

# **Sex Magick**

## **Willa Okati**

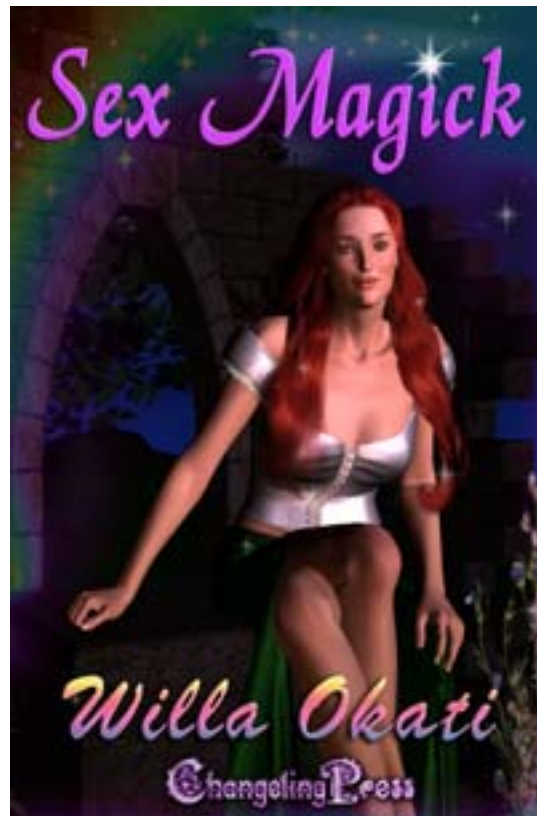
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## Chapter One

Tomnas braced himself over a slim red-haired woman, his hands knuckled into fists on either side of her slight shoulders, pressing down against the vibrating floor of their boxcar. He was breathing heavily, although the sound couldn't be heard above the noise of the cargo train. "Tatiana... God. You're the only woman I've ever..."

"Shh." Tatiana reached up to brush a wisp of Tomnas' overlong, dark blond hair out of his eyes. "I know. You have always preferred men, but now you find yourself with me. It is not a situation either of us would have expected, no. But now we travel together, yes, and it is comfort we must find in one another's arms."

"I wouldn't call it comfort." Tomnas dipped down to kiss her sweet, berry-flavored lips. "More like salvation. What I'd have done without you, I don't know."

Tatiana licked those lips. "But now you have me," she said, her mouth curving into the smile of a woman who knows she's about to get her way. "And I have you. And on this midnight train, what else is there to do except love and be loved?" She laughed softly. "Except to count the trees as they flash past, and I think I would rather be otherwise occupied."

"I think I would too." Tomnas lowered himself onto one arm, all the better to bring his mouth closer to Tatiana's ruby lips. He groaned. "Fuck, you smell so sweet. Are you working Magick on me?"

"Mmm. Maybe just a little bit." Tatiana slipped her hand between their bodies, bringing it to rest on the bulge of Tomnas' erection. "I am a devil, yes?"

"Everything but the horns."

"I think I am plenty horny for the both of us." Tatiana stroked Tomnas' hip with her free hand. "Make love to me, before I die from wanting you. Here and now, on the midnight train. I want to see the stars."

“As if I could resist you, witch.” Tomnas lowered himself onto his other arm, pressing the length of his body along Tatiana’s, and kissed her with every ounce of passion he possessed, licking up her sweet flavor and plunging into her mouth for more of the fruits she tasted like. Persephone couldn’t have been better.

They had been friends, at first. Tatiana was a Magick student from Russia, come to America in search of a Master. She had fallen in with Tomnas when he was busking on a street corner in search of money, adding her sweet voice to his and singing some of the songs from her homeland in a high, tremulous melody that was the perfect counterpoint to his lower tenor.

After that, they had decided to travel together. The arrangement was for them to be nothing but companions, but after a while even the most dedicated lover of men would have given in to Tatiana’s wiles. Long, slender legs, sleek hips, trim waist, and velvety-smooth arms. Long red hair that tumbled past her shoulders and down beyond her breasts in a tangle of curls. And her face... sweet face of an angel...

Tomnas groaned, and deepened their kiss. Tatiana removed her hand from his cock and wound both of her arms around his neck, pulling him closer so that she could taste him, too. He could feel her small nipples perking up into nubs beneath the thin shirt she wore, rubbing against his own bare chest. The sensation was like nothing he’d ever felt, not even when with a man.

Or with Pedri...

Tomnas couldn’t seem to take his mouth away from Tatiana, not even to speak. Women liked hearing words of love, he knew, but he decided he’d let his body do the talking for a little while. Although he did love her. How it had happened, he didn’t know, but she’d become as dear to him as anyone he’d ever known. Tatiana, with her long skirts and skimpy tops, her hemp jewelry and her clashing earrings, her sweet smile and her deep violet eyes.

He wondered what she saw in him. From the way she moaned and moved beneath his body, there must have been something to like. He didn’t think it was just because he’d learned how to be a skillful lover of women, entirely at her hands. When

he made love to Tatiana, he felt the shimmer of Magick surrounding them, warming their naked bodies. They fit together somehow, like puzzle pieces in a jigsaw.

"Tomnas," Tatiana whispered, threading her fingers through the back of his hair. "Do you feel in the mood to play? I would very much like to make this last."

Drawing back, Tomnas nodded. It should have been a hard gesture to see, given how dark the boxcar was, but Tatiana's Magick sight lent her the eyes of a cat in the night. He picked up one of her hands and pressed a fervent kiss to the palm. "Whatever you want," he said, and meant it.

"Then we will play 'do as I say'." He could hear her voice perfectly, soft and kittenish, despite the noise of the train. Magick again. His own throat tingled, a sure sign that she had used the same trick for him. He didn't mind. Anything to make this even better than it had been before. "And I say to remove your jeans. I want to see you naked, sweet Tomnas." She wriggled her hips, nudging her soft pussy against the hardness of his cock. "Trade and trade about. You have the right to demand something of me, next."

Tomnas grinned. When this pretty lady asked him to strip, he didn't hesitate. He'd taken off the ragged T-shirt he wore of his own free will, all the better to let his bare skin feel the warmth of hers, but the jeans could definitely go too. Wriggling free, he stood up and began pulling open the buttons on his fly. The holes loose and frayed, they gave way without any struggle. He wore no underwear beneath, so his cock peeped out as soon as he was finished. Hard enough to strain at his belly, it was leaking small drops of fluid.

Tatiana made a small, pleased noise. She spoke in Russian, a liquid stream of syllables, then finished in English. "You are so beautiful to me. Finish your undressing, and then we will make love, yes?"

"Oh, yes," Tomnas breathed. "As the lady commands."

"Are you my knight in shining armor now?" she teased.

"I would do anything for you," he said, feeling the truth of his words. "Anything from taking off my jeans to carrying you through fire."

"You never know what our tests will be with our Masters," she said archly. "But for now, the removal of your jeans will be enough. Hurry, Tomnas. I ache to have you between my legs."

"You should be a Master already." Tomnas inhaled the rich, textured air, smelling the iron of the boxcar, the pungent, thin layer of hay they rested on, and above all else fruit -- ripe strawberries, sweet pears, and crisp autumn apples. Tatiana pulsed with the scent instead of ordinary female musk, a trick she had perfected long before she met him. "With all the Magick you know..."

Tatiana put a finger over her lips. "I tire of games, I think. No more talking," she said softly. "Come and make love to me, if you care for me at all." She spread her legs beneath the long, tiered skirt she wore. Her hands came up to cup her small, plump breasts and squeeze the nipples. "Take off the jeans."

Tomnas caught his breath at the beauty of the sight. He'd always liked hard, flat male nipples, and preferred a pulsing cock to a creamy pussy, but Tatiana had wound him around her finger. With a slight push, he shoved his jeans down. Loose from the weight he had lost, they slithered down to his ankles. He stepped out of them, letting her see the full hardness of his cock. Taking the organ in hand, he stroked, savoring the feeling of hard flesh in his palm.

Tatiana chuckled. "I see you are not done teasing yet. Can two play at this new game?" She rose fluidly, settling herself on her knees, and reached out to pull Tomnas closer. With her hands on his hips, soft and light as a summer breeze, she urged him to her and bent her face to his cock.

The first light lap of her tongue had Tomnas' head spinning. He had always heard that women disliked oral sex, but Tatiana loved it and was an expert besides. She knew just how to move, to touch and taste; in any way that could send a man spiraling off into ecstasy, she was a mistress of the art. If he hadn't been so familiar with Tatiana's Magick and such good friends with her, he would have suspected all her enchantment to be a spell. He'd never loved a woman before, but she'd stolen his heart with no Magick needed. So strange, and yet so wonderful.

Taking more of his cock into her mouth, she sucked, her eyes closing as if he were the best thing she had ever tasted.

Tomnas loosed a ragged cry, his hands bunching into fists again before he shakily opened them and began to comb through the wild tufts of her curly hair. He stroked her scalp as gently as he could while she exercised her talent on his cock, using both tongue and teeth to tease him into a frenzy. He could feel her lapping off the drops of pre-come he was leaking, and hear her small noises of appreciation.

Outside, thunder rolled at the same time that a lightning strike illuminated the car. Tatiana pulled off long enough to laugh, her eyes sparkling. "So beautiful!" she exclaimed as the rain began to fall in heavy sheets outside the open door of the boxcar. "Look, Tomnas."

"Only one thing I want to see," Tomnas said, guiding Tatiana's head back to his aching cock. "Please, love."

She winked at him, visible in a passing flash of light. "Greedy, oh, so greedy. But lucky for you that this is my pleasure..." Tatiana drew him into her mouth again, her cheeks bulging and hollowing as she sucked hard, teasing with the tip of her tongue. Lightning flashed again, illuminating her beautiful, narrow face and her elegant nose. Not pretty in the classical sense, but gorgeous as Venus in Tomnas' eyes.

All too soon, he felt the surge of an orgasm growing in his lower belly. "Stop," Tomnas gasped, pushing at Tatiana's shoulders. "I'll come."

She drew off, running her tongue around her lips. "And who says I do not want you to spend in my mouth?" she teased. "I could taste you for hours."

"Sweet little liar." Tomnas thumbed a drop of creamy pre-come off the curve of her lower lip. "You want my cock inside your pussy. I can smell how much you want me."

She arched an eyebrow, then laughed, dimpling prettily. "You are too smart for me," she said in mock dismay. "Yes. I ache to have you between my thighs." Sitting back down in the thin coating of hay that lined their boxcar floor, leftovers from the cargo it had once carried, she spread her legs wide. "Come and see what you think."

Tomnas sank to his knees. He began pushing up Tatiana's skirt, revealing her long, toned legs inch by inch. Both of them enjoyed the slow reveal, he could tell. When he had moved her skirt up to her waist, he paused to take in a rich, fruity breath of the scent wafting from her pussy. "Are you wet?" he whispered, resting the palm of his hand against her mound. "God, you're soaking."

Tatiana's voice was throaty with desire. "I burn for you." Her hands shaking only a little, she reached up to unbutton her thin peasant blouse. The garment fell open to reveal her small, pert breasts with their rosy nipples. "I want to feel your mouth all over me, Tomnas," she urged. "Taste me and see how good I am."

"Then lie back," Tomnas directed. "Rest your head on a cushion of air and let me explore you from head to toe."

Tatiana dimpled again. "You need not pay attention to my toes. I want you on my breasts and in my pussy. Can you do this for me?"

"Oh, yes. God, yes." Tomnas eased Tatiana back into a supine position, her head resting on a Magickally created pillow. Red hair fanned out around her face like a corona of evening sunshine. She laughed and rolled her neck. "I am comfortable. Come, now."

The lightning flashed again as Tomnas lowered himself. The hay chafed against his cock, but that was good; he'd be able to hold out. The longer this went on, the longer he would be able to please the woman who'd consented to lie by his side. He positioned himself between Tatiana's spread legs, and lowered his mouth to her fragrant pussy.

