the desire enflaming him.

She watched as the first dim threads of aqua and emerald mist spun outward.

And there it was, the mist of aqua and emerald thickening around her lover, her Bells as the Dragon at the center of his soul manifested.

She kicked his butt, clawed at his shoulders. "More, Jason. Give me more!" she commanded.

Obedient, her lover surged into her, his hair tickling her breasts, brushing over her shoulders. She got a good grip in it and pulled, making him gasp with the pain, shudder with the pleasure as she kicked him harder, demanding, commanding he pleasure her as she wished.

Nikki arched into his thrusts as orgasm washed over her, pulling her higher, taking her down as the crest passed, a second burst of pleasure burning through her as the Dragon roared and her husband gasped out her name.

Struggling to catch her breath, Nikki freed Jason, uncovered his eyes and tossed the makeshift blindfold aside.

He lay beside her, gasping, arms around her, face pressed into her hair.

She smiled and snuggled into his embrace, His hand moving to rest on her belly, fingers spread to feel the baby moving and she knew he had that silly smile on his face. He always did when the baby kicked or moved. A sort of bemused, 'I'm going to be a daddy' type of expression. He'd worn it a lot with their first baby, even had it when he slept.

Not that it was any different this time.

He kissed her shoulder. "Happy Valentine's Day, Mistress Nikki." He sighed, sleepy, contented the satisfaction in his voice unmistakable.

GAMES DRAGONS PLAY

"Happy Valentine's Day, my pretty Dragon."

He snorted at that and pulled a cover over them.

Outside the snow murmured softly against the window, and her people slept peacefully knowing that they were safe and free.

Protected by a Dragon.

Protected by Bells.

Her husband.

Her lover.

Her boy.

"That was a good game...." he murmured.

"Was it?"

"Umhmm.."

"Glad you liked it."

"Maybe next time you can tie me up, hold me prisoner to your desire."

"And here I thought that's what I'd just done."

"Nah, you just restrained me a little."

"Games dragons play certainly are interesting," she remarked as she drifted off to sleep wrapped in the warmth of a Dragon's love.

MICHAEL BARNETTE

About the Author

Michael Barnette was nominated for a Spectrum Award in 2003 for his first published erotic short story Zoner, which has now appeared internationally in both English and Italian language editions. Zoner has become the first story in the Through Neon Eyes series.

Once a resident of Coconut Grove and South Beach in Florida, Michael relocated to Georgia where there were fewer gunshots and yard to yard searches for suspects to disturb the writing muses. He has since moved on and now lives in a very small town in the Midwest.

To find out more about Michael's works visit these sites on the Internet.

<http://www.michaelbarnette.com>
<http://linktiles.com?tile=2210>
<http://www.myspace.com/michaelbarnette>
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To chat directly with Michael and some of his readers join his Immortal Heroes chat group.
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