

Spellfire Hearts

MIDNIGHT SHOWCASE

Erotic-aah Digest Vol. 06-09

A Spellfire Valentine Digest

Spellfire Hearts

MIDNIGHT SHOWCASE

www.midnightshowcase.com

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Published by

MIDNIGHT SHOWCASE

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Orr's Island, ME 04066

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ISSN#1555-5496

Credits

Cover Artist: Jinger Heaston

Editor: Jewel Adams

Printed in the United States of America

**WELCOME TO
SPELLFIRE, TEXAS**

*Where things aren't what they seem, no—
they are so much hotter!*

The Third of the Spellfire Collections

A Spellfire Valentine Digest

SPELLFIRE HEARTS

Even within a paranormal country town, love can be immortal, invigorating and incredible to behold. Come enjoy the romantic romps of wizards, witches, genies, sorcerers, fairies, ghosts, and other magical beings as they find love in such delightfully unexpected ways of wonder. Let your heart and body find satisfaction in these stories of wickedly wild romance and desire, which happens in Spellfire, Texas, around and on Valentine's Day.

SPELLFIRE HEARTS

***Drifting Desires*, by Leanne Strange**

Harpy Collins's mistaken thoughts made her cautious of loving elemental sorcerer Derek Spellfire. With magical caresses, Derek's determined to give Harpy the love she craves.

***Heart Spells*, by Mae Powers**

Jaleena Trinkets opens a book of love spells and is transported to a mystical place where a hunky gen-witch casts an alluring desire over her.

***Candy Kisses*, by Emery LaRue**

Trevor Jackson finds in Spellfire a woman who puts his libido into overdrive—Candy Piper, a witch talented with candy making and love-craft.

***Haunted Love*, by Tamara James**

Ghost Zechariah Taylor is bewitched by his desires for sorceress Heather Landry. Will his ghostly loving be enough to mend her troubled heart?

***Tricks of Love*, by Mae Powers**

When the town's most notoriously mischievous fairy, Shai, falls in love, Valentine's Day weekend in Spellfire sizzles with magically sensual mayhem.

Drifting Desires

By

Leanne Strange



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Sinful Sundaes: Shifters & Hot Fudge

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Drifting Desires

“Don't forget to fill the straw dispensers,” Harpy Collins reminded the newest waitress at Sinful Sundaes Ice Cream Shoppe.

Harpy watched as Blaze Draconis, her mane of flame-red hair threatening to spill from the twist at the back of her head, picked up the box of Spooktacular Straws from behind the counter and scurried to the nearest table. Harpy thought that Blaze was doing well for only two days on the job, even if it was a few steps down from Spellfire Maintenance Engineer, a position Blaze held for years.

Not that there's anything wrong with waitressing, Harpy mused and brushed crumbs off her own waitress uniform. *Nothing at all*. She shrugged and looked down at the total of the day's receipts.

“Not bad for a Friday in February. The weather's been unseasonably warm for this time of year, and that's good for the ice cream biz.” Harpy raked the piles of coins into a cash bag, and then added the stack of bills. “Thanks, Manny. See you tomorrow night.”

Mano A. Mano, whom everyone called Manny, made the A-OK sign, flipped over onto the tips of two fingers, hopped off the counter, and disappeared, going wherever disembodied hands went after midnight. Probably down on Alligator Alley to tally receipts for all the joints and pubs. He was the best money-counter she'd ever seen. Manny's totals were never off by so much as one cent.

Cash bag in hand, Harpy called out, “I'll be in the back if you need anything.”

She must have startled Blaze because suddenly Spooktacular Straws flew everywhere, in all directions, skittering across tables and scattering over the floor. Harpy shook her head and sighed. *The dragon-shifter lost her nerve as well as her verve along with her fire and her job.*

Spellfire Hearts

"Don't worry, hon." Harpy forced a smile when Blaze, her face as red as her name, looked up. "I'll help you clean up after I put this in the safe."

In the back, Harpy placed the cash bag in the wall safe. After closing the door and spinning the lock, she made the motions that the owner of Sinful Sundaes, Electra Spellfire-Ruveaux, taught her to cast, a warding spell that even an experienced mage would have trouble breaking. A normal thief, normal as in non-magical, would never be able to crack it.

The re-located ghost of Ishmaiah Hawkins, town crier, still walked his route through town, but according to how his hometown had once been laid out in colonial days back east...which just happened to bring him right through the kitchen of Sinful Sundaes. He rang his bell and called out, "Twelve o'clock and all is well." Then he floated through the back wall.

All was always well for Ishmaiah, Harpy noted that whenever she worked the swing shift and saw him. But all was not well for her. Midnight brought in the janitorial service Electra contracted for the shop. Clean Sweep was a sideline business owned and operated by Electra's brother Derek.

Thinking of Derek made Harpy think of what might have been. Back in high school, when she was young and in love with her whole life ahead of her, she certainly didn't plan on making a career of waitressing. Not that she hated her job. She loved working for Electra and was proud of making head waitress and night manager within the past year. But it just wasn't what she thought she'd be doing at this point in her life.

Before she became too maudlin, the tinkle of the bell over the front door and the sound of rushing wind that followed signified Derek Spellfire was in the house.

Harpy steeled herself and stepped out of the back room. She saw the last of the Spooktacular Straws twirling through the air and into the box that Blaze held.

"Thanks, Derek," Blaze whispered breathlessly and blushed.

"No problem," Derek said.

Harpy wanted to puddle like a scoop of ice cream in July at the sound of his smooth, sexy voice. She shook herself. *No puddling!* She ducked her head over the cash register and busied herself. Maybe Derek would give the place a good cleaning and go away without

saying a word to her.

As Blaze went into the back to get another box of straws, he blasted through the shop like a tornado, sucking up all the dust and trash in his path and depositing it in the wastebasket. *Good. Now, he can leave and that will be that.*

“Good evening, Harpy.” Derek’s smooth tones washed over her, igniting sparks of desire that had lain dormant for so very long.

“Hello, Derek,” she said evenly.

A heavy crash sounded from the back, followed by the explosion of broken glass. Blaze’s trembling voice said, “I’m sorry, Harpy. I’ll clean it up.”

Harpy closed her eyes and shook her head. “If I could get my hands on our esteemed mayor, Perry Normil, right this minute, I’d strangle him.”

Derek chuckled as he gusted across her arm. “Lots of folks in Spellfire would like to do him in, but why right now?”

Harpy’s eyes sprang open and she stifled a shiver. Her back itched something fierce, but she wasn’t going to let Derek know. Oh, no, she wasn’t going to tease him. They were over and had been for a long time. She didn’t really want to go there again...did she?

Harpy moved away from him, pretending to straighten up the counter. “For what he did to Blaze Draconis. It was bad enough he called for Blaze’s resignation, but did he have to publicly humiliate her by announcing she could no longer breathe flames?”

Derek blew closer and need prickled between her thighs. “Didn’t everyone know? I’d only been back in Spellfire a couple of weeks at the time, and I’d already heard the rumor.”

“That’s just it!” Harpy slammed down a salt shaker, and then lowered her voice so Blaze wouldn’t hear. “It was just a rumor, but now everybody knows for sure. Poor Blaze is mortified. A dragon-shifter without her fire is like a—a vampire without fangs.”

Or a harpy without the ability to fly, she could have added.

“Or an elemental sorcerer stuck in his elemental form,” Derek contributed instead.

“It’s not the same thing.” Harpy frowned. “You still have your magic. That’s why the mayor appointed you as Spellfire Maintenance Engineer after forcing Blaze to resign. And because you’re a Spellfire.”

Derek drifted around the counter. “Granted, Perry Normil is a

suck-up. But Blaze can still shape-shift into a dragon.”

“But she can't breathe fire. What's a dragon without fire?”

“True.” Derek wafted even closer.

Harpy edged down along the counter away from him, still pretending to straighten condiment containers, but she was all too aware of his nearness. “Anyway, Electra and I are determined to see this through with Blaze. Everyone in town feels sorry for her because of the way the mayor treated her and they want to help, but she's lasted less than a week at every place that's hired her. She's easily spooked and painfully shy now, and she just can't seem to do anything right anymore.”

Derek eddied along the counter with her. “Does she know how she lost her fire?”

Harpy shook her head and cleared her throat to be able to speak. Derek, even in wind form, was devastating to her furled wings. “She says it sometimes happens to dragon-shifters, but they don't know why.”

“Has she asked Electra about a cure?” Derek drifted around to her other side.

He slid along her skin and tumbled her blond curls. *Did he know what he was doing? Or was it accidental?* She could light into him for getting too close, but what if he truly didn't intend to touch her? She would embarrass herself all over again for *assuming* she knew what just happened.

“Yeah.” Harpy gulped and started moving back up the counter, toward the register and away from Derek again. “Electra has looked, but she can't find anything in the grimoires about curing lost dragon fire.”

“My sister is the most powerful sorceress in town. If she can't find a cure then there isn't one,” he said proudly.

“Shush, here she comes,” Harpy whispered.

Blaze returned with a fresh box of Spooktacular Straws and starting filling the straw dispensers at the tables again. The bell above the door tinkled and a group of jackets and caps entered. The Invisible Man League always met the second Friday night of every month at Sinful Sundaes.

Harpy waved and turned to get their usual order, sparkling water with a twist all around because it was disconcerting to see colored soda or ice cream settle in invisible stomachs, but Derek shifted air

around her and she couldn't move.

"Derek, please." Harpy inhaled deeply to keep from sounding breathless. "I have to get their order."

"When do you get off?" His voice was low and sexy and she felt a warm rush of air across her cheek.

Her body threatened to melt again, but she backed up against the counter. Her back itched madly. She wanted to scratch against the counter, but she restrained herself. "I get off at one, when the night shift comes in. Why?"

The air stirred around her, and he moved in even closer. "Come with me on a night flight."

Harpy clenched her jaw and withdrew her order pad from her pocket. She swung her arm through him, dispersing him away from her. "I can't fly and you know it!"

She stalked through what was left of him, his essence permeating the skin on her arms. She stifled another shiver and stiffened her back to keep her wings from unfurling. *Damn him! Why did he have to bring that up? Why couldn't he just leave her alone?*

"I'm sorry, Harpy. I thought by now you would be flying."

She shook her head while gathering glasses for the invisible men. "Nope. I'm only half harpy, and you know that, too. The witchdoctor told my mother when she got pregnant by my human father that I might never be able to fly. He was right."

"Maybe I can help." Derek swirled around her again. "I'm nothing but air. Let me take you out to Spellfire Park tomorrow. I can direct my wind exactly where you need it. Maybe you can fly. Let me be the wind beneath your wings."

For a second, hope rose in Harpy. To be able to fly like all her harpy relatives had been her greatest desire her entire life...aside from her desire for Derek Spellfire. She squashed both flat. She couldn't fly and she couldn't have Derek. Not after what she had done to him. Even now, knowing she'd been dead wrong, she couldn't apologize. And she couldn't let him near enough to be the wind beneath her anything.

"No!" The word exploded from her mouth.

His air flowed around her, raising goose bumps on her arms. Derek caressed her skin and her hair, and he breezed past her ear. Her heart raced in her chest, and her breathing deepened. It was all she could do not to strip off her uniform and let him spin around her body

until she—

“I’m not leaving until you agree to meet me in Spellfire Park tomorrow.”

A tiny current of air tickled her ear and this time she did shiver. She would do anything to make him stop. “All right. Yes!”

“The Valentine Day Picnic is tomorrow at the park.” Blaze came from behind the counter, and Harpy hadn’t even noticed. “I’ll see you two there.”

Harpy narrowed her eyes.

Derek drifted away from her.

Harpy put her hands on her hips. “You fiend! I am not going, Derek.”

“Too late, baby. You’re already committed.” He spun into a cyclone, but his trailing tail swept beneath her skirt as he headed around the counter. She jumped. The blasted bag of wind had goosed her!

Harpy stared at the door after he left and muttered under her breath, “Yeah, I ought to be committed.”

Chapter 2

Derek blew through Spellfire Park like he didn't have a care in the world. Inside, and he did have an inside even if he was nothing but air, he was jumping for joy. He tricked Harpy. He wasn't proud of it, but she gave him no other choice. In the six months that he'd been back in Spellfire, she refused to give him the time of day. He distracted her by gently wafting over her skin and through her hair, making her forget about the next day's festivities in the park.

Valentine's Day was still several days away, but Spellfire always held the picnic the Saturday before. If the weather wasn't good—too cold or too rainy—then the Witch's Council got together and cast a Sunny Day Spell. No town festival was ever rained out in Spellfire, unless the town itself had a reason to keep nature on its course.

Derek joined his sister Electra and her new vampirian husband Alex at the Spellfire picnic table, beneath the tallest tree in the park, but he couldn't hold still. He kept gusting through the upper limbs of the tree to scan the park, looking for Harpy. He hoped that she kept her word.

“Derek? Is that you?” A familiar voice sounded below him, and he looked down.

The man stood with his face turned up and his hands clasped behind his back. He was a tall, thin man with black hair and blue eyes.

Derek whisked down to the ground, stirring up a few leftover dead leaves and a crumpled napkin. “Roald? Roald Rumsfeld?”

Roald laughed. “I thought I recognized the way the limbs swayed. How have you been?”

Derek swirled around until he took a windy form of his human self. He couldn't sustain the shape for long. His air was difficult to control and used a lot of energy in such a tight configuration. But it made him feel more normal and kept Roald from looking like he was

talking to himself. "I'm doing good. How's the silver-smithing business?"

"Great." Roald brought his hands from around his back. He was wearing thick, unwieldy gloves. He tugged one off.

Derek's breath caught. He'd forgotten how downright weird Roald's hands looked with fire engulfing them to the wrist and orange-red flames licking from the tips of his fingers and thumb.

"Not many people can mold silver with their bare hands." Roald sighed. "I do miss touching things because everything I touch burns to a crisp. On the bright side, I can toast marshmallows whenever I want."

Derek chuckled politely, but the ramifications of what they'd done in high school appalled him.

"What I miss most," Roald lowered his voice as he replaced the specially made flame-retardant glove, "is touching a woman."

"I know how you feel," Derek murmured.

Roald looked startled. "Yeah, I guess you do. Women like to be touched, and they don't hang around long if you can't."

"That's the truth," Derek commiserated.

"And molding silver with your bare hands will only get you so far." He paused, then lowered his voice and confessed, "My hands aren't the only part of my body flaming like a blowtorch."

Derek nodded politely. He never thought about that. *Ouch*. But what if Roald hit on the answer that Derek had been seeking for years as to why Harpy dumped him just a few days after his and Roald's foolishness turned him into air. She wouldn't tell him why, even when he begged. She just said she never wanted to see him again.

At first, he thought it might be the embarrassment of having a boyfriend who was no more than a current of air. He never considered it might be because she thought he couldn't touch her the way a woman needed to be touched.

"We were a couple of dumb-assed kids, weren't we?" Roald asked suddenly.

His question didn't really need an answer. The proof was in what they'd done to themselves.

"It seems there was a point to making spell-offs illegal, after all," Derek said.

"Yeah, there was. But we were too young and full of ourselves to listen to the teachers when they said we weren't ready to handle our

elements.” Roald laughed, but it was a hollow sound. “Do you even remember what started the argument?”

Derek shook his head. “Not really, but I do remember calling you a matchstick.”

Roald shrugged. “Oh, that’s an old insult for us fire sorcerers. I think when you said you were going to blow me out like a candle was when I got really mad.”

They laughed together. They could be friends now that the old high school rivalry was far behind them.

“How did you explain your condition?” Derek asked.

“I told my folks that a spell for homework went wrong. They sent me to Europe for a while, but none of the so-called experts over there could fix it.”

“Same here, except my parents didn’t send me away. I’m surprised someone didn’t figure out what we’d done. My sister Electra suspected, I think, but she never said anything to anyone.”

“Well, I’d better get back to the family. If my grandfather sees me talking to an air sorcerer, I’ll never hear the end of it. Good to see you again, Derek.”

Derek watched Roald walk across the park. They had been dumb-assed kids, just like Roald said. A spelling duel, of all things. If they had been able to admit to what really happened someone might have been able to help them, but if they told, their punishment would have been so much worse.

“Derek?”

This time the voice came from behind him, and he spun around, throwing off micro-tornadoes left and right until he disintegrated into air again. “Harpy, you came.”

She wore a backless one-piece pantsuit, but she kept her arms tightly crossed. Mixed signals, for sure. Harpy herself probably didn’t know what she wanted.

“I said I would.” She uncrossed her arms enough to twirl one loose curl around her finger. He swept through the tumble of blond ringlets pinned at the back of her head and across her bare back.

She hugged herself, shrugging her shoulders up to her earlobes. “Derek, don’t.”

“Why not, baby?” He glissaded back across the nape of her neck.

She licked her lips and rubbed her arms. “I came like I said I would, but I’m not staying. I never attend the Valentine Picnic.”

She turned to face him, but he whirled around her, faster and faster, like a hurricane, leaving her in the calm of his “eye”.

“Sure you do.” He moved forward, his eye wall gently bumping her rear until she was forced to take a step and then another. “You and I used to come every year.”

“I meant since then,” she snapped. “Let me go, so I can leave now.”

“Nope.” He continued pushing her along toward the back of the park and beyond a grove of trees where no one could see them. “You promised to fly with me.”

“And I told you I can't fly,” she cried out.

He reached out through his eye wall with what felt to him like his hand, but was no more than a trail of air and caressed her ear with a flutter of wind no greater than that created by a butterfly's wings. “Let me help you.”

She shuddered, flexing her back. “I've tried everything and nothing works. I'm half human, and I wasn't meant to fly.”

“You haven't tried this. I'm an air sorcerer, Harpy. And because of something stupid I did back in high school, I'm nothing but air now. It won't hurt to try.”

“But why didn't you turn back when...” she clamped her lips together and her eyes narrowed.

“I'm not turning back,” he said, although he was unsure why she became angry. “No one can see us here.”

“Why can't you just leave me alone?” She blinked rapidly.

He thought he saw the glisten of unshed tears in her eyes, but sometimes fast movement skewed his vision. “Why can't you just give it a try?”