"Oh, Tomnas, Tomnas!" Tatiana cried out as Tomnas took his first lick of her pussy, a light stroke of his tongue from the tip of her slit down to the pulsing wetness of her opening. He rolled the flavor of mangos and papayas in his mouth as he lingered there, lapping at her pussy as if he were savoring a piece of fruit. The soft red curls she wore like a crown tickled at his lips, sending tingles through his body. He inhaled, smelling more fruit and tasting her on the back of his tongue.

Tomnas worshiped Tatiana with his tongue, using every trick she had taught him. Sliding one finger into her pussy and beginning to thrust, he moved up to her



clitoris and found it with his tongue. Twining around the swollen, straining nub, he began to lick and suck as if it were a small cock demanding attention.

Oh, but she loved it when he went down on her. Tatiana moaned and writhed, her legs coming up and her knees braced. Slender, bare feet framed his sides. Tomnas laughed softly, knowing from what she'd told him how the sensation would feel against her sensitive flesh, and sucked harder, giving her clit several rough tugs with his tongue.

He felt her orgasm building as he worked, both loving every second of his efforts, scenting the rich fruit smell as it built in strength until he thought he was drowning in ripe berries. When he slid a second finger into her sopping pussy and thrust hard in time with a flick of his tongue, she ripped into a shuddering orgasm that had her hips rolling and her hands beating against the floor of the boxcar.

Tomnas gave her pussy a last kiss, then withdrew for a moment to let her recover. Blood pounded in his cock, and he promised it: *just a few more minutes. You'll get what's coming to you.*

"For someone who has always lain with men, you do this so well," Tatiana finally said, sounding breathless. "I must teach you more and still more. You will be a very, how do you say? You will be a Don Juan."

"I only want to be with you," Tomnas said seriously.

Tatiana smiled fondly and shook her head. "You cannot deny what you are, Tomnas. If a handsome man should cross your path and smile, you would not be able to resist smiling back. I do not mind. I shall enjoy you while I have you. And just now, I want you." She spread her legs wider and brought her fingers down to toy with her own soaked curls. "Inside me, please. I will burst from the impatience of waiting."

Tomnas closed his eyes in a brief spasm of anticipation and relief. "Believe me when I say it's my pleasure," he whispered, easing his way up her body. "Wrap your arms around my neck and lock your ankles behind my back. Please, Tatiana."

Tatiana hummed in pleasure as she obeyed. Tomnas felt the hard lock as she wound herself around his body, holding him in a grasp that would not let go until he'd

satisfied both of them. Tomnas paused long enough for a deep, probing kiss, tangling their tongues together, before he let the tip of his cock brush against her pussy.

"Now," Tatiana ordered, pushing up against his cock. "Fill me up."

"As the lady wishes." Tomnas carefully moved into position, stopping for a second as fresh waves of fruity scent billowed up around them, then slid his cock into Tatiana's pussy in one long stroke. He didn't stop until his balls were flush with her mound of dripping curls, but had to hesitate then as his body was racked with shudders. She felt so very tight, not as rough in her grasp as the asses he had fucked once upon a time, but fierce enough in her grip that he couldn't remember them. All he knew was her.

Tatiana pushed up again. "Fuck me," she said through kiss-swollen lips. Lightning flashed, illuminating her face. "Fuck me hard."

Tomnas groaned, and began to do his best, his gladdest, his hardest. Sliding in and out of her creamy sheath, he stroked slowly at first but then, as her grip tightened, couldn't stop himself from speeding up. Tatiana moaned, her eyes rolling back in her head with pleasure, her fingers kneading hungrily at his back. Tomnas tossed hair out of his eyes only to have it fall back down in them, but couldn't stop himself even if he had wanted to. All that mattered was plunging in and out of Tatiana's tight, slippery pussy while she held him hard.

All too soon, Tomnas felt his delayed orgasm rising up. He rocked up, angling for the sweet spot he'd learned women had too, and heard her cry out with pleasure. Thrusting again and again, he managed to hold off until her body quaked with a second orgasm -- and then, his body could take no more. He let go with a hoarse, strangled cry, spilling his seed deep inside Tatiana's willing body.

They lay still for a moment, both shaking with the aftershocks of sex and the slow, rolling trip down from the heights both had scaled. When he was able to, Tomnas kissed his lady love again, a tender brush of mouth on mouth that turned into a lingering embrace with tongues sliding against each other.

When he freed her, Tatiana laughed again, rolling and amused. "I do not think

you need to ask if it was good for me," she joked in good nature. "Perhaps you already know."

"God. If it was half as good for you as it was for me..." Tomnas groaned as Tatiana unlocked her ankles. He'd have bruises on his back from the pressure of her soft feet, but he'd wear them with pride. Her arms unlaced after she squeezed him in affection, and he rolled off to one side.

He winced. "If you don't mind, I'm going to get those jeans back on. Hay? It looks soft, but if you're not in the heat of the moment you can't call it the most comfortable thing."

Tatiana laughed at him. "Yes, and I will arrange my skirts as well." She wriggled, scooting the crinkled forest-green fabric down, and reached for her blouse. "You did not taste my breasts," she said with a mock pout. "And I had them all ready for you."

"Oh, shit." Tomnas paused in reaching for his jeans. "Tatiana, I didn't mean to forget. I was just --"

She chuckled again. "No, no, no man can think of everything. I find it an honor that you were so hungry for my pussy. And no one could have done better at pleasing me with mouth and cock." She winked. "Perhaps next time, though, you will remember."

Tomnas grinned as he stood and began shimmying into his jeans -- then stopped and sighed.

"Oh, now. What has gotten you so troubled?" Tatiana pretended to pout. A clear hoax, because her eyes were twinkling. "You were not satisfied?"

"I was, and you know it. It's just -- you said 'next time'." Tomnas did up his buttons and sat back down in the thin coating of hay. "We don't know if there will be a next time, Tatiana. Both of us are in search of a Master. We could end up hundreds of miles apart."

"Ah, yes, there is that." Tatiana lifted her hand to softly caress Tomnas' cheek. "But we will worry about separation when the time comes, yes? Until then, we enjoy

one another with all our might. Depending on how long this train ride lasts, we may yet go again." She teased him with her smile. "I could easily be persuaded."

Tomnas smiled. "You always see the best in everything," he said, turning his head to kiss her hand. "And in me."

"There is much good there to see." Tatiana lowered her hand to slap lightly at his shoulder. "Now, put your shirt on, or else you will catch your death of a chill."

"Your Magick and mine are enough to keep us both warm." Tomnas obeyed all the same. He slipped his arms through the ragged T-shirt and felt it settle about him like a second skin. When he reached out for Tatiana she snuggled easily into his arms, arranging herself so the two of them sat side by side. She hummed in contentment as she rested her head on his shoulder.

Softly, Tomnas began to sing, just as he had when they first met.

\* \* \*

So long. He had been searching for so long. Years had gone by without any hope, and he had long given up on the search. But now, out of nowhere, he felt the pulse of a certain energy not far away and approaching fast.

Damien sat in front of the fire in his falling-down house, trying to warm his bones as he gazed into the cup of mulled wine that he still had in his power to conjure. The cup was made of thin wood and heated with the temperature of his drink, sending soothing pulses through his palm.

Instead of drinking, though, he passed his hand over the top of the cup and whispered a few words in the olden tongue of Magick, begging the gods to hear his prayer. They had long since abandoned him, or so he was fairly certain, but if they would listen just this once...

Yes? Yes. Damien relaxed in relief as the surface of his wine rippled, then solidified into the picture of two young practitioners, a man and a woman. Two? Well, the gods didn't skimp on blessings when they finally came through, did they? Damien chuckled, examining the reflected images in his drink.

The woman, long and lean but supple, wildly curly hair draping around her like

a shawl. Damien couldn't tell, but he thought it might be red, a blazing autumn shade. The man had a face that took his breath away, it was so handsome, with a head full of tumbling hair that fell across his cheeks and into his eyes. Even as he watched, that man lifted a hand to brush away some stray locks and laughed as they fell right back into place.

"Yes," Damien whispered. "You are perfect. Both of you. Just what I need. Now, all I need is for you to come here." He dipped the tip of his forefinger into the wine, sending a pulse of Magick through the liquid. "Come to me," he ordered, his voice going low and harsh. "Come to me. Come."

\* \* \*

Tatiana frowned, her head coming up. "Did you sense..."

"I did." Tomnas scanned the outside of the boxcar as best as he could through the pouring rain. "It was the signal of a Master. I didn't think there were any out here in the middle of nowhere."

"But there is. I felt him, just as you did." Tatiana shook her hair back as she leaned forward. "A male. I can sense the masculine scent to his Magick. He is in trouble. Did you feel the way his call, oh, what is the word?"

"It trembled. Whoever he is, he's weak and damaged." Tomnas turned to her. "One of us should go to him."

"No." Tatiana shook her head. "We will not go alone. This could be a trap, Tomnas. We need my cool head and your curiosity to reach the bottom of this. But we must leave the train now, or we will be out of reach too soon."

"We happen to be going at a pretty good speed, yeah. So how do you suggest we get off?"

Tatiana's laughter bubbled up like fresh water from a stream. "Jump, silly. We jump. Let Magick cushion our fall."

"You can do that?"

"I can, and so can you."

"I've never tried..."

“Well, now you learn.” Tatiana freed herself from Tomnas’ grasp and stood. She held out a hand for him to take. He got to his feet as well. Tatiana closed her eyes and began to hum. Uncertainly, Tomnas began to make a similar low, rhythmic sound.

To his surprise, he found himself surrounded by Magick. Wishing or deliberate summons? He didn’t know. But he felt lighter than air, and giddy as a child. Tatiana sparkled at him as she squeezed their linked hands. “On my signal we will jump. One... two... three!”

The two leaped out of the car, twisting and rolling as the Magick gently lowered them down to earth in the pouring rain. They landed on the side of the embankment, laughing and tangled in one another’s arms.

Tomnas kissed his Tatiana with tender fervor. *Time for an adventure.*

\* \* \*

Damien leaned back and sighed with relief. They were coming, the pair of them. If he could make himself go through with this, he would be free at last.

If he had the heart. He tugged on the amber heart pendant around his neck, grown dull with the lack of Magick to fill it up.

This couple could give him what he needed... if he dared to take it.

The Master lifted his eyes to gaze into his fire. It wouldn’t be long now.

But then again, after a wait of ten years, a few more minutes was hardly any time to wait at all for his freedom...

## Chapter Two

The rain tapered off into a drizzle, then a mist, and finally cleared as Tomnas and Tatiana made their way toward the Master's beacon. Distress beacon, as Tomnas knew. Anything that weak, like the pulsing heart of a dying rabbit, meant that the Master was in trouble.

He wiped the splashes of rain off his arms as he thought. This could be a trick. Anything was possible. Out here in the middle of nowhere -- God, he wasn't even sure which state they were in -- a Master might have gone rogue. Someone who'd lie in wait for students to pass through his net, then swoop them up.

Fuck knew, Tomnas had heard of stranger things.

The last he'd heard from Pedri, he was living underground.

Stranger things, oh yes.

They'd had long enough of a walk from the train tracks to start getting footsore and tired. Neither of them had thought to drag their shoes or packs off the train, so who knew where those were now. As for himself, Tomnas didn't mind. He could tough it out. But Tatiana's feet... slim and pale, like silverfish against the dark green grass... he worried about her getting bruised or stepping on something sharp.

They needed a break.

Tomnas paused at the top of a steep incline, offering Tatiana a hand out of both courtesy and the desire to touch her. She smiled at him as she accepted the help; climbing up, she felt light as a feather. "Such a gentleman."

He put his arm around Tatiana's slender waist as they stood atop the verge. "There's nothing to worry about," he soothed. "We're going to be okay."

Making a small, contented noise, she curled against him. "I have no worries. Are you afraid?"

Tomnas frowned. "Who, me? No. No way. I mean, what do we have to be scared of?"

"You know as well as I do." Tatiana finger-walked her hand up Tomnas' chest. "Rogues, vipers, men gone savage... there are many dangers out here, and no one to hear us if we scream."

Tomnas checked to see if she was smiling, and she was -- barely concealed, but there. He poked her playfully. "As if you wouldn't have jumped by yourself when you felt the Master's call."

"Of course I would have. It makes the danger no less." Tatiana paused, her finger circling between Tomnas' nipples. "You would have jumped if you were alone."

"Yeah." Tomnas pressed a kiss to the side of Tatiana's head. "I would. But you were there with me, so now we're in this together." He took a deep breath. "And we could be getting into deep trouble, sure."

"But your curiosity, and mine, it is like the cat. We cannot be satisfied until we have seen with our own eyes what may be happening here." Tatiana turned to look into Tomnas' face. "Yes?"

He leaned forward, touching their foreheads together. "Yes," he agreed. "It shouldn't be much further. I don't see any lights or houses, but the signal's much stronger now. We're on the right path."

"Of course," she purred, nestling closer. "But perhaps, if you do not mind, we could rest a bit longer? I ache from the walk. It has been a few days since we traveled on foot, and I find that it makes the body sore."

"Can't have that." Tomnas picked up Tatiana's hand and toyed with it. On impulse, he lifted it to his mouth and reverently kissed all of the fingers. "Thank you."

"I am the one being kissed, and it is me you thank?"

"Yeah." Tomnas kept her hand near his mouth, letting his breath tickle over her skin. The fine, pale down of hair that every woman had rippled a bit with his words. "You understand me. Accept me for who I am."

"Tomnas, I love what you are. Accept *that*. I count myself lucky to have known



you at all, much less our having had the sex together."

"No. No, that's not it. Not all of it." Tomnas struggled for words. "You know I like men better. But you don't seem to care. No, that came out wrong. You just sort of... you take me for who I am, and don't try to make me into something else."

"Ah, Tomnas." Tatiana's smile grew sweet. "You are as you were made to be, and there is no shame in your preferences. I would gladly share you with another male, or let you go into his arms if that was what you truly chose. However, that does *not* mean I would hesitate to scratch out the eyes of another woman who looked at you twice." She twinkled with mirth. "I accept you as a lover of men. But when it comes to the fairer sex, I have staked my claim."

Tomnas laughed and pressed another kiss to her hand. Then, slowly, he began to move their grasp downward. Tatiana tilted her head in amused curiosity. "What are you doing?"

He glanced back up, giving her a simmering, daring look. Moving their joined hands to his groin, he pressed them into his erection. "Feel like staking your claim again?"

"What? Out here?" Tatiana laughed and looked around, red hair swinging -- but, Tomnas noticed, she didn't say no. "If someone should pass by, anyone could see."

"I know." Tomnas wrapped his free arm around her waist. "But there's no one. And even if there were, that just makes it all the more exciting, doesn't it?" He began to rock them back and forth, just as if they were in a ballroom with something slow and sultry playing, instead of standing in the middle of a field with nothing but moonlight and starsong. "You want this. You want me. I know you do."

"So sure of yourself." Tatiana tapped his lower lip as they moved together. "But I know of all the clever things your mouth can do besides make pretty words."

"Want a demonstration?"

Tatiana giggled. "Perhaps in a bit. We go in steps, yes? See how things unfold."

"Speaking of unfolding..." Tomnas began to toy with the buttons on Tatiana's loose blouse. "You had the honor earlier. What about me, now?"

"Mmm. Lie down on the grass with me." Tatiana slipped free of Tomnas' arms and sank down gracefully as a faerie, then lay back on the grassy knoll. The contrast of her red hair spilled out against the dark green heated Tomnas' blood. He couldn't help following her down, lying on his side with his arms supporting his upper body, one on either side of Tatiana's slim shoulders.

Lowering his face, he kissed her. And Tatiana, bless her heart, kissed him in return. The woman held nothing back, bringing her fingers up to comb through his overlong hair and keep him close. She nibbled with her teeth and flickered her tongue along his lips, always surprising him by being one step ahead.

Tomnas pulled free with a sigh. He loved Tatiana's mouth, but there was so much else of her to worship. Moving on to the soft curve of her jaw, he kissed his way down to the hollow of her throat, then across one collarbone. Lingering there, sucking hard enough to leave a mark, he made quick work of her buttons. He spread her blouse open wide, baring her beautiful small breasts to the sky... and his attention.

"Oh, Tomnas," Tatiana gasped as he fastened onto one nipple while cupping the other breast. She liked to be kneaded just this side of roughly, he had learned, and from the noises she made he was doing a good job. There wasn't that much difference in a male breast or a female one.

Except that he'd never had anyone who tasted like blackberries before.

Worrying lightly with his teeth, Tomnas took more into his mouth. Tatiana was the perfect size for this, just enough to fill him without spilling over. He rolled his tongue over her flavorful skin, first licking and then drawing patterns with the tip of his tongue. When he switched to the other breast, he worked her dampened nipple with his fingers. The way she gasped and moved against him was both thrill and reward.

"Tomnas," Tatiana said first softly, then insistently. "Tomnas!" When he raised his head to look at her, she wore a broad smile. "Now it is your turn again with the buttons." She lifted her leg to rub her thigh against his tumescent cock. "Put that beast of yours to good use in my pussy."

Tomnas, who had never thought he'd be excited to hear anyone ask that of him,

found his heart rate racing and his breath coming in quick gulps. He swallowed whatever she might have had to say next in a kiss, then raised himself onto his knees.

"No." Tatiana shook her head as she sat up. "I have changed my mind. I will do this for you." Her hands fluttered out like gleaming pieces of starlight, chasing the buttons down his fly. They popped loose like magic under her touch. She caught his cock as it fell out and pressed a kiss to the tip. Coming away with a smear of clear fluid on her lips, she licked it away and hummed in satisfaction.

"You'll drive me crazy," Tomnas breathed, gazing down into her pert face with its saucy smile. "Please say you will."

"I will drive you out of your mind," Tatiana promised. She gave Tomnas a light push to the chest. "Lie on your back, my love. I have a plan."

Tomnas had learned that he usually loved Tatiana's plans. He lay back obediently, his jeans still on, and let her shove them down to his knees. She kissed his cock once more and then, graceful as a dancer, swung one leg over him. Her skirt came down to cover them like a tent, preventing him from seeing anything that she did.

Straddling his groin, she teased him with a light brush of her creaming pussy. Tomnas smelled the rich scent of baking apples with cinnamon as she positioned herself, and then, as she sank slowly down on his cock, groaned in ecstasy.

"Are you crazy yet?" Tatiana teased.

"Getting there fast." Tomnas reached for Tatiana, but all she would allow him to do was take her by the hips. He steadied her with shaking hands as she rose and fell, swallowing and releasing his cock with the tightly clenching muscles of her pussy. Throwing her head back and letting her hair fly wild in the wind, she rode him like a stallion -- and he loved every second of it.

"Tatiana, Tatiana, Tatiana," he groaned, squeezing her flesh hard enough to leave bruises. "Please... more..."

She laughed in delight and sped up her pace. When an orgasm hit her, he knew it by the way she paused to quake, her lips falling apart in an "o" of pleasure. It took all his strength not to thrust up into her as she rode out her climax, but as she wound back

down, she rewarded him by fucking like a thing possessed.

He came in a fountain of warm, sticky fluid, feeling it jet deep inside Tatiana's welcoming body, which rode him until he came to a stop. Letting his hands fall to his sides, Tomnas took in a deep breath and listened to the hammering of his heart.

Tatiana slipped off and stood, her skirt hem fluttering down to her ankles like a flock of green butterflies. Breasts still bare, she watched him with a look of utter pleasure on her face. "That is one for the memory book, would you say?"

"Under F for fucking amazing. God, Tatiana, you are the best." Tomnas fought for strength and managed to wriggle his jeans back up his thighs. He did the buttons up with trembling fingers, then stood.

As breaks went, this had to be one of the best he'd ever had.

But, damn it, it was over. Time to keep going if they wanted to find this Master.

Ready to climb back down the other side of the ridge, Tomnas took Tatiana's hand again. "Coming?"

"With you, always," she said archly, stepping lightly and nimbly down. She didn't seem to mind being shoeless at all. "And perhaps again soon, if we find the sort of Master one of us seeks. You do not think I would leave you without a goodbye? Or you, me? If he is a kind Master, a person who chooses one of us, then he will surely let us say our goodbyes."

"Otherwise, we'll be dead." Tomnas took a deep breath. It curled into mist as the air grew suddenly chilly. "And then nothing will matter at all, will it?"

"Only that we go together." Tatiana squeezed his hand.

"Then onward and upward to possible glory." Tomnas tugged at Tatiana. "Come on. I think we head... this way. Yeah. Definitely this way." On an impulse, he whirled the slight woman around to kiss her. "In a minute, this way," he murmured against her lips, and swallowed her delighted laugh.

\* \* \*

Damien sat still in a hard wooden chair in front of his fire, gazing into the cup of wine he held. Crudely carved out of wood in some manufacturing mill a dozen years

ago, it had no beauty or charm to recommend it. But the thing was all he had left, so he continued to use it day after day. The mulled wine had long since gone cold, not fit for drinking, but its surface still held the images of the pair he'd snagged. They were embracing not half a mile from his home, the woman's long red hair flying and the delectable young man winding strong arms around her.

The Master caressed his cup's edge as if it were the hard line of the man's jaw, aching to feel the real flesh and bone beneath his touch. It had been so long. So very, very long. He hadn't seen anyone at all in ten years, not since his punishment was imposed on him. Utter solitude was a part of his trials.

Soon, though, that young man would be entering his small estate. Damien's heart quickened at the thought. What could he summon up that would best please? And the woman... he'd last had a woman on his property long before the most recent man, but he remembered well how sweet they could be. This one looked like a tasty treat with her hair and her small, pert breasts.

When he breathed in, scenting the air with Magick, he could smell honest sweat, hay... and fruit. A cornucopia of berries, cherries, pears and apples. Had one or both of them learned the fruit trick? Damien chuckled. If it were the woman, she was clever. If it were the man, he would be a deadly temptation. Like all Masters, he preferred a diet of vegetable matter but favored fruit. The aroma would entice an ascetic, much less a Master who had been deprived of any company at all for years upon years.

Watching the two figures climb small hills and take broad strides across his land -- he owned every acre for miles around -- he imagined himself kissing both of them, separately and together. The breath hitched in his chest.

He couldn't be so bold. They wouldn't want him, and they had each other, so they wouldn't need him. However, *he* needed *them*... and he had to make sure they'd stay, both man and woman.

How could he best entice them...?

Moving stiffly, Damien stood. His joints ached as they always did after sitting in the hard chair for too long, along with his regular aches and pains. Eternally young

after the way of the Masters, although perhaps three hundred years old, in most of his appearance he looked about thirty. Most of his appearance. The rest... Damien shuddered away from the thought.

To distract himself from the unwelcome reminders, he limped across the bare wooden floor of his room. He avoided the curtained-off mirror as he passed it. Away from the fire, the air was too cold. Damien shivered as he paced away. Warmth, the two would need warmth, especially after their trek through the rain.

A thought directed into will, and his abandoned chimneys cleared. Another impulse, and Magickal fires crackled into life in their hearths. They wouldn't provide much in the way of heat or light, but it was all he had the strength for.

*Oh, how the mighty have fallen...* Damien winced. Yes. As these two approached, it was time to remind himself of what hubris had wrought upon him. He'd thought himself better than the gods -- certainly above his fellow Masters -- and they had all seen fit to punish him.

Carved by a finger of Magick, his story was etched into the plaster of the far wall. Damien stopped, wishing he had brought his cane to lean on, as he gazed at the letters. A hand to his hip eased the aching but did not stop it completely, and nothing could take away the sharp sting in his heart as he read out the terms of his punishment.

The message never changed. Not that he expected it to.