“Do you...” She took a deep breath, but her words still came out in a breathless rush. “Do you really think it'll work?”

He wasn't going to lie to her. “I honestly don't know, but it can't hurt to try.”

She nodded. “All right.”

Derek breathed a sighing sound of relief. While in the air, he would prove he could touch her in more ways than she ever imagined. Maybe, just maybe, she would realize he could be as good a lover now as he had been back then, even if he was only air.

He stopped his whirling and turned into a gentle zephyr.

“H-How do we do this?” Harpy sounded nervous. She twirled the

loose curl and bit her bottom lip at the same time.

“Take off your shoes,” he directed. “Then relax and I’ll do the rest.”

She toed off her sandals and stood as stiff as a board. He gathered around her and whispered in her ear, “Relax, baby. I won’t drop you.”

“It’s not that.” She smiled, and her body went pliable within him. “I’m scared it won’t work, but...what if it does? I’ve never flown before.”

“I’ll be here to help you,” he promised.

He cradled her and lifted her, cushioning her with his air. He used a huge amount of energy changing forms to talk to Roald, and he wished now he hadn’t. He would be able to draw more energy from the air around him, but it would take time to build. He only had enough left to create the semblance of his head, shoulders, chest, and arms again.

Harpy jerked against him and threw her arms around his neck. “Oh, Derek!”

“I have you,” he reassured her. He enfolded her in his arms and let the rest of him carry them up, up, up beyond the clouds, so high that no one in Spellfire Park could see them. He nuzzled her neck, and then her head turned until their lips met.

He kissed her deeply, sliding his mouth over her sensual lips. She tasted as sweet as the confections she dished up at the shop. She tasted like Harpy and she tasted like home. He groaned into her mouth, and his hands slid down her back, over the nubs where her wings started to sprout, proving she was as hot for him as he was for her. Her wings always unfurled when she became aroused.

He ran his hands up her back and over her growing nubs again. She arched against him and didn’t protest when he unfastened the halter top at the back of her neck. The front fluttered to her waist, revealing her pert breasts and taut nipples.

He bent the form of his head, taking one hard peak into the facsimile of his mouth, and all his air pressure rushed lower, creating a thick, solid cylinder of concentrated wind that probed between her thighs. She gasped, and he released the rosy tip of her breast. Her dazzling blue eyes were wide, startled.

“I can touch you, Harpy.” He massaged her back and felt her wings expand. He thrust his wind-cock hard between her thighs. “I can make love to you, the way we used to. You didn’t have to break

up with me over that.”

She gasped again and drew away from him. Her eyes grew even wider, two pools of bright blue surrounded by white. “Th-That’s not why, Derek,” she stammered.

He let his hands drop to her waist. If that wasn’t the reason, then he wasn’t sure he wanted to know. If she broke up with him because of how he looked, that said more about Harpy than he ever realized. *He was the same Derek, dammit. Why would she think otherwise?* He couldn’t believe Harpy cared more for appearances than what they held in their hearts.

Instead of asking her, like he knew he should, he pushed the bunch of her pantsuit down over her hips and peeled the lacey thongs from between her plump cheeks. He directed his wind to whisk them off her legs.

“Oh, no. Derek!” Frantically, she tightened her arms around the form of his neck and shoulders, her breasts pressing firmly against the shape of his chest.

“It’s all right,” he whispered soothingly into her ear. “We’re above the clouds. No one can see us.”

His wind-fingers traced the generous curves of her butt, and her body tensed in an entirely different way. Her hips thrust forward, gliding her wet pussy lips along his cock. He shuddered at the thought of entering Harpy again after such a long time.

Chapter 3

Harpy trembled in Derek's arms, the tip of his cock teasing her wet entrance. She wanted nothing more than to push her hips forward and have him inside her where he belonged. But she couldn't allow it, not until she told him the truth.

"No, Derek," she whispered and pulled away. She clung to his shoulders, but moved as far from him as possible without letting go. "Not yet."

"It's been a long time, I know, baby." He tried to sound as if he understood her decision, but she could hear the disappointment that echoed her own. "If you're not ready yet, I understand."

She shook her head. Loose curls bounced across her eyes, and he reached up to brush them out of the way. Smiling, she touched the shape of his cheek. The moving air holding his upper body together made the tips of her fingers tingle.

Oh, how she wanted to touch the real flesh-and-blood Derek, run her fingers through his hair and look into his flecked jade-green eyes. Still, she knew she would take him in his present form if only he could get past how she once doubted him. "I have something to tell you. After I do, you may not want to continue with this."

He snorted. "I can't imagine what you could tell me that would make me not want you."

She licked her lips. "This might."

"That serious, huh?"

She pressed her lips together and nodded.

"All right. We'll rest here and talk."

He settled them on the nearest cloud, his magic holding the white puffiness together. Softer than a down mattress, it caressed every inch of her body when she sank into it. Derek joined her, holding her in the crook of his arm. She couldn't yet furl her wings, and he was careful of them.

He looked down at her. "What is it, baby? What has kept us apart all these years if it wasn't that you thought I couldn't touch you?"

Harpy snuggled closer to him. After he heard what she had to tell him, she might never be welcome in his arms again. She wanted to stay there as long as possible. "Back then, I loved you more than you ever knew. I still do, and I want you to remember that when I say what I have to say."

"I love you, too, Harpy, and I never stopped loving you." He drew even closer and kissed her ear. "I never understood why you said you never wanted to see me again. Not a day went by that I didn't wish you were back in my life. I left Spellfire because I couldn't bear to be in the same town with you and not be able to have you. And I came back because I couldn't bear not being near you even if I couldn't have you."

Tears filled her eyes. She'd been so stupid back then and all the years in between, too. How could she expect him to forgive her when she couldn't forgive herself?

"What is it, baby?" He placed a finger under her chin and raised her head. When he saw her tears, he used his thumb to wipe the wet trail from her cheek. His windy touch made her skin tingle, but it was more than pressurized air. It was because he was Derek, her Derek.

"Wh-When you transformed into air and—and couldn't change back—" She gulped in a deep breath.

"That," he interrupted with a rueful laugh, "That was something profoundly stupid Roald Rumsfeld and I did. I should have told you back then, but..."

"You and *Roald Rumsfeld*?" Her voice rose to a high-pitched squeak on the fire sorcerer's name. Her mind was on making love and being unfaithful and what Derek said just didn't compute.

"Don't look so horrified." Derek wiped another tear-track from her other cheek. "Illegal spell-offs are more common than you think among elemental pre-sorcerers."

"Oh. *Oh!*" She nearly squealed with relief. "You and Roald dueled with spells."

"Sure. What'd you think..." Then he laughed so hard that he dispersed most of his wind. "You thought Roald and I...uh, no. We were enemies like most elemental sorcerers. We got into an argument that neither of us can remember. One insult led to another, and we agreed to meet at midnight in Spellfire Woods, each of us intending to

prove his element the most powerful. We finally learned that each element is equally as powerful as another, just in a different way, and that it takes all of the elements to keep things in balance. Well, enough of Elemental Philosophy 101.”

Harpy watched as Derek gathered his air and wind and concentrated it into a full form of himself. She longed to run her fingers through the thick dark blond hair that she remembered so well, and she yearned to see his jade-green eyes darken with passion. She was happy enough to be with Derek, but part of her did miss Derek's flesh-and-blood body. All because of a stupid spell-off with a fire sorcerer!

“Oh, that's why Roald always wears those awful-looking gloves. I wondered about that. I don't remember seeing him that way at the same time you turned to air, though.”

“Roald's parents sent him to Europe to try to find a cure. It didn't work, and when he came back he was wearing the gloves.”

Harpy sat up. “You did something to each other during the duel.”

Derek nodded. “We threw the same spell at the same time. They crossed and glitched, and this is the result. I turned into air and Roald turned into fire on his hands and other body parts.”

“Don't you realize you could have been expelled as well as expelled?”

“Yeah, that's why we couldn't tell anybody. We swore to each other never to reveal what happened that night so the Witch Board wouldn't throw us out of school or take away our magic.” He laid a hand on her arm. “Now, tell me what you thought I'd done.”

Harpy shook her head, but she knew she must say it even if he tossed her from the cloud because of his disappointment in her. “I know it's not true now, but I...I thought you slept with Tristine Havoc.”

She peered up at him through her lowered lashes, but only confusion registered on his countenance.

His brows furrowed. “Tris Havoc? Why would you think I'd slept with Tris Havoc? She was Electra's friend, but I barely knew her. She and Electra and our cousin Adam graduated a couple of years before that. They were already in college by then.”

“The curse,” Harpy said to remind him.

But he seemed more confused than before.

“The Spellfire-Havoc feud that cursed the Spellfire men and

Havoc women,” she explained. “Havoc women can't make love with anyone except their true loves or their lovers turn into inanimate objects.”

“Oh, right. I'd forgotten about it.”

Harpy stared at him. “How could you forget about it? You're a Spellfire, and Spellfire men can never find satisfaction because of the curse.”

“But making love to you, Harpy, I've always been satisfied. You are my true love.” He raked his fingers into her curls and pulled her to him for a kiss. He took her breath away and *she* felt winded when he drew back. “Besides, when Tris Havoc broke the curse, with a Spellfire, of all people, she broke it for both the Havocs and the Spellfires. But that doesn't matter. I never want anyone to satisfy me but you.”

“Then you're not mad at me for doubting you?” Harpy couldn't believe he wasn't at least a little resentful of what she thought he'd done. “Tris' lovers turned into nature objects. And air is part of nature.”

“Ahhhh, I never thought of that. I can understand why you thought what you did. Tris was my sister's best friend, so you'd think I might know her better than I really did.” He nodded. “It makes sense. I'm sorry I didn't tell you what really happened. It's not that I didn't want to or didn't trust you not to tell anyone, but it wasn't only *my* secret to keep. Roald and I made a pact. I'm telling you now because you deserve to know the truth, and I know you won't say anything. There is no statute of limitations on illegal spell-offs. That old hag Mattie Matlock is still on the Witch Board, and with her friend Frightful Frieda, they have the power to ex-spell Roald and me for life. I don't want any more secrets between us, Harpy.”

“Me, either,” she murmured. Relief flooded her entire being, and it was as if a terrible weight lifted from her shoulders. She felt light enough to fly without wings.

In fact, she started floating off the cloud and Derek along with her, but his wind lifted them from their puffy resting place.

“Where were we?” Derek asked and pulled her hard against the wind-filled form of his body.

“Right here, where we should be,” she whispered.

Harpy's wings expanded to their full width as Derek's hands cupped her butt. Desire spiraled throughout her whole body, settling

between her thighs in a pounding rhythm. Her clit ached for Derek's touch.

If she ever held any doubts that Derek would be able to satisfy her in his airy condition, he proved them all false. The shape of his lips glided over her skin, and the tingle of his air pressure proved to be the only difference from before. The extra sensation added to her pleasure.

The cock of his wind-body, as hard and hot as any made of flesh and blood, thrust into her pussy, deep and possessive. She gasped, clenching her legs around his waist and digging her fingers into his shoulders. She felt the rush of wind that kept his shape from dispersing brush against her skin.

"Oh, baby," he groaned the words and drove into her, harder and faster with each stroke. "Oh, Harpy, it's been so long, too long."

She bounced with his rhythm and each time he slammed against her clit, she cried out her pleasure.

Incredibly, they both reached their peaks at the same time. Her back curved with the raw force of her orgasm. Her wings reached their full span and flapped in graceful arcs around them, keeping time with her pulses of pleasure.

At the same time, Derek strained into her, his hands pressing into her butt cheeks. When he came, freeing his pent-up air, a sharp crack sounded, the force of his release breaking the sound barrier.

The air around her that was Derek coalesced, turning into a silvery mist and then the rush of wind against her skin changed to warm, solid flesh. Derek looked down at her with flecked jade-green eyes, his dark blond hair wind-tousled.

She reached out, but before she touched the cute dimple in his chin or ran her fingers through his hair, they were falling. Instead, she clutched him, her arms and legs holding onto him for dear life. "Oh, Derek, do something!"

"You can do it, Harpy," he called to her over the sound of air speeding past her ears. "Fly, baby, fly."

She beat her wings to please him and to show him she tried. Nothing would happen, of course, because she never had been able to keep herself aloft. The sooner he saw that her wings were useless, the sooner he would use his wind magic to save them.

Suddenly, they weren't falling anymore. They slowed and were now holding steady in the air. Her wings...*her* wings kept them aloft.

Derek grinned. "I knew you could do it, baby."

She shook her head. The incredible, magnificent, fantastic feeling of flying soared through her heart. "I think *you* did it, Derek. You gave me your wind when you came inside of me...and you! Look at you!"

She kissed him hard, her wings flapping as intensely as a hummingbird's. She ran her hands over his shoulders and back, feeling his muscles ripple beneath his smooth skin.

He laughed out loud. "I think giving you some of my wind broke the spell."

Reluctantly, Harpy gently landed them behind the grove of trees at the back of Spellfire Park.

"I'm so sorry I doubted you." Harpy felt like she couldn't apologize enough...or touch him enough. She raked her fingers through his hair and kissed his warm lips. "When you turned into air and couldn't turn back, and wouldn't tell me why, what else was I supposed to think? Josh Nasterian turned into a tree, and Bobby Bedlam a brook, and they slept with Tris Havoc. I-I thought you did, too."

Derek took her face into his hands and kissed her. "I should have told you. And I might have, but it was so damned embarrassing. I thought I was the greatest air sorcerer that ever lived, and then to be bested by a mere fire sorcerer! I felt too ashamed of that."

"He didn't best you. Sounds like you two got what you deserved for spell-dueling." She hugged him and her wings fluttered. Oh, she couldn't wait to get him in the air again...or in her bed. "But you shouldn't have been forced to live with it this long. Couldn't you have told Electra? She might have helped you."

"No. She suspected, but she couldn't make a counter-spell for spell-dueling without it alerting the Witch Board."

Harpy nodded. "And they would have ex-spelled you."

"Right. Roald and I agreed we didn't want to lose our powers indefinitely. Some sorcerers have had their powers revoked for decades by the Witch Board."

"So I've heard."

"Roald and I decided to live with the consequences instead."

Harpy hugged him again, reveling in the touch of his skin. She could hardly believe he was whole again...and still loved her even after what she thought he'd done with Tris Havoc all those years ago!

She didn't deserve to be this happy. Her wings quivered harder.

Derek looked around them. "Let's find your clothes and get you dressed."

"I don't want to," she murmured. "Let's fly again, Derek."

He kissed her and ran his hands down her body. His fingers splayed across her butt, and he jerked her toward him. His hard cock rubbed her mound. "In a little while, baby, I promise. I'll take you home and fuck you till your wings hang in tatters from sheer exhaustion."

She beat her wings and used the lift to wrap her legs around his hips. His cock nudged her wet pussy, and she moaned in anticipation.

"Not...now..." Derek rasped the words against her ear. "I promise, soon...oh, baby, real soon...but I have to take care of something else first."

He unwrapped her legs and set her down gently.

She frowned at him. "Okay, but I'm going to hold you to that promise."

Chapter 4

By the time Harpy convinced Blaze Draconis to come with her, they saw Derek and Roald Rumsfeld walking from the back of the park towards them. Derek was dressed in jeans, shirt, and shoes that Electra conjured for him and Harpy sent ahead with Roald.

The fire sorcerer's eyes were as large as super-scoops of ice cream as she and Blaze joined them. "Do you really think it will work?"

Blaze blinked. "Derek, is that really you?"

"In the flesh." Derek laughed. "At last."

"H-How wonderful for you." Blaze stammered and turned around. "I-I have to go now."

"No, wait," Derek said, and Harpy put her hand on Blaze's shoulder. "I asked Harpy to bring you out here to meet Roald Rumsfeld. He's a fire sorcerer."

Blaze sniffled, as if trying to hold back tears. "Nice to see you again."

"Hello, Blaze," Roald said.

"I met Roald when I visited his grandfather, to see if he could help me regain my flames. He couldn't. Now, if you'll excuse me, I have to get back."

"Just a minute, Blaze. We have something to show you." Derek nodded at Roald.

Roald held up his hands, and then removed his gloves. Flames twisted and curled from the tips of all ten fingers and thumbs.

Blaze licked her lips and stared in fascination and awe. Tears welled in her eyes. "How can you all be so cruel?"

Bursting into tears, Blaze again turned to leave, but Harpy put her arms around the distraught dragon-shifter. "Blaze, we think you and Roald can help one another. I'm only half harpy, and I've never been able to fly. Then Derek gave me some of his air in wind-form. He

changed back to his old self and now I can fly. Look!”

Harpy unfurled her wings and lifted off the ground. She soared once over the park, and then landed smoothly next to Derek.

“And you think—” Blaze wiped her eyes clear of tears and looked at Roald. The fire sorcerer looked back at her. Both of them held hope in their eyes, but seemed too frightened of the possibility of failure...much as Harpy felt before taking the chance with Derek.

“There may be one hitch,” Derek warned.

Blaze and Roald turned as one to look at her and Derek, and shouted, “*What?*”

Harpy shrugged, furling her wings. “Derek and I were...well, in the middle of things, if you catch my drift...when it happened.”

Blaze looked at Roald. “A-Are you willing?”

Roald nodded. “Sure.”

“Then let's go!” Blaze grabbed him by the sleeve and yanked, pulling him toward the grove of trees.

Derek put his arm around her. “Blaze is going to get a surprise when he undresses.”

She gasped and looked up at him. “You mean...”

“Yep.” Laughing, Derek shook his head. “Blaze will have to shape-shift and Roald will get the blowjob of his life. That's the only way Roald and I could figure out how they could transfer his fire to her without harming her. I hope it works out for them.”

“I think it will. Why shouldn't it? It worked for us.” She raised her mouth to his and they kissed. “I'm so sorry, Derek...”

“Don't apologize again. I understand why you thought I'd slept with Tris Havoc. And it's partially my fault for not telling you what really happened.” He kissed the tip of her nose. “Let's put it behind us. We're together now, and that's all that matters.”

“I'll never doubt you again,” Harpy promised.

When they neared the Spellfire family picnic table, Electra ran up to her brother and gave him a big hug. Word spread rapidly and there were hand-shakes and hugs all around from Electra's husband Alex, cousin Adam Spellfire and his fiancée Tristine Havoc, and many others.

Harpy even hugged Tris. She'd been cool toward the Havoc woman for years. Even after all of Tris' ex-lovers changed back to their real bodies, and Harpy realized how wrong she'd been when Derek didn't, she couldn't bring herself to be friendly to Tris. Now,

though, she had Derek back and, like Derek said, nothing else mattered.

They tried to beg off, but Electra insisted they sit with them for the afternoon festivities. Harpy realized they couldn't be rude without blatantly saying they'd rather spend the afternoon making love. Her shoulder blades itched fiercely, and occasionally Derek would rub his hands over the nubs. His touch only made it worse. She wanted to sprout, grab him by the shirtfront, and soar with him above the clouds right then!

After the music started for the Valentine dance in the gazebo, and she and Derek thought they might be able to slip away, a dark shadow passed over Spellfire Park, blocking out the late afternoon sun.

Everyone looked up. A dragon, its wing span nearly as wide as the park, glided over them. Suddenly, the dark sky flared with light from the mouth of the dragon. As the flame died, the dragon turned to fly over the park again, and Harpy saw a man seated in front of the dragon's wings.

"Blaze and Roald," Derek said.

The dragon shifted smaller as it coasted to land, and by the time it touched the ground, it wasn't much larger than a horse. Roald dismounted, and Blaze then transformed into her human self, fully clothed.

Harpy and Derek ran to meet them.

"It worked! Oh, it worked!" Blaze cried out. "Did you see my flame?"

"It was beautiful." Harpy was glad to see Blaze back to her former vibrant and confident self.

Roald held out his hands and turned them over. "No more flaming fingers and no more gloves. I won't be able to mold silver with my bare hands anymore, but I can touch things again."

He reached for Blaze, and she went into his embrace. His hands ran over her arm.

"Don't worry, darling," Blaze murmured, "I'll be there to light your fire any time."

The dragon-shifter and the fire sorcerer laughed and kissed.

Roald turned to Derek. "How can I...How can *we* ever thank you?"

"No need for thanks." Derek drew Harpy closer. "Just be as happy as Harpy and I are."

Harpy looked up at Derek and smiled. "As happy as we will be forever."

* * * *

It was much, much later before Harpy and Derek were able to slip away from Spellfire Park. They went to her townhouse to finish what they began after Derek changed back into his human self. He kept his promise, fucking her until her wings were tattered and sore. After a sound night's sleep, they'd be as good as new, but right then at nearly midnight, she felt sated and complete. It was amazing how much one's life could change in twenty-four hours.

Harpy eased from the bed, leaving Derek asleep. She wrapped her robe under her arms and around her breasts toga-style and padded into the kitchen, her tired wings hanging limply behind her.

She hadn't eaten since breakfast, and she thought Derek might be hungry, too. She pulled cold cuts, cheese, mayonnaise, and sweet ice tea from the refrigerator and bread from the box on the counter. As she spread mayo over two slices of bread, she felt a draft cross her ankles.

"Derek?"

There was no answer, and she didn't feel it again. It must have been a natural breeze from an open window. She unwrapped cheese slices and laid them on the bread. Another rush of air drifted across her calves. She needed to close that window.

Before she could take a step, the air curled up her thighs and between them, tickling her labia. She gasped as her inner muscles clenched, sending waves of desire coursing through her.

She leaned over the counter and spread her legs wide. The air pressed in closer to her, separating her pussy lips. A jolt raced through her as a concentrated current swept through them and nudged her clit.

Harpy could hardly believe she was hot and ready again so soon, but when she thought of Derek, as air or in the flesh, her passion knew no boundaries. Her back arched against the assault, and she closed her eyes, undulating her hips to rub her clit on him. Another hard, solid current of air probed deeply into her wet folds.

More air swirled up her body and surrounded her breasts, tightening on the taut peaks of her nipples. She rocked against the counter, her entire body rippling with the sensations that Derek's airy touch caused.

A moan escaped her throat when he touched her inner spot. A

few more strokes against it sent her crashing over the edge, her moan turning into a cry of pleasure. When the aftershocks settled she collapsed on the counter, her eyes blinking open to find the air around her turning to a misty silver and then into Derek. His warm arms around her kept her from falling because her muscles turned to rubber.

"Oh, Derek," she said his name on a sigh. Trembling, she reached over for one of the crowns they tossed on the counter when they came in from the picnic. "You deserve to be named King Valentine because you are the King of Love."

Derek laughed and put the other crown on top of her curls. "And you are my Queen. Marry me, Harpy, and make me the happiest air sorcerer in the world."

She broke off in the middle of her laughter. Marry Derek? She wanted nothing more back in high school. To graduate and marry Derek were always her two main goals in life. They spoke of it and planned for it. They both wanted to open a little shop in Spellfire where Derek could sell his wind spells and charms and she would help him run it. When she thought he'd been unfaithful, everything changed...except her love for him.

"It won't be exactly like we planned," he continued as if reading her thoughts. "If Blaze wants her job back as Maintenance Engineer, she can have it. I still have Clean Sweep and you're at Sinful Sundaes. We won't have the little spell and charm shop we talked about, but we'll be together."

"Yes, Derek," she breathed and threw her arms around him. "Oh, yes!"

He hugged her tightly and they kissed, a long, deep, delicious kiss that tingled her to the tips of her toes and her wings.

"What about Valentine's Day?" he murmured against her lips. "Marry me on Valentine's Day?"

"That's only a few days away!" she squealed. "I'd never get everything ready in time."

"We can have the wedding in Spellfire Park and the reception at Electra's and Alex's new restaurant, Garnet Moon," Derek said. "Electra will pull it all together. She loves doing that kind of stuff."

"Yes, but I need a dress. And flowers. And—" Harpy's mind whirled with everything that would need to be done and only a few days to do it.

Spellfire Hearts

“Does it matter?” Derek licked her earlobe and traced wetly down the side of her neck. “Electra can conjure up what you need.”

She let her head fall back, so he could trail kisses and licks over her collarbone and breasts. “No,” she murmured. “It doesn't matter. Nothing matters except that we're together again.”

Derek nipped one of her breasts and then the other. Harpy's body melted with desire, her wings fluttering on the winds of their love.

Heart Spells

By

Mae Powers



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Sweet Seductress

The Mating Tree

Heart Spells

Jaleena Trinkets stepped through the chiming door of her uncle and aunt's new-age metaphysical shop *Trinkets*. While waiting on them to close, if they ever did, she browsed through the rows of new-age spell books and magic tomes. She always liked coming here on her spring, summer and Christmas vacations. With her parents traveling for the Wizard's Guild so much to do lectures, she couldn't always be with them. Sometimes she got to go around the world to other places with them, but when they couldn't take her, she spent time here in Spellfire, with her book-loving aunt and uncle.

They always treated her like their own child, especially since they didn't have any. She loved them well. Like her, they adored magic and magical history, along with its many novelties and varieties. She'd learned things from both her aunt and uncle. Her aunt Katspell was just a slight empath, but her specialty power lay in her affinity for spell books of any kind. Her uncle Jeth held the particular ability to tell where books were meant to go and where they came from, and what they were capable of, and who they were right for. He often showed her how he 'knowingly' knew at a touch what was in them. Both her uncle and aunt could sense and talk to any kind of book. She felt an affinity for books herself, which she often felt must be passed down from them. Or, she inwardly chuckled, she watched them so much she picked up on book affinity magic.

Although her first love, Danny, and her both loved books, he could not get use to how she developed her innate ability to know pages. She possessed some empathy like her aunt and a little of her uncle's "knowing", but all she took from her parents was the understanding of how spells worked. She could fly like her wizard father and she could direct a broom to fly like her mother. She didn't

get along with most of the brooms she knew. They were too bristly to ride upon.

Yet, she did have the knack for deciphering old spells and whether or not they would work or needed improvement by encouragement. She'd just finished college the previous year, and traveled with her parents for a few months after that. Now she took off the spring to go visit her aunt and uncle and see what she wanted to do from then on. It was near the middle of the month, in fact just a few days from Valentine's Day.

She had her relatives' blessings as well as their moral and financial support, so she decided to listen to her witchling instincts and come to Spellfire. Her mom had been a late bloomer too in finding her particular powers, being half human and half witch. Jaleena seemed to be a lot like her mother, except for her small book affinity and knowing spells by supernatural means and instincts. However, they were still proud of her.

Although she traveled, became well learned, and even experienced a sweet loving affair of the heart and body, she still felt something must be missing in her life. She wasn't sure what it might be or if it had something to do with her magical empathies or that of her mind or heart. Or even her body. Although she'd liked the sweet delights and desire that Danny instilled in her, she always felt that they were not meant to be life mates as her aunt, uncle, and parents were. She wanted an abiding love like theirs, no matter the problems or ups and downs.

Though it was icky to think of your relatives in a physical romantic way, she could see, even after thirty odd years of marriage that both her sets of relatives were content and satisfied in all ways. She wanted that for herself. She wanted to feel magic in her lovemaking, to feel that supernatural thrill and passion. Danny never understood her quietness or her off times and moodiness, but they parted amicably and she felt glad for that. She moved towards the shelf of love and desire spells. They were her favorite in her uncle's shop Trinkets.

For some reason, she always liked this section because true romantic and magical love proved very hard to find. Yes, she desired someone physically, but she wanted to be swept off her feet into an exciting, enchanted place by the man or wizard who was meant to be her mate for life. She'd read a lot of the books, especially her favorite

tomb *Heart Spells*. It was an old tome and a rare find for her uncle. He'd been hoping to find its second tome or companion book. Uncle Jeth said it would be more enchanted than the first of the two-book set. Yet, the original thick volume of *Heart Spells* became two volumes, when it had been torn apart during the annals of time. She fervently knew its history and read every inch of the current book. Perhaps she'd work for her uncle, while she decided to go to the elite wizard's academy in Paris.

Her father wanted her to discover more of her heritage, but she needed time to decide. Her mother made sure she got a regular college education and she majored in history and minored in antiquities and arts. She reverently touched each volume as she went by them. She moved around almost caressing each, seeing if her uncle recently bought any new ones he'd forgotten to tell her about. Sometimes she felt life within the volumes as if a person or even a story were waiting to get out. Some of the tomes and even the spells held a history behind them. She learned a lot of them over the years. Once, she even went with her uncle to look for the old second half of the *Heart Spells* tome.

However, the trip, though fun, did not turn up the second volume. It needed to be complete, just like her. The *Heart Spells* 2nd edition was even more steeped in history than its predecessor. Yet, the mystery of how the two tomes were separated has never been revealed. The only thing that is known was that an ancient wizard made them for his lady love to pass the time away, helping people to find the right spell that would take them to their true love. It is said that his love had a particular student she was teaching the spells to, so that he too could help others find their true love. The *Heart Spells* didn't put a spell on the person to fall in love, but how they could actually find their true love.

Well, being a covetous wizard of his beautiful gen-witch wife, he became enraged with jealousy and he tore the two tomes in half, making the second volume and the student he thought was her lover to disappear. The wife, so enraged herself, cursed him and his volumes of books. It is said they all disappeared into smoke and when the smoke cleared, all that was left was the one tome with a new backing on it.

Over the years, she'd made up stories to while away her girlish dreaming days. She liked the old cover very much. The front had a

gold outlined square upon it and a second inner square of ruby etching. Upon the ivory tome, no thicker than the length of her pinky, there was a silver oval background, and with that these words were written in expensive and exquisite letters—*Heart Spells: An Original Tome of Love, Spelled for Those Who Truly Desire It*—on the opening title page.

She desired to find the volume, but knew it had been unobtainable. She always wanted to find within its pages a way to solve the mystery. Yet, her steadfast ways kept her earthbound, ways she'd gotten from her workable but slightly staid father. Sometimes she really felt close to the book. In addition, there were times she felt like she could open its pages and find that magical missing part that her heart and body craved. However, her earthly and realistic ways told her this feat would be impossible; no one could open a page and step into it for real into another realm.

Oh, she read books about that, saw movies with ecstatic special effects that still made her believe it could happen, but it never did, despite in her world travels and extensive education.

She sighed and nearly walked away when something caught her attention. A piece of red paper was sticking out of the book. It almost sparkled. She glanced around to make sure no one else was about, someone who might tease her, that knew her interest in the book. The others in the shop were not near her section. She turned back to the shelf and viewed the book again. Her heart started thumping faster as she suddenly felt overwhelmed to touch it. She never noticed a slip of red paper in the book before and she'd read every inch of it. She'd seen the slight drawings within its covers. But other than the oversized ruby lettering of the first few lines of some of the spells, there was no red paper within the silver and white pages. Some one must have been perusing it and left the paper inside.

She sucked her slim fore-finger for a moment and finally, curiosity, like witches and their families are known for, made her reach out and touch the heart tinted paper.

Immediately it flared. She pulled her hand back for a second and it died to just a dull red. She knew that this book, shelved in the reference section, was only meant to be read within the store, since it was so much rarer than most of the other magical tomes. Yet, it never really opened on its own before, nor did it show any life.

Why now? She could not resist the lure. She needed to find out.

She reached out and grasped the paper, pulling out a heart shaped piece of paper no bigger than her palm. It glowed softly in her hands. Moreover, it had silver script upon it. She quickly read the words. Taken aback, she read them again. How could this be? Were these spelled words true?

She decided to find out. Silently Jaleena read:

*For eons of despair, I await,
For the one, who is my fate.
Cast a spell to ease my heart,
Do not keep us, anymore, apart.*

*Within this book, find me here.
Say these words to bring you near.
Return my love to set me free,
So Heart Spells will once more be.*

She studied lots of spells, but this one still didn't make total sense. Had someone written it to be humorous or to cause turmoil? What if someone were playing a practical joke on some unsuspecting person? As long as she didn't read it out loud, it couldn't be made to happen. She quickly stuffed the paper into her jeans pocket. It tingled at first and then remained calm.

She stepped back from the row of books, and for some reason looked at the tome of *Heart Spells*. It seemed to shrink a little, as if some life suddenly faded out of it, or that it's knowledge dimmed. Perhaps it was her affinity for pages of a book that made her feel this way, but she knew she couldn't let the feeling overwhelm her right now. It was nearly closing time, Trinkets would reopen again for the late night magical crowd of readers and buyers.

Dinner with her aunt and uncle always a camaraderie affair, but for some reason she kept the piece of paper a secret. She knew the only person she dared let read it, perhaps the only person that well-spell read and that was Electra Spellfire. However, though she knew witchy friends in town like Electra, Tris Havoc, Harpy Collins, and Candy Piper, she felt this incident was almost too intimate to tell them about. For some reason, she couldn't fathom now, she realized she needed to keep this a personal matter. She sighed inwardly, but kept a normal buoyancy about her that would keep her relatives entertained

throughout dinner.

Since she just came back into town, they didn't expect her to work until after the coming weekend. She was glad for a few days of reprieve. However, later on in her room above the store, their home, she felt restless. She took a shower to ease her restlessness. Some inward sense told her it was connected with the paper she found. But how could that be? Was the tiny bit of energy that came from the paper, the reason for her anxiety and restlessness?

She knew she needed to find out. She could try to talk to her aunt and uncle or someone else, but for some reason she held back. Again, she felt that feeling of intimacy that this must be something she alone must delve into, the secret of and for her, in fact, to find.

Jaleena stood before her old fashioned mirror and brushed out her dark blonde hair until it was almost dry. She braided it up and then clipped it behind her head. Quickly, she put on some lacy underclothing, grabbed a pair of comfortable jeans, and threw on a long sleeved, scooped-neck T that had hearts caressed around the neckline. She threw on some strap sandals and looked at herself for a moment, then giggled. At twenty-four and a little bit more than slender, she still thought she looked like a rustic schoolgirl instead of a world-traveled person. What with her wide baby blue eyes, some thought her to be, pretty childlike and innocent of life.

Valentine's Day was coming, but for some reason she didn't want to join in on Spellfire's usual festivities, like the Spellfire Picnic Festival the town held the Saturday before Valentine's Day.

She left the three bedroom, upper story townhouse of her uncle and aunt and headed down the back stairs. She felt pulled to the tome. She came out of the back room determined to get to the bottom of the Heart Spell mystery. There were the regular faeries, elves, and nice vamps mingling over at the espresso area and some werewolf professors from the magic academy were having their weekly meeting. Then she saw a few witches like her friend Candy Piper having tea cakes with their witch friend Tris Havoc. They waved hi as she walked by. She nodded to a few others, but made her way to the love spells section. She let out a sigh of relief when she saw the private reference section was undisturbed at the moment.

She slid the book off the shelf and glancing around to make sure no one was watching her, she walked quickly through the store and went back to her bedroom. There she retrieved the paper from her

dresser and sat down on the bed. She laid the slightly crumpled piece of paper on the top of the book. It glowed faintly and then she sat back as the glow just dwindled to dullness. Should she read the words out loud?

She took a deep breath. Should she indeed?

Her skin tingled with the excitement of the unknown, and inwardly she felt an unusual sensation making her insides all fluttery with nervousness and excitement. Her spine shivered. Something besides her own innate curiosity wanted her to open the book, perhaps to say the words. There was only one way to know for sure and that was to read the words out loud.

“For eons of despair, I await,
For the one, who is my fate.
Cast a spell to ease my heart,
Do not keep us, anymore, apart.

Within this book, find me here.
Say these words to bring you near.
Return my love to set me free,
So *Heart Spells* will once more be.”

For a split second, nothing happened. Her torso jerked upright as she saw a tiny drift of swirling white gray smoke start drifting upwards from the glowing piece of paper. Her eyes widened in surprise. She sat transfixed, as the swirls became larger and larger, spiraling upward and then towards her. The swirl started snaking around her body starting in a slow twirling caress, becoming thicker and wider with each gyration it made around her until she couldn't see in front of her. She twisted first one way and then another. She reached out trying to cut through the swirls, but they moved with her, enveloping her arms.