*For the crime of unspeakable pride and sin of abusing the Magicks with which you were trusted, we do condemn the one called Damien. For ten years he shall live alone with neither student nor lover, depending on himself alone for his needs. His Magick shall be diminished upon this speaking and dwindle from there, until he is reduced to little more than a common man.*

*We are not merciless, however, and we will allow him a second chance when the time is ripe. May he use that chance wisely, choosing to serve others rather than wholly himself, and perhaps the gods will see fit to loose his chains.*

*Do you still believe in the gods, Damien? Perhaps after ten years of reading this message,*

*you will.*

*Until then, you bear our mark.*

The words were signed by the members of the High Council who had seen fit to punish him. Damien knew each one by heart. He had no books in his small chamber, although he could have used a little energy to summon some. He hadn't wanted any. He husbanded the little Magick he had left, keeping his hearth burning in the cool months and breezes blowing through open windows during the warm season.

What food and drink he required had shrunk to smaller and smaller amounts as the years passed by, until now he ate one small portion a day of whatever grew nearby, and had one drink. Generally water, but on rare occasions a sup from the casket of wine he'd managed to summon once upon a time. Water was too clean and pure to use for Magickal sight, but wine did the trick.

Something had told him to drink the mulled wine that night. And when looking on the glossy brown surface, he had seen that second chance flashing past in the boxcar of a train. Watched the two who might be his salvation coming closer and closer.

They would have to stay, once they arrived. Damien knew that if they left, he would be lost forever or until the Council mercifully moved in favor of his final death.

What could entice them to stay, besides the warmth of a fire? He would have to work hard at this, to conjure up what he could to satisfy all appetites, to coax the pair into giving his Magick what it needed and restore him to strength.

If they did not, he was lost.

And he would not have that, not if he could help it.

Damien reached out with one thin hand and shakily traced the letters that had condemned him. "Come to me, you two," he whispered in a voice dry as old paper. "Come into my parlor, said the spider to the fly..."

\* \* \*

"Do you see it?" Tatiana said in a low voice, pausing. Tomnas, who would have walked forward, found himself stopped by her hand. He glanced up and saw what had

stopped her -- a house, appearing as if from nowhere, standing tall and shabby against the moonlit sky. They were barely a hundred yards from the dwelling, where before they had seen nothing but stretching pastures.

Tomnas whistled. "Damn me. This *is* the home of a Master. No one else could be that clever with a concealing spell." He stood still and gazed at the place. It looked tumbledown, with peeling white paint and falling gutters, the porch rotted through in places and the steps broken. A shutter hung from one hinge, banging slightly in the breeze that swirled past them, drying their skin and turning them pale with cold. "It doesn't look like he's been having a good few years, does it?"

"This feels very much like a dangerous trap." Tatiana freed her hand and raised it to the hollow at the base of her throat. "Tomnas, perhaps we should turn around. We are strong; we can walk as far as need be to find another train."

"What? Are you joking? We've found a Master."

"Yes, but I scent danger, Tomnas. This place has the feel of being abandoned by god and man. There is soured Magick in the air, foul to my nose. Can you not smell it?"

Tomnas took a deep breath, then shook his head. "You can?"

Tatiana nodded gravely. "I vote that we go back the way we came, Tomnas. But if you choose to go forward, it will not be alone. I accompany you, whatever it may be we walk toward."

"No pressure, huh?" Tomnas took a few steps forward. He placed his hands on his hips. His curiosity had risen and was all but quivering at the sight of the house. Lights had sprung up inside, faint and flickering, as if someone were preparing fires. He couldn't smell the Magick like Tatiana had, but he had enough talent to sense the utter sense of sorrow that hung around this house.

Curiosity and sympathy, his two downfalls -- well, those and the woman behind him. "I think it'll be all right," he said slowly, testing the waters as best as he could. "Whoever's in there doesn't intend to hurt us. I think. It's your choice, Tatiana, not mine. I'm going. You can come with me, or go back." He turned to look at her. "I wish you would stay by my side, though."



Tatiana shook her head. "Tomnas, for you I would walk across burning coals. But promise me this -- we must be careful, and watchful. Let us double-check each thing we come across for... well. This may be the Master's way of testing hopeful new students, yes? Are we agreed?"

"Agreed." Tomnas let out a sigh of relief. He reached for Tatiana's hand again, pulling her close. "We keep going. We'll see what we see. And you'll be there to help me."

He faced the house. "What do you have in store for us, Master?"

\* \* \*

Damien stood still, weaving slightly as he felt the two brightly-burning beacons of young Magick approaching his home. He was weak from taking the illusion off the house, but it had been necessary. And although he could hardly spare the strength without a moment's rest, he exerted another pulse of energy and scented the air with enhanced senses.

Fruit. Rich, autumn-ripe fruit. Stronger and stronger as the pair grew closer. *Yes, yes.* Just as he had suspected, the two were already a loving pair, albeit an unusual one. A man who preferred men, save for the lady at his side, and a lady with the courage of a lioness. They were both youthful and strong, powerful in their ways but untrained for the most part.

He ached for the days when he would have kept his home in pristine condition and had a servant to welcome them in, tired and footsore as they must be. A maid to wash their feet and dress them in warm clothes before bringing them up to his chamber.

Of course, he would have had to choose between one or the other. A cracked laugh escaped his lips as Damien reflected on how his ill fortune had suddenly taken an unexpected turn for the better. Two was always better than one. One chance, and then a second. Trust the Council to be literal in their choice of wording.

Two practitioners, with no need to pick one away from the other. Of course, they didn't know this yet. And perhaps it would not do to inform them until he had assessed their abilities when they were close enough to feel them out with all six senses.

A little wariness kept a man -- and a woman -- on their toes. Bare toes, he had noticed. Sympathy touched his heart. He might have no maids or serving men, but he could expend the strength to make them comfortable.

*Just come a little closer, he thought. Enter my garden, and make free of what you find there...*

\* \* \*

Tomnas came to a stop at the gates surrounding the old house. The metal had rusted and come apart in places. Years of bad weather would have wrought this damage. He ran his hand across the battered iron, avoiding the spikes that decorated the rails. Once upon a time, he sensed, it would have been dangerous to touch this without permission. Masters guarded their homes carefully.

Now, though, it was nothing more than an ordinary fence. He couldn't feel a single tingle of Magick in the metal.

What had happened to this Master, to bring him so low?

"Tatiana, come on," he urged. "I think we're safe. The gate is open, and no one's going to stop us from going inside."

"That is what worries me," she muttered, but followed suit. "Ow!"

"What is it?" Tomnas turned to see Tatiana limping. "What happened? Did you step on something?"

"A sharp branch." Tatiana shook her foot. "The skin is not broken, but it was painful nonetheless. Perhaps it was a warning."

"Or an accident." At her indignant huff, Tomnas waved around them. "Look at the garden, Tatiana. Everything's old and bare. There are branches dropped everywhere, and more than one season's worth of leaves on the ground. Whoever this Master is, he either doesn't care -- which I don't believe -- or he's lost interest -- which is also hard to believe -- or he doesn't have the power to maintain his home." He beckoned her on. "No one means any harm, Tats. I think this is a cry for help, not a call to battle."

Tatiana stepped forward carefully, the hem of her long green skirt swishing

through the fallen leaves. "Perhaps you are right," she said thoughtfully. "What sort of Master is this, then? Is he so desperate for Magick that he will snap us up in one bite? Munch, crunch, with nothing left of us but the bones?"

"No Master would do that." Tomnas shook his head. "I don't feel any malevolence. Nothing bad. Just this sort of... loneliness... on the wind. Whoever he is, he's been by himself for ages. No students, no petitioners. He wants company, Tatiana. He wants someone to teach."

"Yet his power is so weak," Tatiana countered. "Is this the sort of Master we wish to seek out?"

"Tatiana..." Tomnas retraced his steps, stood in front of the woman, and lifted his hand to cup her cheek. He leaned in for a kiss, gentle and light, feeling her soften under his touch. When she was pliable he lifted off, licking his lips to taste the ripeness of blueberries she had been flavored with. "We may not need this Master, but he needs us."

Tatiana sighed. "I mistrust this."

"I know you do. Will you come with me, all the same?"

"Did I not say I would? Go in front of me, please, and kick the branches out of the way." Tatiana's red-haired temper had flared. She put her hands on her hips. "I am not afraid. We will go and see how the land lies, and then we will decide if we stay or if we leave."

He wouldn't have expected less from his lady-love. Tomnas nodded. He took Tatiana's hand and lifted it to his mouth for a kiss. "Thank you," he said against her soft, sweet skin. "For everything."

She smiled. "I will follow you, Tomnas, wherever you lead."

"You put a lot of faith in me."

"No more than is deserved. It is because you make an exception for me that I love you." Tatiana hesitated, blushed, and then stood firm. "Yes, I have said it. It does not matter whether or not you feel the same, but I --"

"Tatiana." Tomnas raised his finger to her cherry-red lips. He felt a deep swell of

something hot rising inside his chest. Something he hadn't felt since he'd thought that Pedri might have loved him, during those days at the Academy when they were learning their trade. "I love you, too. I think I have for a while now."

Tatiana's eyes grew dreamy. "Then we can truly face this together," she said softly. Her expression grew firm. "Into the garden we go, then. I follow in your footsteps. Go along, Tomnas. I have your back."

Kissing her one last time before he turned to clear a path, Tomnas savored the sweet taste of his lady. Then, he looked forward and began to shuffle his way through the leaves. "I'm sure the Master's waiting for us," he said, anticipation beginning to build. "Let's see what he wants. We could even be lucky enough for him to want two students."

Tatiana's laugh bubbled up behind him. "Two students? What sort of Master would want such a thing?"

\* \* \*

*What kind of Master, indeed,* Damien thought. He had moved to a window that faced down on his garden, ruined as it was. Sparing a thought for the beauty it had once housed, from lush rose bushes to full green trees, violets to vegetable garden, he loosed a sigh of unhappiness.

These two had faith in him, faith completely unwarranted, but welcome nonetheless. The knowledge flooded his bones in a welcome dose of warmth, heating him from the inside out. This couple, this "Tomnas" and "Tatiana," were exactly what he needed. He couldn't have had better if there had been a whole rank full of students to choose from.

They had faith, and they were in love. They could help him become who he had once been. All they had to do was take a few more steps, and they would be his.

He would take good care of them. Time had taught him well how to handle his students. None of the high-handed, hard-edged teaching methods he had once employed. No, now he would use a light touch, nudging and guiding instead of ordering.

And he would feed on the sexual energy they shared between one another as it brightened his home with its burning light.

It was a shame that he would never look upon them face to face.

Ah, yes. Although he hated this, it was time again to remind himself completely of why he could not face any students as the Master he was, a Master of Sex Magick.

Turning, he stomped across to the mirror. His hand trembled briefly as he reached for the curtain that covered the glass -- then, in a fit of self-disgust, twitched the gauzy black covering aside.

His reflection gazed back at him. Overgrown brown hair, the color of cinnamon, roughly trimmed by his own two hands some time back and left to run free ever since. No beard -- he had never been one of those troubled with facial hair. Thin lips, which had once gloried in kissing and being kissed. So long without the comfort of another mouth pressed to his own...

But he knew why. Besides the ordinary lines of his physiognomy, there were the scars. Etched across his cheeks, gashing down his chin, across his forehead and even through one eye, causing it to droop. Physical reminders that he could never again be what he once had been.

No one would want to approach this, even to learn from him.

This pair, these two, they were his second chance.

He did not intend to fail again.

## Chapter Three

Tomnas took a few steps further into the garden. Deeper in, he was seeing signs of more than decay and rot. There were statues, mostly weathered by time with chunks broken off, but still recognizable. Couples twined together in the act of passion, in every possible position as far as the eye could see. Some had couples face to face, arms wound around one another, marble lips to marble lips.

To his left, he saw a man behind a woman, her arm reached up to caress the man's head as his hand rested over her proudly swelling breast. To his right, he saw two men, each with a hand on the other's shoulder, their swollen cocks nearly touching.