She brought her hands downward. They landed on the book. She groped it as if her life depended on it. She brought the tome to her chest hugging it for dear life. Soon she felt the swirling clouds envelop her completely. She blinked and was transfixed, unable to move even with the gyrating mass. Sparkling, tingling sensations emitted within the cloud.

The spell encompassed her and she felt herself drifting further

into its secretive mystifying masses. Eerie, almost soothing whispers penetrated the fog of her mind. Somewhere around her, she could hear people whispering as if in awe of something. The whispers got louder and the swirling began twisting in the opposite way until it started clearing and became a tiny swirl and curled itself back into the book.

She blinked and it came to pass that she wasn't in Kansas anymore. *No*, she thought, *in Spellfire*. The place before her was not any she'd visited before in Spellfire, or even on Earth for that matter. She blinked her eyelids rapidly this time and shook her senses clear.

In awe, she sat transfixed as she slowly took in the place before her.

* * * *

Where was she? Did the spell and the book she gripped so tightly bring her here? And where exactly was here? A spell within a spell book that wasn't written in the spell book brought her here. So, who did write the hex?

This wasn't Kansas, or the Emerald City, or even Spellfire, Texas. Then where was she? She was in a tomb. No, not quite a tomb. She saw dusty tomes of books piled everywhere and dust filmed tubes and bottles of things with gooky liquids in them in various spots and on shelves. In addition, more tomes and scrolls were strewn on several shelves and tables. It looked like a tall room of stone. Faint afternoon sunlight drifted through the thin slitted windows with no panes. They looked like the sporadic castle windows of medieval times. In old Trinkets history books, she'd seen drawn pictures of such castles with tiny rectangular windows and on her trips to older European countries with her parents. Was this then an ancient wizard's lab where he or she did all their spell casting and potion making?

It could easily pass for that. Then her glance alighted on a set of stairs that led upwards a few feet. She got up off the stack of cushions, keeping the book with her. She wandered slowly around the place, gently fingering the tomes. Some said spell books, some were letters in a language she hadn't seen before and in an ancient mystifying set of symbols on some, she almost recognized. Was this indeed an old wizard's library and lab? She shivered with both dread and excitement. Perhaps it was both.

She made her way over to the desk nearest her seeing an open dusty scroll book there. A written bit of script was upon it and she

read the words, pleased they were in a language she understood. *“...Oh my love what have I done? How could I disbelievest thou? Would that I could undo what I shamefully put upon you and our former world of happiness. But alas we are split asunder until we can be put together again...and I am but a heartbroken spell from the doorway into the answer...”*

Any other words before and after seemed too faint to read for her. She did an “oh!” and moved back from the desk looking around again with more certainty as she realized where she might be. This then, could be the very lab of the old wizard who had torn apart the *Heart Spell* tome. She came to feel and realize, that she was indeed in a void, a spell void world the wizard had created.

The wind outside rustled into the room. She ventured towards the stairs, hoping there was a way out. She went up the stairs slowly. A door indeed was up there and ajar. She glanced at the steps again. Fresh prints were there. She’d realized that she’d seen bits of life around now. The cushions she’d sat upon hadn’t been as dusty as the rest of the room. Moreover, tidbits of a fresh plate of food and wine were laid upon a small side table.

She peeked around the heavy, curved door, and peered out. She looked left and then right, seeing the ends of the castle lab, and accompanying areas, but not a whole castle. She could see a courtyard of withered flowers standing tall behind old benches in various places around the small area. A courtyard trail that led near a mortar and stone wall almost waist tall, which connected to the ends of the small imprisonment on either side, and opened in the middle like a gateway. Yet, only one lone tree stood near the middle of the courtyard, near the end of the path, but nothing but blue skies and an empty horizon lay beyond that.

Then sitting on the end of the rock-hewn fence wall, Jaleena saw him there. A man with his head turned towards the day lit horizon, one muscular leg on either side of the wall; one hand on his hip, the other stroking his slightly nubbly chin with the other. He had shoulder length hair tied back neatly with a black ribbon. Upon his broad back he sported a tan, pheasant style shirt, like pirates of old. His tapered lower torso was fitted in a darker brown pant like garment bow-tied at his waist. Upon his feet, he wore old leather sandals that had seen better days.

She studied him closer as he turned his face towards the tiny

castle. He glanced up, she was sure, not seeing her at first. Slightly taller than herself maybe, with warm toasty brown hair, he maintained a slight athletic shape, and an oval face with spots of freckles. His eyes were a green-brown color hard to describe—maybe Topaz? She drew in her breath at his serene, and yet almost melancholy glance. Her spine tingled with an awareness she hadn't felt since she first met Danny, yet somehow this felt different. Livelier, more like she found what she'd sought all her life.

In one swift glance, just after she became aware of herself standing outside the door, he saw her. Their eyes met, blue against topaz, and the awareness increased tenfold. Her breath caught. His eyes widened and she felt a rush of emotion and butterflies swirled within her system just as the strange gray-white gyrations had surrounded her earlier, bringing her to this strange enchanted place.

He arose from the short stonewall he'd been sitting on and stepped towards her. Slowly at first, and then those long strides widened until he closed the distance between them. He looked down at her and his lips widened in the most delicious smile she'd ever seen on a man. And again, she felt that feeling of coming home, of where her heart belonged. She felt even more right and alive as his breathtaking eyes flickered with excitement and more. Then he leaned down, tilted his head to the side, and softly kissed her trembling lips. It was the most unnerving peck she'd ever received.

Then he stepped back and said, "You answered my call."

Somehow, she knew then that he'd been the one to write that spell. That his heart had called to hers. Was this instant love then? Or an enchantment? Whichever, it felt completely right within her.

"You wrote that spell?" A cool but comforting breeze arose around them.

He nodded. "In hopes it would bring you to me." He reached up gently and caressed her face. "Yes, you."

"Why me?"

"Only my own heart spell would work to bring you here. The one meant to break my lonely imprisonment."

She pulled back as reality hit her. "You're the one the wizard imprisoned because he thought you and his wife did it?"

He was taken aback at her pulling away from him. "Yes." He sighed and took a step back. "I am called Ereus. Come inside, I will explain all that I can to you."

She felt bereft, alone when he walked towards the castle lab. She followed at a slow pace. So, this was the man in the myth in which the wizard imprisoned or caused to vanish. All because the wizard thought the gen-witch student made love to his wife. Now, she understood the wizard's words on the scroll tablet. This man was totally innocent. With a lilt to her steps, she followed him down into the ancient lab at a quicker pace.

He showed her around the place and told her more of his existence here, for the seeming eternity he had been imprisoned here, and how he came to be. She listened intently as he spoke his tale, telling her of his innocent and intense learnings from the wizard Takor's wife, Devina. He had always been interested in helping others to find their mates, as he felt it to be his calling. Now his guiltless aspiration to help others caused him to be incarcerated.

She in turn, told him how she found the piece of paper and said the words. She told him her name and the world she lived in as best she could, especially about Spellfire and its myriad of inhabitants and magics.

"We have an eternity here, Jaleena, until we find a way to free ourselves."

She had the feeling, he somehow knew the answer to the curse, but she could not bring herself to completely state it. In her heart, which cracked even more when his soulful eyes looked upon her, she inherently knew where the answer to his curse lay. Her stomach growled at that moment. She chuckled, a little embarrassed. Though she had eaten a little with her aunt and uncle, she'd always had a ravenous appetite when she was a little distressed.

"You must still be confused and a little awe by all this. Let me get you some sustenance." He took her hand and led her to a table, which had only a few books on it and that plate of tidbits she'd seen earlier. He quickly cleared it off and pulled back one of the two chairs for her. Then he glanced from her to the window. "Take this away and bring new refreshments for us."

Moments later, two new plates of food appeared before them. She slowly sat down, admiring the simply done magic, despite her being around such things most of her life. She looked with delight upon the morsels of succulent roast bits, cheeses and wafer thin crackers of some sort. A flask of wine and two glasses appeared before them on the table. She was glad when he sat down to join her.

“The spirits caring for me here, are not the tidiest, but they do see to my necessities with kind works. Have you need to take care of you ablutions, the door near that shelf will send you into a closet that will magically refresh you in all ways. It took me awhile to get use to that type of magical ministrations.”

She blushed; knowing full well he meant it was a magical toiletry area. She only briefly glanced at the area he spoke of then reached down to take a piece of cheese. To her further delight, she found it sharp, tangy, and appealing. She tried the meat and crackers, also finding these savory and salty in perspective, but nourishingly good, nonetheless. He reached over and poured them both a half glass of wine. When she had enough, she leaned back in her chair, satisfied.

She studied him for a moment, liking what she saw in his handsome face. A kind face, yet appealing to all her senses. As was his body. Desire stirred within her the moment he looked upon her. She knew she wanted to make love to him, yet still she held back. She always wanted to know someone a bit better before letting them make love to her, or getting too intimate with her in any manner. At, least, she reconsidered, to feel naturally comfortable with the man in question.

Jaleena glanced around the room. “Have you studied most of these books then? How have you passed your time away?”

“I know it has been years, but it seems at times only long months since I’ve been here. I have done a lot of reading and magic making. I’m half witch and half genie, so my tries are a culmination of magic and wish-craft. Are you a powerful witch, Jaleena?”

She liked the way he sounded her name; it made her all giddy and alive inside. “I have some powers, but I’m told I haven’t reached my full potential yet. I’ve always felt an affinity for spell books. Especially *Heart Spells*. Many years I’ve wanted to solve the mystery surrounding it. Now, I think I comprehend what happened. Was he such a bad wizard then, or just excessively jealous?”

“Takor could be a stubborn man, but he was wise and his heart lay in the right place. He was my friend and teacher also. It’s just that he loved Devina so much, his obsession with loving her caused them harm.”

“Are they around then? I read those words in his journal.” She pointed to the desk loaded down with books, on which the books she spoke of still lay there open. “I deciphered a bit of that, old English I

believe. He sounds like he regrets his misdeed.”

“Your lilt is pleasing, as is your intelligence. You are correct in your assumption. This small castle was mostly destroyed when Takor split the tome of *Heart Spells*. This lab and work room, and a couple of ante chambers that have not been entered for years, is all that remains.”

“Do they haunt this place then, Ereus?”

He sighed with heavy heart. “I hear their quarrels sometimes, but often they are just restless, and I think they miss each other. Sometimes when I call upon either one of them, they can answer me. Other times, I think their ghosted forms are kept away from each other by the curse of this place.”

“Do they still love each other? I’ve learned from my studies and other spell-casters that only true love and a forgiving heart spell can break such a curse as theirs.”

“I’ve talked with them sometimes together, some times alone. They still deeply love each other. Always have, I am sure, and always will. I think everyone wants a love like that.”

She looked deeply into his eyes and saw that he did indeed want the same. Her heart melted that much more and her body awakened with a thirst she felt sure only he could quench. She moved her hand to touch his wrist, which lay upon the table. He almost jumped at her slight touch, then he beamed her the most alluring smile she’d ever seen on a man before.

“I want to help you find a way to bring *Heart Spells* back together, and to end yours, Takor’s and Devina’s curse. It must be here in these tomes somewhere.”

He covered her hand with his. “With these books I have kept happy. They allowed me to form the spell, which appeared to you. You are the only one who can help me.”

“Have you tried to send your message to another?”

“It would always come back. Only the one my heart spell was meant for could come here. I know it must be hard for you to realize that upon our first meeting, but only you can break me free from this imprisonment.”

She knew deep within her that he spoke true words. Her heart melted completely, and yet she knew it wasn’t a spell cast upon her. It was her own heart answering his call of love. His call to find her and let their hearts become one together. She smiled at his slightly

worried look. He returned the smile, then bent down and tenderly touched his lips to hers.

Jaleena's heart soared to the outer worlds and beyond. No knight in shining armor here, but a witch hybrid who had a love for books just like herself. She soared to new heights, as did her body and heart. She reached up to stroke his cheek. Ereus put a hand behind her head, bringing her face close. She leaned into his kiss as far as the table allowed.

His tongue slowly explored hers. She loved the savory-ness of his mouth; and his mouth felt hot and moist twisting around her own. His lips were seductive, drawing her into an even deeper response. Then at the same time, they arose, taking those few steps together to be even closer, without their mouths ever pulling from the kiss. Sparkles of heat arose with them, making Jaleena feel as if this was the most magical moment she'd ever felt in her whole life.

Gently their hands moved over each other's bodies, learning, exploring and needing more. Jaleena wanted him. His heat radiated in waves, so natural and inherently magical without being supernatural. His arms wrapped around her, then swiftly he swept her off her feet, taking her over to the large pile of cushions. He stretched out beside her, once more pulling her hot tempting body next to his own willing one.

Jaleena arched against him; loving the incredible ways, he caressed her, seeking to please her with his heatedly exquisite touches. Liquid heat raced through her body. She kneaded his back with circular motions, rubbing her hips up against his hardened manhood. His groan of need pleased her. Soon, she helped him to wiggle out of their clothing. He looked down at her and the desire in his beautiful eyes made her powerful need of him greater than any spell that could be cast upon her quivering body.

He lowered over her, and his tongue darted out, teasing the erratically beating hollow of her neck. Ereus moved to lathe sweet hot kisses on her shoulders, soothing the ache in her body with the magically wonderful caresses of his delicious tongue. She reached around him, touching his taut body in wonder. She caressed every bare piece of flesh exposed to her. She opened her legs to his exploring fingers. Jaleena felt the length of his need pressing against her thigh. Yet, he waited, inflaming her desires even more with his sensual, roaming hands.

His lips followed the trail of where his hands had gone, lowering over her soft curves of pleasure. He teased her depths with his hot tongue and fingers, bringing her to an ecstatic, surreal passion; no man ever before made her reach. Then he took his time trailing kisses back up to her. His eyes bore into hers. She nodded and opened her arms and body to him. Then ever so agonizingly slowly, he entered her hot depths, nearly bringing her once more to that wondrous place all their own. She matched his movements and captured his groan of pleasure against her lips, savoring his pleasures.

His strokes were hot and passionate. She met his fervor, rocking up against him, increasing her movements when he did. Fierce sensations of need drove her wild. Heat swirled in raging torrents inside of her. She felt his own shudders of need for completion. Together the two reached a magical high that didn't need a spell to be enhanced. Love and nature were their own best orgasmic wonders. She rolled with him, gasping with heavy pleasure.

"I have never felt such wonderful magic as that before, my Jaleena. I adore you."

She tilted her head back seeing him smiling down at her. "Ah, sweet Ereus, I've never felt such magic as yours this day. I'd love you forever, if you could be with me in every way."

Suddenly the room around them shook and two voices blared out in unison. "So be it."

She grasped tightly to Ereus as the room started spinning around them. Everything but their bodies became whirling blurs. Winds whipped up around them. She cried out in shock and frustration. His arms tightened around her protectively. Then just as suddenly the shaking and whirring stopped. The room became visible once more.

Jaleena glance around and let out a whoop of glee. "We're home. I'm home."

His surprised look of pleasure and awe of reality brightened his face. "Your own heart spell cast off the curse around me. You've brought me with you. Thank you my love."

She looked up at him in awe this time as reality struck her. "Well I'll be damn. I do love you, Ereus. I think I knew it from the moment you laid eyes on me for the first time."

"You've set me free with a natural spell from you own heart. I knew too you were the one. I just did not want to force that on you."

"Love is a magic all in itself, to be given freely." She wrapped

her arms around his neck as they huddled on the bed. “Now, how about showing me some more of your loving magic?”

“With pleasure.” He lowered his head towards hers when a thunderous quake was felt way below them. His eyes widened nervously. “Uh oh.”

She pulled back from him. “What do you mean uh-oh?”

“I think the wizard’s lab came back with us.” He waved his hand around them in small circles. Soon both of them were refreshed and wearing clean versions of their former clothes.

She grabbed his hand and they jumped off the bed together. “I don’t think my aunt and uncle are going to like it if they suddenly get a new basement or something added to the building.”

He laughed but kept her from running out of the room. “Look upon the bed.”

She turned side ways to view the bed and gasped. There lying on the bed was the tome of Heart Spells. Only it was thicker and glowing brightly with a passionate red aura. Well the legend did say it was suppose to have been torn asunder near Valentine’s Day. So it is appropriate it would have been put together back around the same day.

“Well go through that later. Come on, I’ll introduce you to the hectic town of Spellfire. Boy is uncle gonna be so surprised.” He took her hand, smiling back at her, looking at her with such love in his eyes; she almost forgot she was back home. “I love you, Ereus.”

“And I love you, Jaleena. Now show me my new home.” She was only too happy to do as he requested. Home had indeed, become a new heart spell for her to explore with newfound bliss.

Candy Kisses

by

Emery LaRue



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Spellfire Seasons: Mistletoe & Mayhem
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Candy Kisses

“So this is Spellfire.” Trevor Jackson whispered to himself as he slowly drove through the town. He’d heard a lot about this place, but wasn’t prepared for how normal it actually looked. Not sure what he was expecting really.

“Spooks?” he said again, then laughed at his thoughts. When he had been told about Spellfire, he immediately knew this was the place for him to vacation for a few days. He was way overdue. Fifteen years ago, he made his first book sale. It was just as long ago since his last vacation.

Feeling the urge for something sweet, he watched the business signs. The Sinful Sundaes Ice Cream Shoppe looked tempting. However, the minute he parked in front of the shop, his feet carried him up the block. He stopped before the Candied Kisses store, and wondered why? It felt like he knew this must be the place he needed to come to. Trevor shrugged and walked inside.

The shoppe looked cozy, quiet and smelled like sweet heaven. As he inspected the sweets inside the glass case, he rang the little bell for service.

“Be right with you.” a female voice said from the back.

Trevor felt the shock over his body’s instant response to that voice. He placed his hands on the counter and closed his eyes, shaking his head. The minute that female voice reached his ears, he hardened like granite and his knees almost buckled.

What the hell?

“Are you, okay?”

When he glanced at the owner of that voice, his legs threatened to give. She must be the most stunning woman he ever set eyes on.

Long blonde hair pulled back from the face of a blue-eyed angel. Her face appeared flushed with a shy heat and he realized she seemed aware of his reaction.

"I'm fine, thank you. Road weary I think." he cleared his throat, hoping it would hide the husky note he knew was there.

"New to our town?"

Before he could answer, another woman appeared from the back room.

"Thanks again, Candy. I can't tell you what a life saver you are."

"No worries, Missy. You come back anytime you need the remedy."

Trevor watched as the woman smiled at them both, and walked from the store. He turned his eyes back to the beauty behind the counter.

"Remedy?" he chuckled. "I thought this was a sweets store."

"It is, and I am Candy Piper."

"Trevor." he wondered if she even realized how that statement sounded. "As to your question earlier, yes. I just arrived today."

"You look very familiar." her eyes studied him closely, and again his body received a jolt of pure, sexual awareness.

He tried to pay attention to the sweets, but with her watching him, he couldn't seem to think straight. It had been so long since his body reacted in such away.

"What are these?" he asked in hopes to draw his mind away.

"Candied Carmel Apples."

"Can I get a dozen of those?"

Even as she filled his order, her eyes seemed to bore into him. He wondered how long it would take before she guessed who he was. It never bothered him before, but for some reason, he wanted her to see him as the man, not the writer. "Here you go. One dozen apples."

"Thanks. Can you recommend a hotel?"

"Sure. Just up the block is the Havoc House." She replied.

"Havoc?"

"It's safe, I promise you." Candy's lilting smile tickled his heart.

"What do I owe you?"

"Nothing. It's a welcome to Spellfire gift." Ok, now her delicious smile really tugged deep in his chest.

Trevor picked up the box and smiled, turning for the door, but stopped before he could open it. He knew he must see her again.

“Candy?”

“Yes.”

“This is a little forward, you don’t know me. Do you think you would be interested in dinner? Tell me all about your town?”

She hesitated so long, watching him again with those blue eyes, that he was sure he just made a complete ass of himself.

“Sure. I would love to. I close around six.”

“I will meet you out front a minute after.” He turned and walked quickly away, but not before Candy got a good side view of his profile. Her eyes widened and she rushed to the back of her shop.

“I knew it,” she cried as she held T.J. Jackson’s latest crime novel in her hands. His picture, a side view, gleamed on the glossy back cover. Her favorite writer arrived in her town, in her shop, and just asked her to dinner.

Candy placed the book in her bag, she didn’t want to forget it. This would be her only chance to have it signed, and she would not miss the opportunity. For the first time since she opened Candied Kisses, Candy couldn’t wait to close. It was just her luck that time decided to drag by very slowly.

* * * *

A ballroom. An honest to god ballroom. The first of many interesting rooms he explored at the hotel. The place was grand, beautiful. It held a unique but unusual quality all of its own. He liked the place right away.

After checking into the very unusual Havoc House and alone in his room, Trevor thought about his reaction to Candy. He wanted to blame it on his lack of female companionship these last few months. His body still hummed with an energy that felt new to him, and all he could think about was getting her into his bed. That wasn’t like him at all.

After a quick and very cool shower, he felt a little relief. If he survived dinner with the woman, he would have to take matters into his own hands. Damn, but the thought of her just sent him soaring.

Dressed and ready for dinner, Trevor took a deep breath and left the hotel. He would walk. It was a nice evening, and from what he could see, most of the businesses were fairly close together.

When he stood before Candied Kisses, his nerves kicked up a little. He debated bailing, until the door opened and Candy stood

before him. She changed into a baby blue blouse and knee length skirt that sent his mouth to water.

“Hi.” her smile was radiant. “Are you always on time?”

“I try to be.” he returned her smile. “You look nice.”

“Thanks.” she turned and locked the door.

“Where would you like to eat?”

“Well, I thought maybe Spirits?”

“Spirits?”

“Just up the hill. My friend Missy and her family own and operate it. It is like a bar and grill really. It’s a friendly place.”

“Lead on my lady.” he offered his arm and she took it. “Is Missy your friend that needed the remedy?”

“Yes.” her voice held a smile. “Her name is Mistletoe, but we all call her Missy.”

“Mistletoe?”

“Long story. She is expecting her first child and has a massive sweet tooth. I make her a special treat with a little something to help with any sickness troubles.”

“She was so tiny.”

“Yes, she is only about three months, but that little one is demanding.”

Candy pointed out certain establishments along the way, and Trevor soaked it all in. If the lady at his side were any other but her, he would have been bored to tears. He admitted that he truly felt attracted to this woman.

Spirits sat up on a hill, and the first thought Trevor thought the place looked like something from an old west novel. Swinging doors and wooden decks. Once they entered, he couldn’t help but smile at the sawdust on the floor. He loved the place.

“Let’s take that big window seat. The view is amazing.”

Once seated, Trevor glanced out the window and could not contain the gasp of awe. The sun was barely setting, its light danced across a river that looked so pure, it could be rippling glass.

“Beautiful, isn’t it?” Candy said as she looked out at the water. “That is a spot I like to walk to when I need to think. It’s very soothing. That’s the Selkie River.”

“Selkie?”

Candy glanced at him quickly, her eyes wide. She fidgeted with the napkin on the table and looked around the room.

"It's just what we call it."

On the verge of asking what made her so nervous, Trevor held his question when the woman he knew as Missy walked to their table.

"Hi Candy."

"Felling better, Missy?"

"Absolutely." she turned to Trevor. "I'm Missy Mayhem."

"Trevor."

"Welcome to Spellfire." Missy inhaled deeply and her eyes widened. She looked quickly to Candy.

"Can I get some tea, Missy?"

"Sure." she looked to Trevor. "Need a drink?"

"Tea would be fine, thanks."

"Coming right up." she stopped and looked again to Candy. "We need to talk."

Trevor watched her go, confused and puzzled. Something just passed between these two and he felt like a third wheel.

"Something wrong?" he asked.

"No, nothing."

When Missy returned with their drinks, he watched the play between the ladies. Candy seemed very nervous. They placed orders for dinner, and he watched Missy walk away.

"Mistletoe Mayhem. There's a name you won't hear everyday." He tried for idle chat.

"That's not the best part. Her husband's name is Garland."

"Mistletoe and Garland?" He had to smile. "It's Christmas all year round for them I bet."

"You have no idea."

"Tell me more about you."

"What would you like to know?" she grinned. "It will cost you."

"What?"

"I have a certain book in my bag. Sign it for me later and I will tell you all about myself."

"Deal."

Candy told him of her sister in Chicago. How she just couldn't make her candy store work there. Her dreams for Candied Kisses. How much she loved Spellfire and how easily she fit in with the locals.

"Why would you fit in here and nowhere else?"

"I'm a witch."

Okay, he didn't expect that one. Her eyes were so wide in her face, he didn't know if she were serious or afraid he would take her as such. Then again, she looked a little afraid he may actually believe her.

"A witch, huh? Well, your beauty has placed a spell of its own on me."

Heat crept into her cheeks, and she started looking around the room again, as if searching for someone.

"Excuse me, Trevor. I will be right back."

Candy was up and across the room so quickly he didn't have time to stand. He watched her go with a mixture of wanting and a feeling of getting himself into something he knew nothing about. So what if she's a witch. He sure didn't mind getting caught in her spell.

* * *

"Missy, I need to talk to you please."

"Come into the back."

Once in the storeroom, Candy's heart began to slow, but only a little. Something was happening between her and Trevor, and she needed to understand. She never felt anything like this before, and it rather scared her.

"What is going on? My heart feels like it may beat out of my chest."

"Calm down, Candy." Missy patted her shoulder. "I said we needed to talk because, well, as you know I can sense a few things you can't."

"And?"

"You and that man out there have more in common than you may think." Missy smiled. For so long she hoped her friend would meet her mate. "Your scent matches his."

"Is he a Selkie?"

"Heavens no. He is as normal and human as they come." Missy seemed to reconsider. "There is something about him though. I just can't place it. But you two are destined to be together."

"Is that why I feel as if my heart is about to burst?"

"Instant attraction."

"I told him I'm a witch. I didn't mean to."

"You will find it hard to keep anything from him. Even though he is human, I think, and immune to the wonders of Spellfire, you are not."

"Oh, I don't need this."

"Sure you do. Remember, everything happens for a reason." Missy smiled. "Now you better get back out there. Don't be afraid Candy. Let the towns magic guide you along."

Candy nodded and left the storeroom. When she sat back at the table, Trevor regarded her closely.

"Look, Candy, I know we just met and all, but I enjoy your company. If there is something I need to know, just tell me."

"Let's enjoy dinner, and after we will walk and talk."

"Sounds good to me. I am starved."

All through dinner she watched him, wondering if he felt what she did. She knew the attraction was real, but did his heart pound and his pulse race? Candy felt so stunned by her thoughts. Just thinking of his touch made her feel wanton and she wanted to melt right there in her chair. Missy believed in love at first site. Garland loved her only in his dreams until they met. Candy never knew two people more in love. She couldn't see it for herself though. Well, maybe until now.

"Finished?"

"What?" She looked up, not realizing she ate her meal and tasted nothing. "Yes, I'm finished."

"Let's take that walk."

Trevor paid the bill and as they walked outside, he once again offered his arm. She took it, but this time he pulled her a little closer to his side.

"Want to walk along the river?" she asked as she turned them to the back of the building.

"Absolutely. I bet it's breathtaking."

They walked along the bank of the river, just admiring the glow of the moon on the water. Trevor lowered his arm, and twined his fingers through hers. They were silent for a while, but it felt right. Once the lights from Spirits dimmed, he pulled her to a stop and turned her to face him.

"I was right," he said as his hand caressed her face.

"About?"

"Breathtaking," he lowered his head and kissed her.

A gentle kiss, not meant to tease or entice. Just a taste of her is what he wanted. Once his lips touched hers, he felt a relief sweep through him. Like he silently searched all along and finally found

what coming home truly meant. When he pulled away, just enough to look into her face, he knew she felt it too.

“I should say I’m sorry, a gentleman would.”

“Why?”

“We just met, and already I am taking liberties.”

“Are you?”

“Am I what?”

“Sorry?”

“No.”

Candy smiled and wrapped her arms around his waist. Her body flush against his. He was taller by at least a foot, but she liked that. She herself was a taller woman.

“Kiss me again?”

He threaded his hands through her hair and tilted her head to just the right angle, and he lowered his mouth to hers again. When he felt her tongue trace his lips, he groaned and kissed her deeply. Her own moan of pleasure followed.

The feel of her hands roaming his back started other thoughts entering his mind. Like stripping her slowly and making love to her right there beside the river.

She pulled away and smiled as she slowly walked backwards, deeper into the shadows and pulling him along with her. He followed her willingly. A fallen tree lay just behind her, and she pulled herself to sit on a large broken limb. When he stepped to her, his mind and body registered how she sat at just the right height.

“We were going to talk?” she said as she pulled him between her thighs.

“I don’t know if I can think straight. All I can think about is touching you.”

“Is it possible to touch and talk?”

“I’m willing to give it a go.” he kissed her neck, nipping her gently. “What is happening between us? We just met, but I feel as if I have known you a lifetime.”

“According to Missy, we are destined for each other.” she gasped when his tongue made its hot path to her ear. “Do you believe in fate?”

“I never thought about it until now.”

All thought of talk soon fled. His hot breath on her ear caused her body to tremble and her nipples to tighten painfully. She trembled

over the sensation, never feeling it before. *So much intensity.* She pulled his shirt from his slacks and worked her hands underneath, needing to touch his flesh. Her nails raked gently across his lower back.

Trevor reeled in a turmoil of need. His cock grew so hard it throbbed. He wanted her now, here, anywhere! The site of her thighs bared to the night air, him standing between them, he wanted to thrust inside her body. Hot and deep with only the night as their witness. She returned his kiss with a flaming passion of her own. She wanted him with as much need as he did her.

Working the buttons on her blouse, he eased one hand inside to cup a breast. Her nipple almost scalded him, and he gently gripped the soft fullness. He couldn't stop kissing her, and he could feel her hips rocking. Slowly, he moved his other hand under her skirt. He found her hot and wet and wanting. He eased his hand into her panties and her hips rocked even faster. She was on the brink of ecstasy and he wanted to take her, feel her close about him.

Candy loved the feel of his hands on her, and being bolder than she would ever imagined, she unbuttoned his slacks and slid her own hand inside to touch him as well. He felt long and thick, and so excitingly hard. She wanted to bring him the same pleasure, and smiled when he pulled from their kiss and groaned.

"Damn, but your hand feels good." he said as he lowered his head again, but this time, to her breast.

His hot mouth on her sensitive flesh caused her to cry out, and her free hand held him closer as her other tightened around him. Just when she thought she could take no more, he slowly pushed one finger into her body. Her body jerked and convulsed with the pleasure that shot through her. She couldn't stop the motions of her hips, seeming to search for more.

Trevor ground his teeth together. She was so hot inside, and tight. The thought of her body clamping his own in orgasm, and the feel of her soft hand stroking him, caused his own hips to move, searching for release.

Her head fell back and he took her cry into his mouth and body. His body tightened in response as he found release with her. What they shared proved the most erotic experience of his life.

They stayed that way, locked together, until a chilly breeze swept up from the river. Then they helped each other right their clothes,

kissing and touching still. Each wondering why they felt no shame or embarrassment.

Together they walked back to Candied Kisses. Her apartment being over the store. Still he couldn't stop kissing her. He wouldn't stay, but what they just discovered together was far from over.

"Can I see you tomorrow?" he asked in between kisses.

"I would hope so. Sure you won't come inside?"

"If I come inside, this will go even further. I will play the gentleman. Tonight anyway."

"Then I will settle for tomorrow." she kissed him once more. "Goodnight, Trevor."

"Goodnight."

He stood there, under the sign, until the lights upstairs came on. Then he made his way slowly back to Havoc House. Trevor refused to question what just happened between them tonight. It felt too real, too incredible to be anything but right.

Whatever made him come to this town, rumors or articles, didn't matter now. What mattered is what he felt at this moment. He looked around the quiet town, and it seemed like he looked through a new pair of eyes. One thing he did know for certain, Spellfire did hold a certain kind of magic. He felt its energy when he looked at that river.

He felt its power with Candy tonight.

* * * *

Candy opened her eyes to the morning light and stretched like a contented kitten. Trevor, last night he made her body sing and all she could think of was the night to come. If they were alone tonight, there would be no reservation.

First however, she would tell him the truth about her. Finish that talk that truly never started last night. Then if he still wanted her, she would hold nothing back.

Rolling from bed, she walked to the bathroom and started the shower. Though she would love to lay about and daydream, Valentines Day was coming up and she needed to make her treats for the couples who would visit her store. Sweetheart Tarts were sure to be a big hit this year. Tangy and sweet with just a hint of magic. A magic that will set fire to the blood of lovers and turn them into a roaring flame.

Finished in the shower, she dressed in her usual day dress and headed down stairs to her store. Gathering her ingredients, sugar,

spice and everything nice, Candy rolled the dough out on the counter and chanted softly to herself. Once she finished, she cut the dough with a special heart shaped tool. Then she placed them in the big freezer to cool. Tomorrow was the big day, couples would begin to gather for her special treat.

Glancing at the clock, she opened the doors and waited. It wasn't long before Missy and Garland entered the store, and she couldn't help but smile. These two didn't need the special candies. Love poured from them in waves.

"Morning Candy." Missy said as she approached the counter. "Anything new?"

"Always." Candy said, though she knew Missy didn't mean treats. "What can I get for you two?"

"We thought we would try some of those special tarts the town raves about." Garland said, winking at his wife.

"I was just about to pull them out of the cooler."

"We can come back."

"Sit tight. They should be ready." Candy walked into the back room and soon came out with a large tray filled with the Valentines treats. "Now, you should wait until tomorrow evening. The treat works almost immediately. Also, there is nothing in here that would harm your little one."

"What happens if we decide to eat one now?" Missy asked.

"Well, all it takes is one, and you may not make it home."

"It's like an aphrodisiac?"

"Yes, but all natural." Candy laughed. "I make it only for couples who know they are in love."

"What if they're not?" Garland asked, accepting the small package from Candy. "I mean, would it make them think they are?"

"Odds are they would think they loved the first man or woman they seen." Candy said, hugging them both. "So be sure to eat these two treats in private."

She watched her friends leave and suddenly she felt lonely. Garland and Missy found a love that would live on, even when they did not. A romantic love story is what they created. Candy sighed to herself as the door jingled, and she lost track of the next few hours.

Just as she gave up on seeing Trevor today, he walked in as the last customer left. Just the site of him made her heart skip. Tall and handsome, he carried himself with a confidence most men could not

even come close to possessing. Her body tingled as memories of last night entered her mind.

“Afternoon, Candy.”

“Hi.” she smiled and leaned into his embrace when he came around the counter to wrap her in his arms. His kiss tasted sweet, and she cherished it. “I just about gave up on seeing you today.”

“Not a chance, baby. Busy day?”

“Very.” she pointed to the tray of sweets. “My Valentines Day Couples Special. A hit.”

“What are they?”

“Sweetheart Tarts.” she winked. “Trevor don’t....”

Before she even finished, he snatched one off the tray and popped it in his mouth. Her eyes widen as he chewed and swallowed, smacking his lips at the sweet, yet, tart flavor.

“Delicious.”

“Oh no.” she whispered.

“What?”

“Trevor those tarts are special. For couples only.” she placed her palm to her forehead. “I tried to stop you.”

“They taste like tarts to me.”

“They are, but with a little kick. They’re enchanted tarts.”

“Enchanted?”

“I told you I was a witch.” she watched him closely. “How do you feel?”

He smiled, “Like I did something wrong, but not sure what.”

The bell over the door jingled, and without thinking, she forced him to turn his back to the door.

“Don’t turn around, whatever you do, promise me. Just stare at the back door until I’m finished.”

He didn’t argue but she could see he wanted to. Candy quickly helped the last customer of the day then closed and locked the door. It was early yet, but she had little choice. She drew the shades as well. All she would need is a troll to pass by and Trevor to lay eyes on it as the magic kicked in.

“Candy?”

“What is it?” she hurried to his side. “Are you feeling the effects?”

“What the hell did you put in that?”

“I told you, just a spell. It will wear off eventually.”