The sight took his breath away. Tatiana was marvelous, but God, he missed feeling another man's cock in his hand. That wonderful, springy hardness which nothing else could match. There had been Pedri for so long, then Jace for a short period of time, and then no one... until Tatiana.

He'd never thought he could fall in love with a woman. But he had, hadn't he? She'd wound him around her heartstrings, tangling them both together until he could hardly tell where one stopped and the other started.

The thought made him laugh, even as Tatiana lightly stepped up to his side. He put out his hand for her to take, chuckling under his breath. She raised one eyebrow. "And what is so funny, Tomnas?"

"Just thinking that I even though I love you, there's still something about the sight of a man," he said, gesturing to the statue of two males.

Tatiana's mouth quirked into a grin. "Lucky for me," she purred, "I feel the same way." She took the hand that had been in Tomnas' own and ran it up from his wrist to his shoulder. "And it is not such a bad thing to have a woman in your life, is it? If you say no, I will be heartbroken, but I shall survive." Her purple eyes twinkled with

mischievous. "Come now, Tomnas. What do you think?"

"Vixen." Tomnas captured her wandering hand and kissed the fingertips one at a time, flickering his tongue out over each pad. She tasted of strawberries this time, plump and succulent. "Why always fruit?" he asked out of sudden curiosity.

Tatiana dimpled at him. "Why not? It pleases me." She pulled free and stepped ahead a bit. "Now, this statue," she said, pointing at two women twined together. "Does this excite your imagination?"

One of the ladies looked a bit like Tatiana, with a long spill of hair down her back, forever frozen in stone. Tomnas stared at the sculpture, imagining the sight of Tatiana with another woman, and felt his cock jerk in his pants. He began to stutter, not sure of what the hell to say.

Tatiana took pity on him by laughing. "I take it you like the idea. Well, perhaps someday, if you, how do you say, play your cards right?" She looked back mischievously. "For the moment, there is only you and I."

"And this Master."

"Yes, him too." Tatiana turned, her lips pursed. "Does it not strike you as odd that we have not yet been greeted, nor told to walk away? We have had no address at all. You would think that a Master would keep more careful watch over his sanctuary."

Tomnas touched a branch that had broken from a tree and been caught in others on its way down to the ground. The wood, rotten, crumbled softly beneath his fingertips. "I don't think this Master spends much time paying attention to what goes on out here," he said honestly.

"Do you think he sees us?"

"I'm not sure. Although I am sure that the Master is a 'he'."

"Yes... there is a certain feeling to his Magick." Tatiana stopped in front of a statue of a woman caught between two men, one an average-looking guy, and one larger than life. A handsome face, chiseled and lean, with windswept hair and a savage grin on his face. "I think this is what he must look like. What do you say?"

Tomnas took another step closer, gazing at the sculpture. He looked up into the

face of the man, their possible Master, and felt his heart skip a beat even as his cock began to tingle. He'd never seen anyone to match the man for good looks. Not even Pedri or Jace could compare. There was conceit in the statue's form, yes, but also a sort of wild glory that only someone in their true element could have.

"I think you're right," he replied slowly. As if on its own, his hand reached out to touch. The cold marble felt alive under his touch, crackling with a sort of dormant electricity. "I wonder if he's watching us laying our hands on him."

"Do you think we will be struck down?"

Tomnas laughed. "Not now. If the Master were that kind of man, he'd have already blasted us out of the garden." He stroked the statue's foot as he gazed up into its face. "I think, whoever he is, that he's a good person."

"We will see," Tatiana said archly. "'And it harm none, do as ye will'. Perhaps this is his philosophy as well."

"I'll tell you one thing." Tomnas glanced around. "I know what kind of Master we're dealing with."

"You do?"

Tomnas grinned, feeling his libido spring to life despite the chilly air. "This is a master of Sex Magick."

\* \* \*

So, they knew what he was. Damien stood watching at his window, sure that he could not be seen. He would have sworn that he could feel the lightly callused hand of the delicious young man as he ran it over his carved image's calf and thigh. The touch thrilled him, even with a degree of separation.

What would he do, if he were whole, unscarred, and able to walk down in the garden on his own? Throw his arms around Tomnas and sweep him into a kiss, clasping that warm, honey-colored skin against his own? Peel off the thin T-shirt the man wore and press close, chest-to-chest?

Ah, but he would not leave the lady out of it. Though it wasn't his specialty, Damien could still feel the tie of love between the two. It made them both beautiful



beyond ordinary mortals, and gave them a sort of serene glow. Both might have been nervous of entering a strange place without any sort of welcome, but they were still confident without being proud, at ease without being cocky.

As he watched, Damien's lips parted at the sight of the red-haired beauty turning in a slow circle, that mane of glorious red hair cascading around her shoulders and swinging down her back.

They were both prizes.

And they deserved a little welcome, after all, even if he couldn't deliver it in person.

Closing his eyes, Damien exerted a little more of his Magick to make the pair comfortable.

It was the least he could do.

\* \* \*

"Tomnas!" Tatiana's exclamation came a split-second before Tomnas noticed for himself: small fairy lights had sprung up on every tree and statue.

He reached out to touch. "Christmas decorations?" One of the motes danced under his touch. "No. No wires. I think our Master is extending a hand."

"Perhaps." When he turned to look, Tatiana was running her fingers through a string of the lights. She seemed enchanted. "So beautiful. A lovely welcome. And oh, Tomnas, look!"

One of the sculptures, a mermaid above a pool filled with dry leaves, had begun to pour fresh water down into her basin. At the sight, Tomnas' mouth suddenly felt parched as if he had been running in the desert. "Do you think it's safe to drink?"

"Do you think this Master would harm us? Poison us?"

"One way to find out. But I don't think we're in any danger." Tomnas crossed to the pool and cupped his hands under the mermaid's spout. The water felt soft and slightly warm. When he raised the drink to his mouth and let it trickle through his lips it had a slight tang of salt and minerals. He swallowed in relief, feeling the liquid slide down into his empty belly. "Tatiana, come and drink. It's safe."

Following his example, Tatiana sighed when she'd had a taste. "This is almost better than food. I feel not so hungry already."

"If I knew how, I'd summon something for us to eat," Tomnas said with regret. "Maybe the Master will give us a snack?"

"Perhaps. For now, it is good to get a drink." Tatiana wiped her hands off on her skirt. She shivered. "It is cold out here, yes? I wonder if he would let us inside. This house is not much, but it would be protection against the wind."

The wind, which was picking up. Tomnas felt his own skin popping up into goose bumps. "All we can do is ask," he said, scanning the house for any entrance that might be propped open. On an impulse, he asked, "May we come inside?"

A door, nearly hidden on the side of the house, swung open with a creak. Tatiana jumped, but Tomnas laughed in delight. "See? The Master's looking out for us. All we have to do is let him know what we need." He started forward, eager to get in out of the cold. "Come on!"

He heard Tatiana's laugh, and then the crunching of leaves as she followed in his footsteps. Careful to wipe his feet on an ancient mat, Tomnas stepped inside. He blinked against the sudden brightness of the fire in a hearth, then stood still to let his vision adjust. He felt Tatiana's presence coming to a stop at his back, warm and solid, comforting.

The place was a shambles.

Once, he could tell, it had been glorious... and a shrine to sex. The walls were lined with peeling red velvet paper, the floors had once been good solid wood that he bet would have been polished to a high sheen, and the moth-eaten chaises and padded benches would have been wonderful places to enjoy a long, slow session of lovemaking or a good hard fuck. Possibly both. Now, though, a thick layer of dust lay over the ruins.

Tomnas felt Tatiana's touch on his elbow. "What could have happened to this man to drive him into such a state?" she asked quietly. "Perhaps it is bad luck to be here."

"There's no such thing as luck."

"Says the practitioner of Magick."

"Luck and Magick are not the same thing at all," Tomnas said absently. He wanted to go forward and investigate, but the broken floorboards didn't look at all welcoming to bare feet. Taking a chance, he raised his voice to ask again, "Is there somewhere safe for us? A place where we can rest for a little while?"

Another door creaked open. Tomnas had learned after the first time not to jump. He laughed instead, reaching to tug Tatiana along. "This way. Don't you want to see what he's got waiting for us?"

Tatiana stood fixed in place, gazing at the room. "I feel much grief for this man," she murmured. "Such glory turned to ashes. Do you not have the heart to mourn for all he has lost?"

"I do. I'm not emotionless." Tomnas laid his hand on her shoulder. "But things may be changing. He called us here, and he wants us with him. He might be swinging back up on the Wheel Of Fortune. You never know. And neither will we, unless we go and find out." He gave her a light shake. "So, come on. Let's see what he's got for us."

Tatiana nodded. Then, she tilted her head. "Is that bread I smell? Fresh-baked bread?"

"Fuck me, I think it is." Tomnas turned to look toward the direction of the scent - the open door. "Hurry, Tatiana!"

Laughing, the two practitioners made their careful way to an entrance that could lead to a cave of wonders.

\* \* \*

Damien exhaled slowly. He wasn't certain how much more power he could expend and stay conscious. Yet he couldn't let the beautiful pair go hungry, could he? Summoning was not such a difficult charm.

He only hoped they liked their feast, and what he had planned for them.

\* \* \*

"Good, so good!" Tatiana enthused, waving a chunk of warm bread liberally

spread with sweet butter. "How long has it been since we've eaten?"

Tomnas swallowed a chunk of the soft, yeasty end piece and shook his head. "At least two days. We should go slowly."

"Do you think the Master will let us become ill?"

"I don't think the Master would keep us from suffering the consequences of being stupid." Tomnas took the piece of bread out of Tatiana's hand, and offered her a small chunk of cheese. He popped a bite into his own mouth. "Go slow. A little now, and maybe a little more later."

"Who says it will be here for any length of time?" Tatiana glanced around the small room they had ended up in, what had once been a small kitchen designed around the needs of a single individual. Things were just as worn in here, but somewhat cleaner, as if the Master had made an effort to tidy the place for them.

"Who says it won't?" After she had chewed and swallowed, Tomnas pulled Tatiana to him. He growled playfully as she squealed, hitting his shoulders in play. "Bread and cheese. All that's missing is fruit," he breathed against her lips, smelling sweet summer raspberries. "Pretty lady, can I have a kiss?"

"As if you need to ask." Tatiana pressed her mouth to his own, filling his senses with the rich flavors of berries and fresh pineapple. Tomnas kissed her back, probing gently with his Magick and deftly with his tongue. How did she... ah!

Tatiana made a small *peep* of surprise. She pulled away, staring. "You taste of spearmint!"

He grinned at her. "I figured out your trick. Jealous?"

"Oh, no." Tatiana laughed. "But now kissing you will be even more fun. What flavor next? It is only fair. And delicious..." She kissed him again, pressing her tongue against his teeth. He chuckled into the kiss, wrapping his arms around the small of her back. Tatiana mewed in approval, rubbing against him like an eager cat.

Tomnas could smell the increased scent of blueberries filling the air. "Here? Now?" he broke off long enough to ask. "Under the Master's eyes?"

"Where better?" Tatiana's eyes sparkled. "He is a Master of Sex Magick, after all.

Why not thank him for his generosity by indulging in the pleasures he fosters?" Tatiana writhed a little closer still, pressing her firm breasts against his chest. Tomnas could feel her nipples, puckered from the cold, even though her thin blouse and his T-shirt. The sensation set him on fire, smoldering slowly from the inside out.

"You're weakening my resolve," he warned, reaching for the hem of her shirt. He slid his hand up underneath, cupping one breast and then pinching the nipple. It felt like a small cherry beneath his questing fingers. "How's a man supposed to resist?"

Tatiana rocked her hips against his. "He is not," she said seriously. "He is to fuck me, here and now, in this kitchen."

"You really are a vixen," Tomnas breathed before kissing her yet again, savoring her flavors and the feel of her body against his own. Moaning, Tatiana lifted one leg and hooked it over his hip. He could feel the pulsing warmth of her pussy pressing against his cock, which was suddenly hard and ready.

"Fast," he pulled apart long enough to whisper. "Can't wait. Need to be inside you."

"I'm wet," Tatiana replied softly, undulating against him. "Feel for yourself."

Tomnas laughed. In a move calculated to take her by surprise, he lifted Tatiana up onto the edge of the table and balanced her so precariously that she had no choice but to hold on. He swallowed her delighted laughter in a kiss, and, with her mouth occupied, pulled her long skirt up around her thighs. Pushing his hand between, he found her pussy. It dripped with fragrant cream, ready and eager to receive him.

Her hands were fumbling at his jeans, tugging open first one button and then the next. His cock pressed against the fastening, eager to come out and play. "Faster," he urged with pleasure, still working her pussy with his fingers, running up and down the length of her slit, pausing only to pull lightly on her clit.

His jeans came open at last. Aided by Tatiana's eager hands, Tomnas pushed them down, stepped out, and pulled her toward him. She cried out in pleasure as she was thrown off balance again, then hissed as he guided her onto his cock.

They paused, both breathing heavily. "Good?" Tomnas asked, wanting to know.

Tatiana nodded, her eyes gone hazy. She rolled off a liquid stream of Russian, then finished by saying, "Very good. Move, now, please move..."

"Anything for you." Tomnas thrust more deeply into her, then, trusting in the strength of his arms, pushed and held her away -- then pulled her tight. Tatiana caught on to the rhythm right away, rocking her hips to and fro in time with his strokes.

Stumbling forward, they ended up against a wall, Tomnas' back braced while Tatiana rode the length of his cock. Her head was thrown back, eyes shut and lips parted, her skin shone with a light sheen of sweat, and her breath was sweet as apricots. He wondered what he would look like to her as he fucked her. His own mouth was open, dragging in deep breath after deep breath, and his eyes were half-shut. He'd seen the look of bliss on a man's face before, and found it the most beautiful thing in the world.

He wondered if he looked half that good to Tatiana.

His cock pulsed in her channel as he thrust, warning him of the impending explosion. Grasping Tatiana tighter, wanting her to feel his arms tight around her when he came, he pressed kisses along the line of her jaw and down her neck. "Tatiana," he growled, licking her sweet flesh. "God, Tatiana, so tight, so hot."

She moaned in response, holding him tighter. "So big," she said, licking her lips. "So full."

"Coming -- God, Tatiana, coming --"

"Come for *me*," she ordered. He had just enough presence of mind to tweak her clit hard, dragging her into orgasm just as he shattered into orgasm himself, pumping thick, heavy come into her channel. His cock seemed to have a life of its own, pumping out more and still more long after he should have been spent. Tatiana's own climax rode out as long as his did, with her wailing and writhing in his arms.

When, at last, the fire died down and they were left staring at one another with wide eyes, Tomnas swallowed hard and laughed shakily. "You're right," he said. "Definitely the house of a Sex Master."

"So, you recognize me for what I am," a voice spoke, seemingly out of nowhere.

Tomnas and Tatiana jumped, still twined together, Tomnas sensing that her sudden alarm was an equal to his own. "Who are you?" Tomnas called, pulling his lady love closer. "Are you the Master here?"

"I am," the disembodied voice said. "You couldn't have thought of a better reward for my hospitality than this. I feel... stronger... for your presence and what you've done." It paused. "Thank you."

Tomnas got the feeling that these were hard words for the speaker to come out with. He inclined his head, sure that he could be seen as well as heard. "Do you know who we are?" he asked.

The voice laughed, a low rumble of a sound. "Student practitioners in search of a Master, I would guess. But you two..." There was an even longer pause. "Neither of you needs any tests to qualify. Look at the door to your left. Take what you see there."

Tatiana was the first to catch sight of what the Sex Master offered them. "Hearts," she whispered. "Tomnas, two amber-golden hearts. Signs of demi-Mastery. On chains. One for you, and one for me."

They carefully disentangled themselves. Smoothing down her skirts, Tatiana stepped lightly over broken linoleum to fetch the chains from their pegs. Holding one out to Tomnas, she made as if to slip one around her neck.

Tomnas held out a hand for her to wait. "Does this mean you accept us as students?" he asked wonderingly. "Both of us?"

\* \* \*

Damien turned away from the mirror, closing his eyes and pushing the flats of his palms against them. He couldn't do this. Couldn't lure such a loving pair in to be used as a sexual battery, the only idea he had been able to come up with. They deserved more. Better.

They didn't need a broken-down wreck like him.

They deserved the world.

And he couldn't give it to them, no matter how much he wanted to.

Clearing his voice, he focused again on speaking.

\* \* \*

There was a long hesitation, in which they could sense the Master on the verge of speaking, but no words came forth. "I... cannot," the Master said at last. "It was a mistake to bring you here. But with these hearts, you can find any Master you choose."

Tomnas shook his head. "What if we choose you?"

"If you had any sense, you would not ask that question." The voice sounded annoyed. "Look around you. I am broken. My Magick is all but gone. The only strength I have is that which you have lent me, with your sexual power and your lust and your love. Do you want to stay here and be nothing more than a source of power?"

"But you could teach us," Tomnas pushed. "We could help you bring this place back to life."

"No!" the voice snapped. "Tomnas... yes, I know your name... you will do best by taking fair Tatiana, turning around, and walking out of this place. Leave me to my rack and ruin. This is where I belong."

Tatiana licked her lips and shook her head. She slipped the golden-amber heart around her neck, the pendant nestling between her breasts. "No," she said with determination. "We will help you. Whether you want us to or not."

Tomnas grinned. He had a feeling his Tatiana would come through. One thing he knew for sure, and knew that a Sex Magick Master would know -- never argue with a woman when she was determined.

It looked like they might have found a home after all.



## Chapter Four

"He doesn't want us to help, but he needs us." Tomnas spoke with a growing certainty. "No Master would refuse assistance without a good reason. He doesn't want to see us. I need to know why."

Tatiana nodded. "Come. We will find him, wherever he lurks inside this house. It is not so big, and we are refreshed for the hunt."

"What you said." Tomnas took Tatiana by the hand and pulled her to him for a kiss. The embrace stretched into minutes, their tongues dueling for the top position. When they pulled apart, Tomnas grinned at his lady love. "Let's go find the Master."

"No," the disembodied voice protested. "Run away, children. Go while I'm still strong enough to let you leave."

"Not until we've seen you."

"No!" They could hear the Master breathing. "No one sees me."

"Try and stop us," Tomnas challenged. "Tatiana, come on. We'll try each door we find, every staircase there is. He has to be somewhere."

"Not the staircases!" the Master protested, then made a choked sound.

Tatiana turned to Tomnas with a smug grin. "He is on the second floor," she said firmly. "Do not bother looking through these lower rooms."

"I'll be forced to stop you," the Master warned. "My strength is low. If you try too hard to help me, you'll kill me."

"Then let us come up, no tricks," Tomnas argued. "You're the one making this difficult."

The Master laughed in a dry, rasping way. "Difficult! Look around you. If you saw me, you'd know what *difficult* was."

"See you we shall," Tatiana said with determination. She tugged at her golden-

amber heart. "Tomnas, this is warm in my palm!"

Tomnas checked his own pendant. It pulsed slightly, like a real warm, and had a blood heat. "What's this mean?"

The Master was silent.

"What does it mean?"

No answer.

"Fine. Tatiana?" Tomnas picked his way to the edge of the shabby kitchen and took hold of the doorknob. "Stay close behind me. If I disappear, stay put. You don't know what kind of tricks he'll play to keep us from finding him."

"Like hell I will stay put," Tatiana fired back. "We both need to find this man. If we are separated, then whoever meets him first can smooth the way for the other. But that will not happen." She pulled her heart pendant again. "We are linked through his gifts, which he was perhaps foolish to give. No magic can tear us apart."

Tomnas felt his necklace pulsing, and knew that she spoke the truth. They heard a sound of despair from the Master, as well as the scraping of a heavy piece of furniture. The noise echoed directly above their head, some of the ceiling's plaster falling down in dusty snowflakes.

"That's where he is. Right on top of us. Tatiana, come on!" Tomnas wrenched open the kitchen door, which creaked and fell from one of its hinges. He took the brunt of the impact, protecting Tatiana from a blow to the head, then shoved the door out of the way. "Follow me."

"It is dark. What shall we do for light?"

"Snap your fingers." Tomnas snapped his, and a small ball of flame appeared in his opening palm. It had as much power as a flashlight, the beam swinging to and fro as he looked around the ruined front room.

"I cannot do that." Tatiana sounded crestfallen. "Fire was never my element."

"I know. You're Earth and Air." Tomnas turned to press a kiss to her forehead. "Follow close behind me, then. Hang on to the edge of my shirt if you think we're about to get separated."

"I told you, we will not be parted."

"Tatiana... this man is a Master. He knows more than we can hope to learn. Do you really think, if he has the strength, he won't find a way to try to divide and conquer?"

\* \* \*

Damien gave up trying to push his heavy wooden chair in front of the door. His arms were strong enough, but his body was weakened by the use of too much Magick after so long leaving the Arts alone. He sank down to rest, his breath coming in shallow rasps.

They were looking for him. They might find him. This would never, ever work. Damien rolled his head to and fro on the hard backrest of his chair, desperately combing his mind for a way to stop them. Seeing the pair at a distance had been hard enough. Coming face to face with them, seeing all the love and lust and evidence of sex... he wouldn't be able to hold himself back. And his face. The scars. They'd turn away in disgust.

*No.*

Damien closed his eyes and concentrated on Magick again, drawing out a thin thread or two and beginning to weave a web. He needed to buy himself a little more time. Just a few minutes, perhaps, but they might be all he needed to make them see reason.

*There.* He knew of a way to slow them down.

"Stairs," he whispered, and laughed like a desperate madman.

\* \* \*

"Tatiana, careful!" Tomnas caught her in the nick of time as several of the stairs flattened out into a slick plane. Her bare feet skidded for purchase on the slope, but with Tomnas holding on, she managed to pull herself up to more solid ground. Tomnas stared at the way the steps had flattened out into a steep drop. They'd been almost halfway up, and it wasn't any short distance.

He glanced ahead at the stairs in front of them. They wavered, as if the Master

were trying to make them change their angle as well. Tomnas knew better than to think he wouldn't succeed. "Tatiana, grab onto the railing," he ordered. "Quick!"

He snatched the solid wooden bar as well as the rest of the stairs gave way. Tatiana let out a short scream, but he heard no thumping or rolling noises, so he knew she'd obeyed before the floor gave way beneath them.

She laughed breathlessly. "This Master, he is a determined one, yes?"

"Fuck, yes. But we must be on the right track. Otherwise he wouldn't have pulled this."

"What do we do now, though? Hang here until we agree to go away like a nice little boy and girl?"

"No way." Tomnas gritted his teeth. Why he was so determined, he couldn't have said. Maybe it was the vision of the Master's statue in the garden, or the thought of someone being in trouble, or just his damned curiosity again. In any case, he knew he couldn't rest until he'd found what he was looking for. "Grab the rail with both hands, Tatiana. We'll climb it like a rope."

"It is so slippery, as if it has been slicked with grease." Tomnas heard her take a deep breath. "I will hold on *carefully*."

He wished with all his heart that he could turn around to kiss her. He needed the reassurance of her in his arms. But he couldn't do that without letting go -- or could he?

One way to find out. Tomnas got a careful grip on the rail with one hand, squeezing the wood tightly as possible, then swung around to face Tatiana. She dangled much as he did, some distance below. There would be no touching her, but at least he could look at her face. It was white and lined with worries, but her eyes still flashed with bravery. "I need you," he said hotly. "Not just in finding the Master, not just for sex. No matter what else happens, you are the most precious thing in my life. Even better than the Magick. If we go, we go together."

Tatiana flashed him a grin. "As always. Now, begin to climb. I am right behind you."

Tomnas gave a mighty effort, and whipped his body back around to grasp the

railing with both hands. He slipped a few inches and nearly fell, but his hands managed to hang on tight after a moment. Using the rail as something to brace against, he carefully took a step higher. One step, then another, and another.