"Spells?" he snorted. "You really believe all that nonsense?"

"Before I take offense, I am telling you the truth."

"Prove it."

Candy snapped her fingers and a chair appeared behind him. Trevor gasped as an unseen force pushed him into the chair.

"Proof enough?"

"Okay. You're a witch." he chuckled. "Are you a good witch or a bad witch?"

"Trevor this isn't Munchkin Land so knock it off." she couldn't blame him. If she were in his shoes, she would be skeptical. "How do you feel?"

"Want the truth?"

"Yes."

"Like my body is on fire, and it wants you desperately." he pulled her closer, and she stood between his thighs. He wrapped his arms around her waist and began nipping her belly.

"It's the tarts, Trevor." She wanted to kick and scream and cry. How would she know if this was real?

"No, they just enhanced what I feel."

Candy gasped when his hands traveled up her skirt, and he slowly removed her panties. With him in the chair, she felt open and vulnerable. He gently pulled her onto his lap, her legs falling to either side of his body.

"Kiss me, Candy."

The look in his eyes proved to be something that stole her breath, a spell or not, she could never deny him. Her head lowered, and she placed her mouth to his.

His hands kneaded her bottom, rolling her already sensitive body against the rough material of his slacks. He ground himself against her, and she found it hard to breath. He reached around her, touching her. She knew he found her very hot, wet and ready.

"Unzip me, honey."

Candy reached between them and unsnapped the slacks, then gently moved the zipper down. When he filled her hand, she almost became intimidated by his size. He was a large man, but damn if she didn't want him more than the breath she so desperately tried to take.

"Take me inside you."

Rising slightly, she positioned him where he needed to be, and slowly began to take him into her body. The feel of him stretching

her, filling her to unbelievable degrees became almost too much to bare. She sat there, seated fully, not sure if she wanted to move.

Trevor unbuttoned her dress front, spreading the material wide, and unsnapped the front clasp on her bra. His hands then moved to her back, up, feeling her until he grasped her shoulders. Pulling her slightly away, he leaned forward and took her distended nipple into his mouth. He rolled the bud on his tongue, nipping gently and then sucking deeply. Her hips jerked, and they both gasped.

Then he started to move. Slowly and gently at first. Taking his time and building her excitement higher. All too soon, it wasn't enough. She knew the spell must be fully on him when he suddenly stood, and sat her on the low counter. His hands clasped hers and he held them beside her head as he laid her back and leaned over her.

"Wrap your legs around me, baby."

Candy locked him to her with her thighs, and then all she could do was ride out the wave of passion he set her to drift on. Just as she began falling to the earth, he stiffened, gasped for air, and lay against her.

"Trevor?"

"I'm sorry, baby. I couldn't stop."

"It's the tarts. I told you that."

"We will talk about that later." he raised and looked into her eyes. "Where is your bed?"

"Upstairs."

Still locked together, he lifted her and proceeded up the stairs. She could feel him inside her, swelling and coming to life yet again.

"So soon?"

"Oh yes. Maybe many more times yet."

"I'm telling you. It's the tarts."

"I told you we will talk about that later." he stopped at the door to her apartment. She reached down and turned the handle, and he kicked it closed when they entered. "What room?"

"To the right."

Once inside the room, he allowed her to ease to the floor. Though he hated being parted, he needed his clothes and hers out of the way.

He removed his clothes and watched as she did the same. Her body, looked perfect to him. When she tried to shield herself, he moved her hands away.

"Don't hide yourself from me, Candy. You are beautiful."

“I’m plump.”

“You’re perfect.” he kissed her gently. “Now crawl onto that bed.”

Candy turned and placed one knee on the bed. Then the other. That’s when she felt his hands on her hips. He stood behind her, and slowly entered her. Candy cried out at the sensations and the pleasure of having him so deep inside of her. In this position, he was in control. That thought drove her crazy.

“Too much?” he asked as he slowly moved within her.

“No.” she said as she pushed back against him.

He kept moving slowly, pushing her closer. When she began to tremble around him, he moved a little faster and a little deeper. Over and over he brought her to release, but held back his own.

When her body calmed, he gently pulled away from her, turned her to her back, and leaned in to kiss her. His body was still hard and hungry, he grew determined to make this as special for her as he could. Yes, the tarts did send him into overdrive, but he knew what he wanted before he ever entered the store. He wanted Candy.

He entered her again, and took his sweet time bringing her higher and higher. He took relish in her cries of release and her pleas that she could take no more. He made sure he proved her wrong. When he did finally find his own pleasure, Candy looked well sated and fell asleep wrapped in his arms.

* * * *

Candy opened her eyes to the feel of warm breath against her neck and strong arms around her. She smiled, but it faded as she remembered what transpired last night. Though her heart wanted to fight it, her mind kept winning the battle.

Trevor ate a tart, and she was the first he saw when it took over his body. The night by the river had been wonderful. Full of passion and need. Her heart screamed at her to remember that night. Then her mind drifted back to all the ways he loved her last night. He would never be so full of fire if he were not under the tarts enchantment.

Eyes filling with tears of frustration, Candy eased herself from the bed and hurried into her robe. Quietly she gathered clothes and dressed in the bathroom. Leaving a note on the bed beside him, she walked out of the apartment. She needed to think about things for a little while. Clear her mind.

Spellfire Hearts

Trevor lay silently, watching her. Once the door closed behind her, he sat up and reached for the note she placed beside him. He remembered everything, all they shared. He also remembered her telling him that the tart is what made him want her.

*Trevor,
Thank you for a wonderful night of passion.
I understand it was the enchantment, but I
will hold the memory with me forever.
I know I'm not perfect. You made me feel so
in every way last night. The back door to
the apartment is the door to use when the
store is closed. I need to think some things
through. Again, thank you. Last night I felt
more like a woman than ever before in my life.
Always,
Candy*

Trevor stood and calmly dressed. Taking the note, he folded it and placed it in his pocket. If she thought this was over, she had another thing coming. Today was Valentines Day. A day for love and romance. There were things he needed to do before he went looking for her. After this day, she would no longer doubt what he felt for her. Whatever it takes. From the moment he entered this town, he knew he came home. He felt it again the moment he looked at her and heard her voice. Love at first site. He read about it, but never believed in it. Until now.

* * * *

The Selkie River looked calm this morning. Only the light trickle of the water over the rocks in the shallow end could be heard and it sounded soothing. Some days, Candy would come to this little batch of trees and place her feet in the waters. She would never swim in the river. This was a sacred place to the Selkies.

Missy told her of Selkie Falls and the wonders of the place. However, no other but a selkie could find the place, much less swim to it. It was set way back in an alcove that one must swim far beneath the surface to reach. It was also the place the selkies would make love to their mates for the first time.

Candy watched as Missy and Garland played in the shallows once. They were beautiful seal like creatures in their true form. Missy a white selkie, Garland a black. The grace she witnessed in their play was something to be admired and she so wished she could be like them that day. Full of love for one another.

Living in Chicago with her sister could be fun, but she never truly felt at home. Her magic was forever backfiring and her sister always needed to fix her mistakes. Here in Spellfire, the town's magic aided her, so she moved her candy store here. She always felt happy here. However, she knew something kept it from being perfect. Candy did try dating, even let a man make love to her in Chicago. It proved an experience she would be willing to forget. Nice, but not earth shattering like she felt with Trevor.

The sound of laughter drew her eyes up along the river. Missy and Garland were shedding their clothes. Candy stepped back into the trees and waited until she heard the splash in the water. They would be going to the falls. The perfect place for the lovers to share this special day.

A single tear rolled down her cheek and she wiped it away. What could she offer a man like Trevor? A famous author, a beautiful man in all ways and she, the plain Candy. Plump in all the wrong places. She always heard that she was a beauty, but she had never felt it. Not until last night.

She sat on a patch of grass and leaned against a tree, silently contemplating things. Missy said they were meant to be. Had he not eaten the tart and made love to her, she would have believed his claims of truly wanting her. Her doubts were clouding her mind, and she closed her eyes, desperately trying to sort it all out.

Trevor stood silent behind the tree a few feet away from her. He remembered her saying she came here to think. All was ready back at the Havoc House, but first, they needed to talk.

He wanted her to believe in the magic they made together. Not the *magic* she felt made him love her. She was beautiful in his eyes, and would always be. He had lovers before, but never would he have called himself in love. Candy meant something more. His body ached to be with hers again. His heart longed to beat to the same rhythm as her own. Trevor never thought himself as a man with such romantic notions. However, today, right at this moment and all moments to come, he would gladly walk on water for her.

If she couldn't bring herself to trust in this special magic they shared, he would be in trouble. All the arraignments were made, and he was here to stay. He walked from behind the tree, and stopped beside her.

"Candy?"

Her eyes flew open and she jumped to her feet. How did he get so close to her without her hearing him?

"Trevor." she clasped her hands tight before her. "I'm sorry I left like I did, but I really needed to think."

"I understand."

"Do you?"

"Let's sit here and talk awhile."

Nodding, she took her seat once again and leaned into the tree. Trevor sat beside her and stretched his long legs out in front of him, crossing the ankles. He leaned back onto his arms and looked like a man as relaxed as the river running before him. She wanted to reach out and touch him, but dared not.

"All my life, I have never really known what I wanted." He said, though he didn't look her way. He just watched the river. "I would write a book, it would sell, and I would think I was happy. Fifteen years later I discover that I am only content with what I possessed at the time."

"Trevor..." she began but stopped when he lifted a hand.

"Let me finish. Then you can have your say." he lowered his hand. "Word about Spellfire made its way to me. I don't know why, but I just needed to see this town for myself. The stories were true. The food is to die for and more friendly people I have yet to meet."

He sat forward then, and faced her. He looked so serious and she fought the beat of her heart. It was racing.

"The day I arrived, I parked in front of the ice cream shop, but my feet carried me up the street, to your store and to you, Candy." He reached for her hand and held it in his own. "The minute I heard your voice, I knew I had finally come to the right place. When I set my eyes on you, every part of me reached for you."

He moved closer, so close that only a small distance separated them.

"Yes, your tarts worked their magic. I wanted you desperately. The thing you need to know is, there was magic between us before I ever set foot in your store." His hand reached forward and brushed the

hair from her face. "I think I loved you that very day. So please, don't throw away what we have found together. Don't deny our own special magic."

Candy didn't feel the tears running down her cheeks until Trevor brushed them away. He smiled into her eyes, and her own proved genuine. There were still some doubts, but after what he confessed to her, she owed it to them both to see what would become of it all.

"It's been only a few days, Trevor."

"And?"

"Can love truly happen like that?"

"What does your heart say?" he placed a hand on her chest.

"That it is afraid of breaking."

"Will you come with me to Havoc House?" he asked as he stood. "Will you let me show you that I need no enchantment to want you?"

Without a second thought, she took his hand and he pulled her to her feet. He hugged her to him, and she returned the embrace, absorbing the feel of him.

"I'll come with you, Trevor."

Hand in hand they slowly walked back to town, each silent but very much aware of the other. Candy had no idea what he had planned, but she would forever regret her actions if she didn't take this one chance.

* * * *

Havoc House had a few people dinning, and the ballroom was open for those who would like to dance for the holiday. Trevor walked her past all of this, up the stairs and to his room. He asked the clerk to switch him to a larger room, with a private dinning area.

Candy still couldn't imagine what his plans might be. Trevor seemed set on a slow seduction.

He planned to make his intentions known and that he planned to stay right here in Spellfire.

She stood in the center of the room, unsure of what to do. Trevor smiled, wondering how long it would take to get through to this woman that he really did love her. Time would be on his side now, however. For her he would continue for as long as it might take.

"Relax, Candy," he said, standing before her. "Nothing bad will come of this night."

"I'm sorry, Trevor. This is just all so new to me."

"It will be a few minutes until dinner." he took her hand. "Come with me. I have something for you."

He walked her into the sleeping room, and he noticed her confusion when he passed the bed and sat her at the desk in front of his laptop.

"What's this?"

"Even you know what a computer is, Candy."

"Very funny." She tried for a haughty tone, but failed. "Why am I sitting here in front of your computer?"

"Well, first things first." he pulled out a wrapped package and handed it to her. "I believe I owe you this."

Candy opened the package and gasped. It was his latest book, the one she already owned. However this one, when she opened the front cover, was signed.

"Thank you, Trevor."

"I'm not finished." he clicked the screen on, and before her eyes was his next manuscript. She could not contain her excitement. "I thought you may like to read a little before dinner."

"Really?" her eyes narrowed. "Why are you doing this?"

"Just trust me to explain it all after dinner, okay?"

"You really don't mind?"

"Not at all. Besides, I have a few things left to finish before I call down for dinner."

"We will be eating here?"

"Is that okay with you?"

"Sure." she said, and her face turned to the screen.

Trevor found much pride in the way she seemed to enjoy his work. He always felt a profound sense of accomplishment, but never this feeling of pure satisfaction. This was one of his small ways of bringing her into his life. Trevor wanted Candy not only in his bed, but also in his world. Sharing this one piece of him would prove only a beginning. He left her to read, and went about setting the scene.

Candy stopped reading long enough to accept a glass of wine and a small peck on the cheek, from him a little bit later. She liked his writing style. Already, she felt a part of this story. A serial killer on the loose. A tough detective and a woman—a survivor of the man hunted, team up to stop him. In the process, they fall madly in love. That's what she loved about his books. You got it all. Drama, action and sizzling romance.

“Ready to eat?” Trevor asked from the doorway.

“As much as I hate to stop, I am hungry.”

“It will be there tomorrow.”

She nodded and stood, carrying her glass with her. The smell of food coming from the next room made her mouth water and her stomach grumble.

“I hadn’t realized it had gotten so late.”

“Time does fly. You were at the river awhile.”

“Trevor, about me leaving like I did. It’s not that I have regrets.”

“I understand, Candy. I really do. Tonight will be about something more.”

“More?”

Before he could answer, her eyes set about the room they would dine in. Candles blazed in every corner and on the table. Covered dishes rested on a wheeled cart, and the place setting for two looked romantic in itself. Wild flowers were set for the center piece. Candy loved wild flowers.

Trevor pulled her chair out for her, and she sat, stunned at the picture before her. She realized he did all this for her. If she wasn’t so surprised, she would start to cry. He sat across from her and refilled their glasses.

“Tonight is definitely about more, Candy. Tonight will be a whole new beginning.”

“I still don’t think I understand.”

“Yes. I think you do.” he began serving. “First we eat, then we talk. Really talk.”

Even though Candy felt like a ball of nerves, the food tasted very good. Dinner salads, followed by a prime rib cooked to perfection. Along with fresh asparagus and fruit. They talked of little things through out the meal, and she slowly began to relax. The wine was just as good as the food, and she accepted another glass. Even though the attraction between them felt just as strong as the day they met, it seemed more natural in the privacy of his hotel room.

“That was delicious, Trevor. Thank you.”

He smiled and stood, walked behind her and pulled out her chair. Grabbing the wine, he took her hand and they walked out onto the balcony.

“It’s a beautiful night.”

"It's always beautiful here." she said. "Even in winter, the beauty remains."

She stood at the railing, wine glass between her hands and the moonlight shined on her like a halo. She took his breath away. He knew better than to tell her that now. Best to get right to the big announcement first.

"I have something to show you." He reached into his back pocket and pulled out some folded papers. "Take a look and tell me what you think."

Candy took the papers and unfolded them. Quietly she read until she reached the last page. Her jaw dropped and she stared at him stunned.

"You bought a piece of land here?" she looked back to the papers. "What will you do with it?"

He handed her another set of papers. This time she stared at him, speechless.

"Yes. I bought it today. I plan to put a house on it." He tapped the other papers. "Those are the blueprints."

"What would you do with a house *this* size?" she shook her head. "Five bedrooms?"

"Well, there is the master room. My office of course. Three for the children I hope to have at some point."

Candy folded the papers and handed them back, and once again turned toward the railing. Her heart hammered in her chest and she possessed the strongest urge to laugh. Trevor living in Spellfire?

"Why?"

The feel of his hands on her shoulders, the heat of his body behind her made her want to melt against him. He pulled her hair to the side and placed a gentle kiss to the nape of her neck.

"I want all of this, Candy. I want all of this with you." he wrapped his arms around her. "You can't blame this on an enchantment. I know what I want."

"I'm just plain Candy Piper." she shrugged. "What could I ever offer you?"

Trevor turned her in his arms, took her glass and set it aside. He pulled her close, and held her head to his chest, just above his heart.

"Do you hear that, Candy?" he stroked her hair.

"I hear your heart beating."

"Since the day we met, I swear it started beating for you." he pulled her back and looked into her eyes. "How can you doubt that I am in love with you?"

"It just all seems so unreal. Your T.J. Jackson. World famous, and I am a candy maker."

"Don't forget a very fine witch." he smiled. "To you, I will always be Trevor."

"Are you sure? This, us, me, is what you want?"

"I have never been more sure of anything in my life." he looked at her closely. "What do you want, Candy?"

"You." she placed her head back on his chest. "If you change your mind I swear I will turn you into a toad."

He laughed and lifted her, spinning her around on the balcony. She was finally starting to believe. He placed her on her feet.

"Well?"

"What?" she asked, breathless.

"The house. What do you think of the house?"

"Well, on paper it looks nice enough."

"Would you be happy in a house like that?"

"Happy?" she thought about it for a moment. "I've only lived in my apartment and not much better before Spellfire. It's a palace compared to my small place."

"You're avoiding my question."

"If I lived in a house like that, sure, I could be happy."

"If?"

She nibbled her lip and contemplated how to answer.

"You never said anything about me living there."

"I am building this house for us." he lifted her into his arms and carried her back into the room. "It will take awhile before it's ready. We can talk about that later."

"A few months? Are you using the town's construction company?"

"Yes."

She started to laugh and he put her on her feet beside the bed. Candy tried to stop but the confusion on his face proved priceless.

"Trevor. The minute you turn those plans in to the company, your house will be done within a week."

"No way."

"You still haven't grasped Spellfire, have you?"

“Magic?”

“You have no idea.” she pulled her blouse over her head. “Now, kiss me.”