The railing began to flicker. "Don't you dare," Tomnas warned. "You should know these stairs. If we fall, we'll smash our heads open. Do you want our death on your hands?"

The Master's voice was whispery. "Better death than humiliation."

"Ours or yours?"

The Master fell silent. There was a moment in which Tomnas didn't know what he was going to do, but then the railing stabilized. He let out a breath he hadn't realized he was holding, and took a firmer grasp.

Inch by inch, he and Tatiana made their way up the slope. Their bare feet skidded and their fingers almost slipped from time to time, but they made slow, steady progress. The Master wasn't making this easy, but apparently he truly didn't want to see Tomnas and Tatiana dead.

Nothing worth having came easily.

Tomnas blew hair out of his face and continued his undignified slither up the flattened staircase. "We're almost there," he warned. "I see a door at the top of the steps. Is that where you are?"

The railing bucked and Tomnas slid backwards nearly a foot, colliding with Tatiana. Without thinking he grabbed at her waist to steady her, and almost sent both of them tumbling to the bottom. Only her quick thinking and firm grasp kept them from plummeting.

"That's where he is," she said grimly. "Keep climbing, my Tomnas. We will see this Master, after all. And I will slap his face for doing this to us."

Tomnas let loose with a breathless chuckle. "You would, too. Okay. Keep going. One step at a time, Tatiana. We'll get there in the end."

\* \* \*

*No, no, no!* Damien paced the small confines of his room. Tomnas and Tatiana

were approaching too fast. He'd done a dangerous and strenuous thing by altering the stairs, but truly, he'd thought they would let go and try to find another way up -- when there was no other way.

They would, then, have left him alone in peace. Which was what he wanted. Wasn't it?

When Damien closed his eyes, he could see the bold lines of Tomnas' face and the waterfall of Tatiana's red hair.

Limping, he made his way over to his abandoned cup of wine, waved his hand over the surface, and whispered a few words. The dull surface shimmered into a clear picture of the pair, clambering up his trap like monkeys. Their arms strained with healthy young muscle and their legs worked like agile pistons. They were coming closer, closer, closer.

Groaning, Damien turned away from the cup. He pressed his hands hard against his eyes, struggling to think. If the two did make their way into this room, if they found him... he couldn't bear their disgust when they saw his face.

But they would find him. Two that determined would find a path through fire and ice. They could best his small spells.

The thing that made it worst of all was that he admired them. Wanted both of them. His cock, dormant for so long, was rising and filling with blood, lengthening into a steely hardness. Handsome Tomnas and beautiful Tatiana... and himself.

Ashamed of himself, but knowing nothing else to do, Damien quashed the fire in his hearth and backed into the darkest corner of the room, away from the windows and the strong moonlight streaming in.

Perhaps they'd be satisfied with an offer to teach them from a distance. Maybe they wouldn't come close enough to see.

Maybe the moon was made of green cheese.

Listening to the two struggle their way up the slanted stairs, Damien waited. His heart in his throat, he listened for the sound of feet on the landing and a rattle at the door...

*Oh, gods.* He prayed to any deity who might be listening: let them not make him an object of mockery. Might they see him from a distance, and not come close.

No matter how much his treacherous body ached for their touch. His Sex Magick burned if none of his other talents were alight, and he didn't know if he could control himself.

*Stay back. Please, stay back...*

\* \* \*

"We're here." Tomnas reached the seemingly solid landing of the stairs. Carefully not letting go of the railing in case this too would tilt on him, he reached out for Tatiana with his free hand. "The Master has to be behind that door. Let's go and see what this is all about."

Tatiana let herself be pulled up. She let go of the railing, herself, and dusted down her skirts. Holding up her hands, she stared at them. "The rail, it was so slippery. Yet my fingers are dry."

"Magick," Tomnas said flatly. "More tricks. I'm getting tired of this. I want to see what's going on. Are you still with me?"

Tatiana gave a firm nod. "Until the end," she replied. "Open the door."

Tomnas reached for the handle, and began to turn it. Unlocked. He pushed the door open and stared into the almost pitch blackness inside. "I know you're in there," he called. "You have no right to turn one of us aside, at least, not unless you already have a student. And I don't think you do." He gave his pendant a yank. "You wouldn't have given us these otherwise, or said what you did."

"What do you want from me?" the Master asked, his voice coming from the shadows.

Tomnas opened his mouth, but Tatiana beat him to it with her own words. "We want to see you," she said brazenly. "Let us lay eyes on the man who has given us so much and caused us a great deal of trouble. Step forward into the moonlight."

"No!" There was a scrabbling sound, as if the Master were forcing himself further backward against a wall. "What can I say to make you leave? *You aren't safe here.*

Look around you! I don't even have enough Magick to keep the place in repair. No one comes to me for help, for potions, for tinctures. No one even comes to make love in my parlor."

"Why?" Tomnas asked, inching forward. "There has to be a reason why you're out here all alone."

He heard the Master laugh. It wasn't a humorous sound. "I was banished," he rasped. "Punished for being a prideful fool. Cut off from the other Masters, and left here to rot. The only way I can regain my strength is through Sex Magick, and unless you never learned your lessons, my own right hand doesn't do the trick."

"So?" Tomnas moved a little further closer to the source of the voice.

"Stop!" the Master ordered. "The two of you coming in here is no coincidence. It is a test. If I stand up against you, then I win. Otherwise, I fail."

"Why us? What do we matter in the long run?"

Again, the Master laughed. "You have to ask that, with the Sexual power running so strongly through your veins? You're a source of power, you two. If you touch me, I might drain you. Take all your own Magick and swallow it whole."

"You could not resist this?" Tatiana asked, sliding forward to Tomnas' side. Glancing down, Tomnas saw her hands balled into fists. Not out of fear or self-defense, oh no. Tatiana was angry. He couldn't say that he blamed her.

"I don't know. It's been ten years since I touched another person. The Magick might be stronger than I am."

"No," Tomnas came back. "If you are a Master, you've long since tamed the Magick. It does what you tell it to, not the other way around. You can lay hands on both of us if that's what you want."

He sensed the Master's hesitation. "You take chances with your lives," he said at last.

"What can I say? I've always liked risk." Tomnas lunged forward and grabbed at the darkness. His hands closed around what felt like a wrist, and he pulled forward. "Come out into the moonlight!"



A shocking tingle ran through Tomnas' arms as he held on to the Master. The man struggled against him, but Tomnas was young and strong. He tugged his opponent into the moonlight, and then let go. "There," he said, looking up. The Master had his face turned away. "Let me see you."

"There is nothing to look at." The Master refused to turn around.

Tatiana slipped up beside them. She moved so quickly that the Master had no choice about avoiding her gaze. One hand went to her lips. "Oh. Oh, I see now." She reached up, her pale fingers grazing the man's face. He flinched, but held still. "Foolish person, to think this would matter," she whispered. "Turn around and face Tomnas. I think you will be surprised."

The Master ducked his head, hiding behind a curtain of cinnamon-colored hair. "I cannot."

"You must," Tatiana insisted. "Turn your face around and look at him. At both of us. You will see that we do not reject you for what you are."

The Master shuddered hard enough to see, then slumped in misery. "Have it your way, then. But I warned you. The gods know I told you to walk away. You still have a chance. I would not use you as a living battery for my Magick. But then," he said with a dry, bitter chuckle, "you won't want to come near me after seeing this."

Turning his face upright, the Master looked directly at Tomnas. Highlighted by the moonlight, his features stood out in stark relief. Every angle, every plane, every... scar.

Tomnas' hand went to his mouth. The man had been horribly wounded once upon a time. But he couldn't... no, he couldn't... wasn't able to stop himself from walking forward. Like Tatiana, he raised his hand to touch the scars, tracing his fingers down their lines. "You are beautiful," he whispered, reaching up with the idea of pressing his lips to the Master's own.

The Master reacted like an angry cat. "No!" He pushed at Tomnas, hard enough to knock him down and send him sliding across the room. Walking heavily, he came to stand over Tomnas, staring down with eyes too dark for his face. He glared at Tomnas

and bared his teeth. "You don't know what you've unleashed. But you will. Gods, you will."

## Chapter Five

Tomnas didn't stop to think -- he only reacted. Kicking his legs out to either side, he bashed them against the Master's and sent the man sprawling. He would have landed on Tomnas, except for Tomnas' quick grab and twist that landed them exactly the other way around.

Tomnas snatched the man's hands and held them over his head. The Master fought against him, surprisingly strong for a recluse, but in the end youth triumphed over experience. The Master lay glaring at Tomnas, beaten, but not broken. "Damned fool," he snarled. "You have no idea what you're dealing with."

"I'm about to find out." Breathing heavily, Tomnas examined the face of the Master -- the man who could be the focal point of his and Tatiana's future. The man's face was written with lines of anger, to be sure, but Tomnas didn't see any outright malice there. Instead, there were deeply carved furrows of despair and resignation.

As he examined the man, the Master gave a heave that almost bucked Tomnas off. He regained his balance and held firm. "No more tricks," he warned. "No more games. I wouldn't be able to pin you if you weren't all but drained, so I know what the score is."

"Bah! Go on and look, then," the Master spat. "Doesn't what you see make you sick? I can't even stand to look at myself. Go ahead, get an eyeful. This is what you wanted as your Master."

"I see you," Tomnas replied as steadily as he could. His hands were both occupied, but he examined each scar with a careful gaze. The Master's face had been ravaged, yes, but underneath all the damage he could see the handsome, cocky bastard he must have once been. "You were punished, you said. You'd gotten full of yourself and someone took you down a few pegs."

The Master groaned a laugh. "A few pegs? They took away all my followers, everyone who filled this house with the power of Sex Magick. They locked me in this room with their condemnation written across the wall, never to be erased. I've been alone for ten years. Do you understand what that means to a Master of Sex Magick?" He began to struggle. "Get off me. This dangerous game that you're playing ends right here, right now. You're risking --"

"Fire?" Tomnas held on tight and rested more of his weight on top of the Master. He could feel the man's erection through his clothes, a worn pair of black jeans, and feel the hardness of his chest through the faded black sweater he had on. "I like playing with fire."

"It burns."

"It warms."

"It destroys."

"It protects."

Pushing against Tomnas in vain, the Master rolled his head to and fro. "What can I say to convince you to get off of me?"

"Why not just try pushing me away? Not with Magick, but with your own strength," Tomnas challenged. "You might have been up here ten years, but you're still solid. I can feel every muscle in your body. They're tensed up hard as rocks." He rocked his hips, pressing his own growing cock against the Master's through their jeans.

The man moaned and tilted his head back, exposing a tempting length of throat.

"But you don't really want me to leave you alone now, do you?" Tomnas taunted, using his fingers to stroke the Master's hands.

"Fire," the Master rasped, sounding breathless. "What are you doing to me?"

"After ten years by yourself? Bringing you back to life." Tomnas lowered his face and pressed his lips to the Master's. They were still under his for a long moment as Tomnas flickered his tongue. Then, the Master let out a shuddering sound and opened up. Tomnas plunged in, fucking the man's mouth with his tongue. They clung together for countless seconds, the Master's mouth hard and firm instead of the soft pliability

he'd grown used to, not better, but definitely different. The Master fought with his kisses as he did with words and other actions. Tomnas knew that if he'd been the one on bottom, himself, the Master would be tearing his clothes off right about then.

Well, turnabout was fair play, wasn't it?

Tomnas pulled off, shivering as he felt something not unlike electricity race through his body. "I can taste your power," he said, gripping the Master's wrists tighter. "You keep asking me if I know what I'm doing. I know. Do *you* know what it's like to be so close to everything you've always wanted?" He rocked his pelvis. "I think you do."

"Fire. I told you, fire. You'll get burned," the Master warned. He licked his lips. "You and your pretty lady. Both of you need to turn around, walk out of this room, and forget you ever saw me."