Trevor was in no hurry, and he kissed her for what seemed like hours. Slow and lingering kisses, deep and desperate kisses. They undressed each other and just lay together, exploring each other at leisure.

Feeling bold, Candy pushed him to his back and began kissing her way across his chest. Paying special attention to his nipples. She loved his mouth on her breasts, so she would return the favor. His moan of pleasure gave her courage to travel lower. She nipped his muscled stomach and licked the spot in a gentle caress. The lower she traveled, the harder he would pant. Until finally, she reached her goal and he started gasping.

With her tongue, she explored his length, with her mouth, she loved him for as long as he could take it.

Suddenly, she was flipped onto her back, and a very aroused Trevor lay over her.

“Was I doing it wrong?” she asked with an innocent look in her eyes. She knew he enjoyed every second of it.

“You, my dear, are truly a witch.” he licked the spot between her breasts. “Now, it’s my turn.”

Candy lost control over her body’s reactions to his loving. His hot mouth left nothing untouched. It didn’t take long for her to beg him for release. Trevor didn’t stop until her first climax rolled over her. Only then did he kiss his way back up her body.

Before her spasms faded, he placed his mouth to hers and entered her swiftly. The taste of herself on his lips and the feel of him moving slowly but strongly inside her sent her over the edge yet again. His words were erotic in themselves.

Trevor told her how good she felt. How the feel of her brought him so much pleasure. How he couldn’t, wouldn’t ever get enough of her.

Without leaving her body, he gently turned her and pulled her to her knees. Again and again he brought her to the brink, only to slow and build her up again. He leaned over her back, turned her head and kissed her deeply.

“Do you still believe that the spell made me love you so well?” he nipped her ear. “Will you believe me when I say all I need is to look at you to want you so much?”

He gave her no time to answer. Trevor started to move again, and again he sent her into bliss. He placed her on her back again and remained buried hard and deep inside her body. He brushed the hair back from her face, kissing her gently.

“Do you believe that I love you?”

“Yes.”

As if that word tore at his control, his jaw clenched and he moved faster within her. She could see how he fought to hold back. He loved her and wanted to prove it to her. Candy grasped his face between her palms and forced him to look into her eyes.

“Trevor.” she whispered his name and kissed him gently. “I love you.”

“Say it again.” he said and moved once again in deep strokes that were building a flame inside both of them. “Say it again, baby.”

“I love you.”

Together, they flew to the heavens and back. She watched him in his pleasure, and it prolonged her own. This man, this wonderful man making love to her said he loved her. At this moment, the look in his eyes made her a believer.

After his breathing slowed, Trevor rolled to his side and pulled her to him. The feel of his chest against her back, his thighs cradling her bottom, and his strong arms around her, made her feel cherished and safe.

“Happy Valentines Day, Candy.”

She smiled and snuggled deeper into his embrace.

* * * *

The next morning, after a very long and pleasurable shower, Trevor left Candy at Spirits while he went to speak to the company who would build the house.

She smiled remembering the morning of breakfast in bed, making love, showering and making love, only to shower again.

“I know that look, Candy Piper. I wear it everyday.” Missy said as she joined her at the table. As usual, eating a treat. “I want details.”

“There is nothing to tell.”

“Oh, you can lie to some, but never to me.” she winked. “Where did he run off to?”

"The housing authority. He bought a piece of land and is building a house."

"Here?"

"Yes." Candy couldn't contain her smile.

Missy studied her for a minute, then decided her friend looked truly happy. Candy looked radiant.

"I think your man may have a little magic inside him that he isn't even aware of."

"What do you mean?"

"Oh, not like you or me." Missy took another bite of cookie. "His heart is a true one. That is a magic all on its own. Trust in him Candy."

With that, Missy stood and walked away. Candy thought about what her friend said. Yes, she believed she could trust in him. No, she would trust in him. They will build a life together.

Candy walked to her store and opened a little late, but her usual crowd came in anyway. After a few hours, she began to worry about Trevor. He said he would meet her for lunch, and it was already after one. She shook her head at herself. Trust in him, he will be here.

Before she finished the thought, the door opened and there he stood. Her heart skipped a beat, and she rushed forward and embraced him first.

"Wow. I may have to be late more often."

"How did it go?"

"Great. The house will be up within a week. You were right."

"Have I told you today how happy I am you came to Spellfire?"

"You just want to read the rest of my story." he smiled down at her.

"That too." Her stomach rumbled. "Still want to have lunch? I'm starving."

"I suppose we better feed you then."

"We can eat upstairs."

In her apartment, they shared a light lunch and Trevor discussed plans for the house.

"I want it roomy with lots of windows."

"Sounds beautiful." she said as she cleared the dishes and placed them in the sink.

"Candy, just you being there with me will make it beautiful."

"You say all the right things." she turned, batting her lashes at him.

Trevor stood and walked to her, wrapping her in his arms and holding her to him. He loved to just hold her.

"I say all the right things, but do I do all the right things?"

"Hmm. I don't know. I'll get back to you on that one."

"Minx."

With a squeal, she dodged his hand and made for the bedroom. He spent the rest of the afternoon doing as many right things as possible.

* * * *

2 Weeks Later...

Candy stood at the driveway of the new house that Trevor built. The last few weeks had been wondrous. He stayed with her throughout the construction. It would have been completed sooner but he made some minor changes. Now, the time came for the unveiling.

Missy and Garland, as well as Garland's mother and father stood beside Candy as she waited for Trevor to join her. He wanted to inspect the house before she could see it.

"Here he comes." Missy said. "I'm so happy for you Candy."

"I am happy too." and she was. She truly was. Candy no longer felt the doubts that plagued her. Once she witnessed the moving trucks and the papers he signed, she realized this was forever. Her heart sang with that knowledge.

"Ready?" Trevor asked as he joined them.

"Absolutely." Candy smiled back at him.

"I know I can't wait to see it." Missy chimed in.

"Follow me." Trevor said and they walked to the front gate of the house. There was a tarp draped over the front. "Every new home deserves a name. What do you think of this one?" he pulled the tarp away from the welcome sign.

Everyone gasped and Candy covered her mouth with her hand to hold her own back. His new home, their new home, he named for her.

*Welcome to
Pipers Charming*

"What do you think?" he walked to her and put his arm around her.

"I don't know what to say?" her eyes filled with happy tears. "Wouldn't you rather call it The Jackson Estate or something?"

"Nope. This is it."

"I love it."

"Thanks a lot Trevor." Garland said from behind him. "Have you any idea what us husbands will have to do to top that?"

Laughing they walked through the gate and Candy got her first real look inside her new home. For an hour, everyone walked about the house, and Trevor felt pride in the way Candy gazed about the place. He loved her. Pipers Charming was for her, him, and the children they would raise.

"Candy!" Missy shouted. "Get a look at this kitchen!"

It was large and spacious, and Candy already sensed herself planning the first meal.

"Come along everyone." Lorvena, Garland's mother said. "Let's let these two get better acquainted with their new home."

"Yeah sure that's just what their gonna do." Garland winked.

"Like you would do any different." Lorvena laughed. "Candy, Trevor, it's a beautiful home. I know you will be happy here."

"Thank you." Trevor walked them out and closed the door, turning to Candy. "Well, tell me the truth. What do you think?"

"It's truly wonderful, Trevor. I love it."

"Come with me." he took her hand and walked her up the stairs to the master bedroom. It was the largest room in the upstairs area. "This will be our room."

"So much space."

"Lots of room to chase you around." he smiled and pulled her to him. "My office is the room downstairs, and the other three up here, I will need your help filling."

"My help?" Though she knew what he meant, she played the innocent.

"Oh yes, at least three kids need to have the run of this place." he kissed her sweetly. "First things first, however."

He walked her to the window seat and sat her on the cushioned bench. Sitting beside her, he took her hand again.

"Do you believe I love you more than life?"

"Yes."

"Will you be happy here, with me, in this house?"

"I have no doubt."

He pulled a small box from his pocket and snapped the lid open. A wide band of gold nestled in the velvet, and a cluster of diamonds wrapped the band, winking at her in the sunlight from the window. Her breath caught at the beauty of it, but more than that, its meaning.

“Will you live here with me, have my children, be my wife?”

She couldn’t form the words she so wanted to say. Tears coursed down her cheeks and she nodded her head in a yes. His smile was one of pure joy as he took the ring from the box and placed it on her hand. He then kissed the ring.

“When?” he asked. “When will you marry me?”

“When would you like to?”

“Today,” he smiled. “I know we can’t though. As soon as the house is finished, we get married.”

“What’s the rush?” her smile was radiant.

“I want to get started filling those other rooms,” he lifted his brows at her. “Why do you think, woman? I love you and I want it to be binding.”

“I love you, Trevor.”

Those words seemed to be all he needed to pull her into his arms and kiss her with a passion she only ever felt with him. Though there was no bed as of yet, Trevor removed her clothes and made sweet, gentle love to her on their new bedroom floor.

Candy knew she would love this man the rest of her life, and she held a feeling they would be filling those rooms very soon.

Trevor once again thanked whatever sent him to Spellfire. In a matter of a few weeks, his whole life changed for the better. He would soon marry the woman he loved and fill their new home with the children he dreamed of. In Spellfire, magic truly filled the air. You just have to believe a little and breathe in the magic.

Haunted Love

by

Tamara James



Other works by Tamara can be found...

<http://www.tamarajames.com/>

Spellfire Seasons: Spirit's Bells
Dragons, Elves & Myths, Oh My!

Haunted Love

The Legend of Taylor's Cabin

With intentions pure and hearts unsullied, true love's bliss shall be granted to those who seek it. If on the day of Love, from the highest to the lowest point of the sun's kiss upon the earth, they remain within the cabin Zechariah built for his bride. Should they consummate their union where he lay to sleep, bounty and prosperity shall follow them throughout eternity.

Chapter 1

"Son of a..." Standing on the edge of the rise over looking the river, Zechariah watched the silver SUV park in the lot in front of the pub. With Jacob and his wife, Ianeria, gone, the couple would have to pick up the keys to Zechariah's cabin from Lorvena Mayhem.

Old anger drove a splinter through his heart. "Wasn't it enough she stole everything? My life, my good name, the fortune I worked for." Clumps of dirt sprayed the air when the toe of his boot connected with the ground. An even older pain removed the shard. Ancient hurts seeped from the wounded muscle. Zechariah worried the rocky ground. Dirt covered the pointed tip of the calfskin boot. "I would have given it."

"Merrup." A small marmalade colored cat rose from its boneless sprawl across a sun drench boulder. Sleek and lean from her daily swims, Misty sauntered toward Zechariah. She bumped her body against his leg and sat, her big green gaze focused on him.

“After all this time that’s what I still don’t understand, the utter hatred of it. I was a good man. I tried my best to be a good husband.”

“For one hundred and ten years I’ve been cursed. Bound to his land. Barred from the peace of the grave never to know the solace of heaven.” That he could deal with. It was the second part he could no longer abide. Chained between life and death for eternity, Zechariah had been forced to watch an endless parade of couples, “Rutting in my bed!”

Poor fools, his wife created the legend just to torment him. When Jacob told him that the cabin had been rented, but there would be no couple coming this year, Zechariah thought he’d finally gotten lucky. *Side stepped the curse.*

“Reow.” Always vocal Misty issued a series of chittering meows. Zechariah was glad she was Jacob’s familiar and he couldn’t understand why the little lady sounded like she was tearing off a big chunk of hide. Misty stopped, eyelids slited, disgusted with his lack of comprehension.

The *you’re a moron* cat glare conveyed what her meows didn’t. “You’re right, I do know better then to expect chance to grant me what decades of attempts had never achieved, freedom from the curse.”

Accepting the inevitable, Zechariah paced the ridge, impatient to get the next four days over with. The doors to the SUV were still shut. The couple looked to be talking, but at this distance he couldn’t tell. “What do you think they’re waiting for? They must be tired from their trip.”

“Reow.”

Set almost a quarter of a mile behind Selkie Falls, Zechariah built his cabin in a natural clearing inside the dense forest. His land was the last parcel on this side of Spellfire and still part of the town proper. The cabin wasn’t exactly on the beaten path.

“Merrrup.” The little marmalade familiar was supposed to be Jacob’s but she spent more time with Zechariah. The fact he was a ghost didn’t seem to bother her.

Misty batted at the hem of his pants. Her paw moved through the fabric like a spoon through honey. Stuck between ghost and human form, the sensation of her claws passing through flesh and sinew, discomfoting.

Just another delightful aspect of the curse his wife placed on him. Zechariah could never materialize his entire body like other ghosts, except on Valentine's Day. During the sun's zenith to it's setting the curse forced him into a state just shy of a fully corporeal.

The passenger door opened, emitting the widest, thickest man that Zechariah ever laid eyes on.

"Would you look at that Misty, must' a felt like a sardine packed in a tin can. No wonder the lady is driving." Any hope they'd been visitors of Lorvena's ended. *No selkie moved like a locomotive tuggin' a full load up a hill. The guy was a city slicker from his fancy loafers, thin leather coat, to his baldhead.*

When Jacob said he discovered a way to circumvent the curse, Zechariah grasped hope for the first time in one hundred and ten years. "After all this time you'd think I'd know better."

The city slicker managed to make it around the truck without falling on the slipper-mist soaked gravel. Zechariah shook his head as the city guy helped a petite blonde scale down the side of the oversized car.

The blonde pivoted, one hand shading her face as she scanned the ridge. She stopped.

Her body leaned toward his. The hair stood up on the back of his neck.

Zechariah stepped back, startled. Her neck and head shifted, appearing to track his movement. "Impossible." No one besides Spellfire natives knew the truth behind the legend of Taylor's Cabin. The couples that came thought his cabin and the old bed were the key to their happiness. His wife made sure that the fools believed some nonsense about how he tried to murder her and steal her fortune. So enraged by his actions the Furies rose in a storm and how truelove triumphed over his evil spirit, cursing him to roam his land for eternity forever barred from his home.

"Like a man bent on murder would fight his way through the worst Valentine's Day snow storm ever recorded." Zechariah's laugh sounded as empty as the hole his wife's knife left in his heart. "Only money she ever had was what she stole from me as my life bled onto the floor."

Misty meowed and bumped her body against his. "Meow." Green cat eyes peered out of her round face. Zechariah could hear her

rumbling purr and knew she was trying to sooth him. “You’re right, need to leave the past be.”

The woman still stood staring at the ridge face shielded. A sense of familiarity crawled across his bones. Zechariah squinted. He knew that face. Decades worth of faces overflowed the boundaries of his mind. Couple after couple came here, it was hard to separate them into individuals. Recognition hung just at the edges of Zechariah’s conscious. The man moved between her and Zechariah’s line of sight.

Whatever he said got her heading toward the cabin, anger evident in each stride. Like an avalanche who the woman was rolled over him, “Sweet Lord.” Zechariah staggered. “Not her. Please, let it be anyone but her.”

Maybe he was wrong. It had been almost a decade since he’d last seen Jacob’s niece. The woman in the parking lot of Spirits looked nothing like the coltish seventeen year old she’d been when he’d last seen her. Skinny with straight hair and no hips, Jacob’s niece promised to follow in her family’s foot steps in more ways then her magic.

This woman was all curves. Tight jeans encased full hips, slender legs and a butt that begged for a man’s touch. Her short coat highlighted full breasts and a narrow waist. Wavy blond hair grasped the weak sunlight shining like the richest Chinese silk. She looked like sex.

She turned her face unveiled. Zechariah fell to his knees. His Heather had finally come home and brought her new husband with her.

Chapter 2

You couldn't call it rain, more like a soft haze that blurred the cool February air. She sat with her back to him. Shoulders hunched, her hair lay in damp blonde clumps down her back. Huddled next to her Misty looked like a wet rat. To be that soaked they must have been sitting in front of his grave for hours. Guilt gnawed through the anger simmering in his gut.

"Stubborn fool." Zechariah mumbled. For three day's his Heather had been alone, miserable and hurt. All because he thought Jacob had set him up with another crazy idea to break his curse.

He hesitated unsure of what to say. Heather was a woman, with a woman's heart, and a woman's hurt. Zechariah toed the ground with his boot life had been easier when she was five and had a skinned knee.

Misty rose and nosed him toward the seat then headed back toward the cabin.

Zechariah sat on the bench. His shirt brushed through her coat. Heather shivered. "Sorry for your hurtin'."

She nodded and continued to stare at the narrow tombstone in front of her. Zechariah didn't bother to look. He knew what the marker over the empty grave said. His wife made certain everyone knew the curse she laid upon him.

Silence settled like low fog across a valley. Prepared to wait Zechariah didn't push. A body had a right to tell their hurt when they were ready. A veil of hair obscured her face. Just like he'd done when she was a babe, Zechariah tucked it behind her ear. Smooth and pale from the cold her profile looked like that of a goddess. *Dear Lord above*. Zechariah sat stunned, his mind desperate to catch up with reality. His little imp had become a beautiful woman.

Had too much time passed? Used to be when she had a problem she'd come here and call him. In the beginning Zechariah answered

because she was Jacob's niece and he felt compelled to watch over the precocious toddler. Over the years Heather managed to squirm her way into his heart.

"Not really." She sniffed and wiped her nose on her sleeve. Purple bruises marked lost sleep, her tear reddened eyes spoke of sorrow.

Helpless, Zechariah tucked his hands under him. He wanted to gather her close. He wanted to go back in time and fix her hurts. Heal her pain like she healed his. But he couldn't if she wouldn't let him.

Mist gathered against their skin, Zechariah could feel the cold sink into his bones along with the drops of water. An hour passed. Tension notched tighter and tighter across the back of his neck and shoulders.

Filled with tears she managed to hold them back but couldn't prevent the hitch in her voice. "I called and called." Her voice choked off.

Knots bunched and cramped the muscles in Zechariah's abdomen. He was a selfish little man, instead of answering her call, he ran like a coward. Not able to face watching the child he'd known become a woman.

Three days he wasted in the woods fighting the pull of the curse. In the end he lost the battle, waking hours later in the bedroom of his cabin. "I'm so sorry I didn't answer you."