"Can't do it." Tomnas captured the man's mouth in another kiss, savoring the current that surged through him. He undulated against the man's groin, pressing their cocks as close together as he could. "Your mouth says no, but your body says yes. Ten years without sex. For a Master, that would have felt like an eternity." He kissed the corner of the Master's mouth. "What's your name?"

"What does it matter?"

Tomnas kept a firm hold on the man's hands. "Indulge me."

"You won't give up until I've answered, will you?"

Tomnas shook his head. "Not a chance." He ground down, drawing a gasp from the Master's lips. "Your name."

"Damien!" the Master exploded. "You should recognize it. You'll know everything about me now."

*Damien.* The name ricocheted in Tomnas' mind, bouncing off the walls of his skull. He'd heard rumors, yes, of a Master who'd gone wild and had to be cut off. Never had believed them to be true, though. Who would go rogue when they had it all?

He decided that the gossip was wrong... or that, at least, Damien had seen the error of his ways. No one could be as desperate as Damien, his body so needy, if he

hadn't been aching for a release for years. If he hadn't repented, he wouldn't be pushing Tomnas away.

"You could have killed us," Tomnas said steadily. "You didn't. There's still a good man inside you." He pressed down harder, the buttons on his fly pressing into his cock with a blast of pleasure/pain. "And there could be another man inside you, too."

"Don't tempt me." Damien shook his head. "Any more, and I won't be able to stop. I won't use you as nothing more than a battery to replenish what I've lost."

"What if I shared with you what you need, instead?" Tomnas rubbed the man's wrists. "Freely. Willingly."

Damien gave him an odd look. "Why in all the deepest pits of Hell would you want to do such a thing?"

Tomnas didn't have to think twice. "Because of what you look like. Beneath the scars, you're handsome as a devil, just like your statue out in the garden. Because of what you used to be. Because of what you are and what you do."

"And what is that?"

"You fill him with the fire you speak of so often," Tatiana said suddenly, stepping forward. Her skirt brushed the floor, picking up dust on the deep green edges. She knelt beside Damien's head and took his wrists from Tomnas. Her own grip was no less firm. "And me, as well. I looked upon you and loved what I saw. Fire."

Damien shook his head. "Not possible," he said flatly.

"Are you calling me a liar?"

"I think you're both desperate for a Master," Damien rallied. "Both of you would fuck a humpbacked toad if you thought you'd have a chance at being more than a demi-mage."

"Give us some credit. Why would we want to fuck anyone else when we have each other?" Tomnas asked, rolling his eyes. "I like men, yes. But Tatiana is everything I need." He leered. "She'd even wear a strap-on if I asked her to."

Damien's cock jumped beneath Tomnas'. Tomnas bore down, beginning to rub against him in short strokes. "I don't want you in exchange, or instead of. I want you

both."

"But *why*?" Damien demanded. "There has to be a reason."

"There is no reason besides want." Tatiana leaned down and feathered her lips over Damien's scars. "These marks, these lines, they matter not. I see the good man underneath, despite what he has done to us. The man who took care of us and who called us here. What we give, we give willingly. As it is for myself, so it is for Tomnas. This I know. Do not push us away, Damien. We are your last chance."

"You have no idea..." Damien struggled, but weakly.

When Tatiana covered his mouth in a kiss, Tomnas watched and saw that the Master couldn't help but return the embrace, his tongue slipping into her mouth. Tomnas stroked himself as he watched, surprising himself by the heat he felt at watching his lover kiss another man.

Damien pulled away for breath. "You have no idea about the true depths of Sex Magick. You're neophytes, fresh out of the academies."

"Not so new," Tatiana said soothingly, but with a wicked smile. "I have crossed the oceans, and with Tomnas I have traveled the country. We have experienced much of the sex, together and apart. What do we have to fear from you?"

"It's been so long. The spark is already kindled, and I can feel a powerful flame building. I could burn you to cinders." Damien strained against Tatiana's strong grip. "I won't kill you. I won't, I won't, I won't."

"Then don't. You cannot kill with kindness." Tatiana slowly released Damien's wrists. He looked startled, and began to move, then lay still. His chest heaved as he watched to see what would happen next.

As ever when it pleased her, Tatiana was gentle. She brushed hair away from Damien's face and forehead, tracing his scars with the tip of one finger. "Lust burns, love warms, and sex is the end result of both. We have them in plenty. Let us bring you away from the dark and back into the light."

Damien let out a long breath. "God... God. You have no idea how much I want you. Both of you. But I can't --"

"You can," Tomnas said firmly. "And you will. Tatiana?"

His lover, the one he trusted more than anything else in the world, nodded and moved so that her knees were braced on either side of Damien's head. She held him there as Tomnas began to work his way down the black-clad body. He pushed Damien's sweater up and out of the way to get at the hard flesh underneath, laving it with wet, open-mouthed kisses and circling laps of his tongue. The man's flesh tasted like salt.

Damien bucked and began to swear. Tomnas teased his navel, riding the wave of movement, then nuzzled down into the vee of hair that disappeared into the Master's jeans. "You smell so good," he whispered. "It's been a long time for me, too."

"Walk away," Damien begged. "I would do anything not to hurt you."

"You won't." Tomnas reached the zipper of the man's jeans. "Tell me no," he challenged. "Say no, mean it, and I'll walk away like you asked me to." He cupped the man's erection and squeezed. "But I think you want to say yes. Don't you?"

Damien loosed a ragged groan that ended in a strangled scream. "Yes! God, is that what you want to hear? I said *yes*. Have some mercy!"

"That's all I needed to hear." Tomnas jerked Damien's zipper down and pushed the man's jeans to below his hips. He paused for a moment to savor the sight of the man's cock. Standing tall in front of him, it was long and thick, slightly curved to the left, and had a broad, dark head. Tomnas grasped it at the base and sucked the head into his mouth, tasting the Master for the first time and closing his eyes in sheer bliss. Tatiana's fruit flavoring was a banquet, but this was the bitterness to counterpoint her sweet taste.

Tomnas hadn't realized how much he missed this until he tasted it again.

The Master writhed, his stomach undulating. "I should make you... I should... but don't... don't... don't stop," he managed, trying to thrust up into Tomnas' eager mouth. "It's been so long. I need... I need..."

"You'll get," Tomnas pulled off long enough to promise in a whisper. He blew a long stream of cold breath over Damien's cock, then returned to sucking hard. The scent



of mangos and papayas drifted over to him. He glanced up to see Tatiana changing position, scooting forward so that her pussy was poised above Damien's mouth. She had pulled up her skirt and tied it in a knot so that both could see her red thatch of curls glistening with moisture.

"I give myself to you," she said softly. "Taste me, for I am good. As you receive, so should you give." She lowered herself a few more inches. "Say that you do not want this, and I will move away."

The Master seemed to struggle for words, finally giving a rough-edged cry. "Come here," he begged, reaching up for her with one hand while stretching the other down to Tomnas. "Let me taste your sweet quim. You smell like heaven."

"As Tomnas said, that is all I needed to hear." Tatiana lowered herself so the Master could reach her pussy with his mouth. Her blouse billowed down and hid the view, but Tomnas knew those sounds all too well -- a hungry tongue lapping at the soft walls of a woman's hungry center. The Master moaned, although it was muffled, and thrust up into Tomnas' mouth.

Tomnas closed his eyes, feeling like a great cat devouring his prey. A part of him suggested that he should have felt jealous. Tatiana was his, after all. But this seemed so very right, for the two of them to share the Master, and Tomnas couldn't question her actions, or resent her for them. It would take two to bring the Master back to his full strength, and two was what they had to give.

Moving his hand, jacking what length of cock he couldn't fit into his mouth, Tomnas sucked harder. The Master's hand flexed in his own, slowly and then with a sudden urgency. Tomnas kept up the pressure, using his tongue to coax an orgasm out of the man. After ten years, it would be a spectacular thing to witness, and he planned on being there until the very end.

A frantic flutter of Damien's fingers and he erupted, hot jets of spume flooding Tomnas' mouth. He swallowed eagerly, mouthful after mouthful, from bitter to sweet. Pulling his hand loose, he massaged the Master's hips, urging him on. The Master thrust again and again into Tomnas' mouth, not stopping for a long stretch of time or

ceasing to come, not until he began to go soft. Tomnas used his tongue to begin a clean-up, bathing the man's cock free of sticky strands of semen.

"God," he heard Damien breathe. "You're close. I can feel it. The power's coming back to me in a tide, a flood..."

"Then take care of me." Tomnas undid his jeans once again, pushing them down, and came up to straddle the Master's waist. His own hard cock fell out, coming to rest on the tough muscles of Damien's chest. "Touch my dick."

A shaking hand came up to grasp Tomnas' cock. The Master's fingers moved hesitantly at first, then with more confidence, and finally with the certainty of one discovering a long-forgotten skill. Tatiana's sudden cry of excitement told Tomnas that the man had also remembered his own mouth and tongue, and was putting them to good use.

Tomnas rocked back and forth, sliding his cock in and out of the Master's grasp even as the man pumped him. Tatiana made small noises of excitement rising in pitch. The Master reached up to touch her behind the curtain of her hair and blouse, releasing a wave of citrus scent. The wet sucking noises went on and on and on, the sweetest symphony on earth.

Tomnas closed his eyes and gave himself over to the sensation of having a man's hand on his cock. He felt himself start to tense, and reached down to grab Damien's hand. "I'll come," he warned. "Your sweater."

Damien made a muffled noise and began to work Tomnas' cock harder. Tomnas' bare toes curled against the cold wooden floor, his back arched, and he felt himself come in jets of hot liquid that splattered all over the Master's chest. The orgasm rocked his body as if he were dancing under hot lights with a dozen other horny bodies pressed against him. At the same time, Tatiana loosed a long, warbling wail, pumping her hips against Damien's mouth.

The scent of pineapple filled the room. Their hands fell away from one another, dropping to their sides. All was still except for the sounds of three sets of lungs struggling for breath after what they'd just done to one another.

Tatiana was the first to move. She drew back, unknotting her skirt, but not before Tomnas got a look at the shiny inside of her milk-white thighs and the soaking tuft of red hair. Her hands shook as she smoothed out creases in the fabric, and then as she reached to caress Damien's face.

Damien slowly let go of Tomnas' cock. "Thank you," he whispered. "I -- I --" He stopped. "There aren't words. The Magick is back. It's bathing me like the best afterglow I've ever felt, filling my veins and driving me peacefully insane. I can't say..."

"We do not need words," Tatiana murmured. She slipped down to lie next to Damien, throwing her arm across his chest. "Master and students or not, you and Tomnas are all that I could wish for in men. Everything a woman needs to satisfy herself, and two beautiful men to watch." She giggled. "What more do I need?"

Damien shook his head slowly. "You can't think I'm beautiful," he protested. "Look at me, Tatiana. Look at me. I'm like Frankenstein."

Her lips curved in a smile. "I think perhaps not," she said, stroking his chest. "Rise to your feet and go see in the mirror. See for yourself what we have done for you."

Damien's eyes widened... in an unblemished face. He looked at Tomnas. "Don't play games. Is she telling the truth?"

Tomnas reached to caress the man's smooth skin. "Oh, yes. But, Damien?" He grinned. "This is only the beginning."

With that, Tomnas leaned down to kiss the man again, feeling Tatiana's hand tangle in his hair. They were together, all three of them, just as they should be, and as the pulsing golden-amber heart around his neck told him, they were setting out on a journey that he hoped would have no end.

And from the way Damien kissed him, Tomnas didn't think this trip would ever come to a stop...

## **Willa Okati**

Willa Okati is one hundred percent in love all things vampire and supernatural. However, she's an even bigger fan of stories that feature beautiful men exploring their desires for one another. Casually known as the "blue-haired, tattooed wench" among Changeling folks, she lives for the fun of acting just as young as she feels. She'd love for you to visit her website at <http://www.willaokati.com> or join her reader's loop for fun and chatter at [willa\\_okati@yahoogroups.com](mailto:willa_okati@yahoogroups.com). Happy reading!