Her head settled against his shoulder. The scent of apple drifted from her hair. Zechariah directed energy to his muscles and provided her a solid place to lean. It would be noon in several hours, the drain on his system negligible. The tremors wracking her began to stop with each gulp of air she stole between snuffling sobs. "When you didn't come I thought..."

"You thought I abandoned you." Zechariah brushed his lips across her hair.

"No not that." She gulped back fresh tears, caught her breath. "I thought you were gone." The color of a stormy sea, her blue eyes overflowed.

Saints above, he couldn't take hearing her pain. Zechariah pulled her sideways across his lap. Redirected the flow of energy to his upper body and thighs until they were firm.

That fool of a fiancée of hers had broken her heart. Resting his chin on her head, Zechariah fought to keep the anger from his voice.

“Don’t you give him your tears, darlin’, he’s not worthy of them. No man who’d be fool enough to marry someone else, instead of you, deserves them.”

“I’m not crying over Robert. He and Sandi are perfect for each other.” Her hand waved. “They’re my friends. I’m happy for them.”

“Happy for the snake who stepped out on you?”

“Robert didn’t cheat on me. We just pretended to be engaged. It’s a long story.” Heather leaned back. “I’ll tell you about it, later.”

“Then why the crying?”

Sniffing, Heather wiped her nose against his shirt. “Because even though I told Jacob to wait. That there had to be something else we we’re missing. He was so excited. So sure I’d figured it all out. Then he left me a message saying he needed me to come to the cabin. The message was so full of static, I couldn’t make out what he was saying just that he was upset.”

Color flagged her cheeks. “When I arrived none of you were here. No one in town knew what was going on other then they needed to leave because of an emergency in aunt Ianeria’s family.” Heather pushed closer to him, buried her face in his shirt, her words muffled. “I thought I lost you.”

“No wonder you’re beside yourself, getting half a message like that.” Zechariah tucked her closer, his chin on top of her hair. The scent of fresh apples teased him. “I’m here. Your aunt and uncle are okay. Jacob sounded upset because your aunt’s sister Mineria was hurt in an accident.”

A lost sound fell from her. Zechariah’s arms tightened one hand moved to rub small circles against her back.

“It’s okay Heather. I promise Mineria is going to be just fine. The injury was minor. But you know your aunt Ianeria she wanted to be with her. They took the first flight to Crete to help heal her.”

“That explains the message and why no one knew where they’d gone.” Heather’s aunt was a sea nymph as were her sisters. Any injury would be treated deep in the Mediterranean Sea. Cell phones, even magically enhanced ones, don’t work that far down.

A sexy smile curled up the corners of her lips. “Uncle Jacob would have been lucky if aunt Ianeria let him pack a bag.” She pressed her hand against her chest. “Whew, I feel like I can breathe again.”

Like the sun against the deepest ocean Heather's gaze held his, excitement thick in her voice. "Zechariah, I think I've found the key to breaking your curse."

His sweet Heather, she'd been crying for him. Emotions tripped over each other in a confused jumble in his heart. Love pulled itself to the front. Sweet Lord above, he loved her. Zechariah cupped her face against his palm. Joy shown through the drying glimmer of her tears, her beautiful face happy once more. He wished he could keep it that way forever. "I know you want to believe you've found away to break it, but there is none Heather."

He'd spent ninety-five years trying to end it with no luck. Jacob and Ianeria spent the last forty-seven. At this point, he would settle for an end to the annual Valentine's Day nightmare.

"There's always a way." She pushed her damp hair off her face. "Life is about balance. A curse once given is made to be broken. The wrong righted."

Zechariah couldn't bear to look at the hope in her gaze. It hurt too much, knowing it would fade in small degrees with each failure. Better to end it now before pain filled the scooped out hollow left by hope. He brushed her hair with his chin and looked ahead.

Polished smooth from native rattlesnake rock the marble-like surface of the memorial marker was dotted with small buttons that resembled the tail of its namesake. Straight plain letters had been carved deep into its diamond hard surface.

*Zechariah Taylor born July 28, 1864 cursed February 14, 1895
To forever watch and never know.*

Heather's body shifted against his. Her weight a treasure Zechariah wished he could keep. Feelings tangled, he desperately wanted her to be right. He was flawed. Something's couldn't be fixed. "Heather you're a talented sorceress and healer don't waste it on something you can't change."

"Of all the horse pucky." Fists to hips, she slipped from his lap and stood before him. "Don't you try to tell me what's a waste of my time. I'm not that little girl you used to catch sneaking out her bedroom window. I'm a grown woman." She stomped her foot and poked at his chest. It sunk into his shirt up to the knuckle. "You stop that and make yourself solid so I can hit you."

Zechariah chewed his lip to stop the grin that tried to take over his mouth. Glad the fire was back in her eyes. His heart near broke

when he read that invitation and learned that her beau left her for another woman. When he came out and saw her all huddled up and crying, the sight near felled him. At that moment his feelings of jealousy at the thought of her marrying mattered less than a tick on a hound dog. Zechariah wanted Heather to be happy. Back and forth she paced lecturing him on universal checks and balances.

“Whoa, there.” Zechariah caught her before she hit the ground. Arms curled under Heather he shoved his energy to the front of his body. Soft breasts flattened against the now solid muscles of his chest, the curve of her waist tucked into him. Perfect. Zechariah’s member twitched already hard from watching her. He cradled her closer. She smelled like heaven. “You all right, darlin’?”

“Yeah, just tired.” Unable to stifle it, the yawn stretched the muscles of her jaw. “Been up late researching.” Another yawn sucked the breath from her. “Told you I figured out the key to your curse.” Solving it had been simple. Heather was certain that Zechariah’s wife knew they would expect a complex puzzle and hadn’t bothered. She’d been right. They’d all spent years searching for nothing.

She was sure he wanted to lecture her about wasting her time. His lips tightened and thinned displeasure evident in their downward turn. “You work too hard. Let’s get you back to the cabin and into some dry cloths. I’ll even make you some coco with those tiny marshmallows you love.”

“Yum, chocolate and dry clothing sounds perfect.” Warm male, hard muscles, and strength surrounded Heather. Images of Zechariah touching her swayed a seductive rhythm in her mind. A soft moan snuck past her lips. “I work as hard as needed, Zechariah.”

Calloused skin abraded her chin, his finger gentle as it tipped her head back so that their gazes met. A rich brown rimmed with black his eyes were surrounded by thick lashes. Heather always felt loved when he looked at her. Until now. Skin taunt, the brown of his eyes disappeared swallowed by the wide black of his pupils. Zechariah looked like he wanted to take her right here on the mist-covered grass.

Her sex clenched.

Firm and warm his lips pressed a kiss onto her forehead. “Nothing wrong with working hard, just be careful about wasting your time on researching the wrong thing. You’re too talented.”

It was an old argument between them. One they never resolved. Heather had grown up knowing about the curse and the truth behind

it. She'd also known that she would be the one to break the curse. Zechariah always supported in her in everything, encouraging her to try and learn anything she'd ever shown and interest in. Except this in this he pushed her away.

"Come." Linking her fingers through his, Heather tugged Zechariah toward the house. No point in rehashing an argument neither of them would bend on. Besides she was too tired.

In the years she'd been gone grass and wildflowers had taken over and obliterated the rock-lined path from the cabin to the marker. It saddened her that no one bothered to tend his grave. If Heather had her way Zechariah's grave wouldn't need tending for a long time.

Cold and wet, the layers of exhaustion draped over her in their weight, dragging her down. Dizzy...she staggered. Drained emotionally and physically, Heather felt grateful for Zechariah's arms around her. Having figured out the key Heather spent the last two weeks pouring over old scrolls, and ancient texts, trying to figure out what trick lay hidden in the deceptively simple curse.

"You're flushed." A cute frown curled down the corners of Zechariah's mouth. "Hold still." His lips pressed against her forehead, firm and warm. The quick brush sent her pulse racing. "And you've a fever."

"S'fine just need some sleep." Muzzy headed, her voice came out muffled. Heather rubbed her face against the soft flannel of his shirt. He smelled of woods and man.

She'd known Zechariah for twenty-three years. Couldn't remember a time when she didn't love him in someway. Heather wrapped her arms around his lean waist and cuddled her body into the heat and strength of his. For the next ten hours his curse would keep him just a hair shy of full manifestation. She always puzzled over that part of the curse. Why not complete? Why even include it, when having it the opposite way would make more sense.

Her uncle and Zechariah's explanation for the Valentine's Day end of it never sat well with her. There was no doubt that Zechariah's wife was a cruel greedy bitch who would do anything to get what she wanted. Her cruelty is why Heather kept digging even after she'd figured out that true love was what she forced him to bare witness to all these years. It took Heather a while, but she finally figured out the trick. At least she prayed she did.

"Zack, I have to tell you what I learned." A yawn interrupted her.

Spellfire Hearts

“Heather, darlin’, you’re so tuckered you can barely stand.” One strong arm swept under her legs the other supported her against his chest. “Sleep, you can tell me later.”

Too tired to argue Heather nuzzled her face closer and slept.

Chapter 3

Layers of sensation filtered through her rousing senses. Misty's purr vibrated against her legs. Her little body managed to stretch itself from Heather's knee to ankle. Pops and cracks from the fire punctuated the purrs. Warmth and light danced over her face. A heavy weight sprawled across her legs and a powerful arm held her. Zechariah's chin rested, on what was becoming his customary spot, the top of her head.

The curved spiral of the braided rug they lay on pressed into her side. Its thick, soft fabric a cushion between their bodies and the wood floor.

With each exhalation the short silk of his chest hair and firm muscles teased the skin of her back. The slow steady taunt, a counter point to the rough denim of his pants. Pleasure snaked through Heather's waking body. She held still, afraid to open her eyes.

Zechariah always made her feel cherished and loved. He treated her like her brothers did, except without the customary teasing. At five years old it had been great to have a brother who didn't put frogs in your bed or pull your pigtails. At seventeen the appeal vanished, she didn't need another sibling she had plenty of them. She wanted a lover. Wished for Zechariah to be her first and her last. The day before she returned to college she'd approached him.

He'd been so sweet in his rejection. Heather remembered how crushed she felt.

Now almost a decade later she lay in his arms. She wasn't sure what caused Zechariah to see her as a woman. She didn't think Zechariah was even aware of the shift in his attitude. Maybe her years away brought on the change in him. Between college, medical school, and her summers at White Hall, the paranormal healer's academy, Heather hadn't been back to Spellfire. Despite the fact that they'd not seen one another, Heather and Zechariah kept in touch.

Heather grinned, memories of Zechariah's first attempts a sweet reminder of how much he cared for her. She'd been too ashamed to call. But not Zechariah, he'd been so cute. In his usual fashion Zechariah hadn't bothered to keep up with the technology. According to Misty and her uncle, Zechariah's first bumbling attempts at using the computer resulted in several fires and five totaled hard drives. Fortunate for Zechariah, her uncle's familiar loved electronics. In the beginning the dainty feline worked the speakerphone and computer while Zechariah grumbled about modern technology in the background. Quick as you please their antics put Heather at ease, her embarrassment lost to laughter.

"Have a good nap?" Zechariah's breath brushed the words against her ear.

"Mmm, yes. How long have I been asleep?" Heather whispered, scared that he would move away from her.

Slumber filled the lazy drawl of Texas in his voice. "Almost five hours."

Zechariah tucked her closer to his body. The rough calluses on his fingers grazed the skin on her abdomen. Her nipples peaked. Heather hoped the tight crests would be next to feel the delicious abrasion of the pads on her skin.

"Zechariah?"

"Hum."

"Why am I naked?"

"You were soaked to the bone. I needed to get you out of those clothes." His hand roamed the contours of her body. Like the wings of a butterfly the back of his hand kissed the undersides of her breasts. His fingers fluttered tingles down her stomach, visited by a tantalizing brush of pleasure at the soft skin of her mound, then danced over her hipbone. Ecstasy encased her. Heather couldn't suppress the low hum that welled up from her chest. Moisture dampened her labia, slicking her channel.

Zechariah's low sexy drawl seduced her, while his hand continued to arouse. "I dried and wrapped you in blankets before the fire."

Sweat beaded across her upper lip. The restless need to rub her skin over his made Heather roll. Zechariah halted the movement with a gentle press. His palm a magnificent delight weighing down the center of her body.

Heather panted as her need broke over her body like goose bumps.

Sweet and rich like maple syrup his voice poured over her. “You were shivering so bad I got under the covers with you.” Zechariah’s voice dipped low a rasp of sex and need filled his words. “Nothing like body heat to take the chill off.” His thumb tracked over her hip.

Heather writhed, her channel pulsing her lips slick.

“You warm enough now darlin’?”

“Yes.”

“Good.” Zechariah’s voice rumbled.

Cool air hit her back. Disappointment rushed in with the chill walking down her spine. Now that she was warm and awake he was leaving. “Zechariah?”

Her world paused, not sure what she would say. When he answered her. Heather wanted to plead with him to stay, to love her as she always loved him.

She knew she wouldn’t beg. Pride would prevent her. Zechariah must choose to accept what she offered.

“You know what. Your shivering wasn’t the only reason I got under the blankets.” Lips passed their secrets to the skin on the back of her neck. His hands urged her onto her stomach.

Ohmygod, Zechariah Taylor was kissing her. Down her spine his mouth shared its warmth, excitement spilled through the layers of her flesh. The liquid satin of his tongue slide into the clef at the top of her cheeks the same time his hands glided from her hips, dipped in at her waist and caressed the sides of her breasts and back. Up and down his hands and tongue lapped and stroked. The combined sensations sent Heather’s body into overload. Her nipples tingled, her core wept, aching to be filled.

“So beautiful. I need a taste of you.” Zechariah’s voice an orgasm for her ears. The heat of his breath scalded the moisture left by his mouth.

Heather almost came when his teeth fastened onto the skin of her right buttock. Zechariah drew back his teeth abraded the sensitive skin between. His hands flowed behind his mouth they stroked the soft flesh between her ass, the crease at the top of her thighs. Juice dripped from between Heather’s lips. She’d never been so excited. Her clit was so swollen and full of need if Zechariah didn’t touch it soon she’d be forced to take care of it herself.

Heather squirmed. The movement caused her nipples to rub against the braided rug. Zechariah splayed his hand in the curve of her spine, making it clear he wanted her to stay.

“Zechariah, please move. I’m going to roll over.”

“Soon.”

“No, now.” Her body craved, her heart longed. In the twenty-three years she’d known Zechariah she’d never felt him. Oh, there’d been brief moments when he’d made himself solid enough so that he could touch her, but a woman longed to learn all the contours of her lover’s body.

With lean hips, a wide chest and broad, long fingered hands Zechariah possessed a physic that begged to be touched, licked, and fucked. “You’ve had long enough it’s my turn.”

“Heather.” Zechariah slid a denim-covered leg between her thighs. “I’ve only had a small bit of you.” The worn fabric, a combination of soft and scratchy, added to Heather’s urgency. His other leg joined the first. His words low and husky surrounded her. “My mouth just learned the flavor of you. I need more. I want your juice to fill my belly, your scent to bath my face, and your sweet channel to ride my fingers as I feel it clench around them while you ride out your pleasure.”

“All that and I’ve nothing.” Heather pushed up on her arms and twisted her body so she could see him. Zechariah knelt between her legs. The fire highlighted the muscles of his chest. Dark hair lightly coated his pectorals, skipped his six-pack of abs, and picked up in a thin line that vanished into his jeans. His erection shoved out the front of the denim. Thick and long the tip of the head peeked out above the very top button.

Heather licked her lips, imagining the dark velvet tip pushing its way into her mouth. Zechariah groaned.

“If I was on my back we could savor each other.” Her gaze met his. Hungry lust, stark, raw and wanting, glazed his brown eyes. A flush painted his cheeks with color. Her pussy throbbed. “Together.”

Fast as dry lightening his lips met hers. His tongue thrust into mouth the same moment his fingers slid into her drenched channel. He pumped them in and out. Heather groaned at the overwhelming sensation. His tongue stroked her mouth. His fingers filled her. Hot male skin caressed her back, worn denim scraped her calves, thighs, and buttocks. His erection filled the cleft between her butt cheeks.

Zechariah's mouth left hers. Heather's protest a groan of need.

"Sweet lord, darlin', what you do to me. Watching you eat me up with your gaze. The way you licked your mouth when you stared at my rod. I near exploded." The two fingers stroking her pussy stopped his knuckles flush with the bare skin of her mound. They curled forward seeking. Heather rotated her hips. She needed him to move.

"This is all the readying I can give you," His hips bore down on hers. The braided rug dug into her skin, her mound and stomach flattened. Her channel constricted, delighting in the added pressure. The tips of his fingers continued their quest for her sweet spot. "'Cause when I roll you over I'm going to slide so deep into your sheath that our souls will touch."

Heather's hips bucked lifting them both off the carpet. The pleasure of her orgasm hit. "Aaaaah."

"That's it cum for me." Air hit her back as Zechariah lifted off her. His fingers stole in and out of her, milking the last drops of ecstasy. "Look at you. So beautiful."

His thumb tweaked her swollen clit sending her into a second orgasm.

Chapter 4

Boneless, Heather lay with her face flat against the rug. Her lids barely open. Her body felt like someone had just removed her spine, she had no substance other than the throbbing echoes deep within her sex. Misty came over to investigate. Her nose wet cold against Heather's cheek. "Hey, your breath smells like fish."

Zechariah chuckled. "She's been playing at the falls with the selkies' again. Got Garland wrapped around her little paw, has him catching fish for her."

Heather could hear Zechariah shifting. The thunk of his boots and sexy shush of his pants as he removed them brought naughty thoughts to her to mind. If she could just get the bones back into her body she'd act on them.

Zechariah reached for the cat. His erection glided over her. A line of pre-cum followed in its wake. She groaned wished it was her lips they painted.

"Time to let the adults play." Misty sidestepped his grasp, sniffed, sauntered off.

Heather rolled. Mmm, he looked good. One arm locked. Muscles bunched tight as it supported his weight above her. "Are we going to play, Zechariah?"

She could feel the heat of him. Their legs tangled. The short stiff hair coating them, a sensual counter to the silky brush of the longer ones covering the heavy weight of his sex. Heather walked her fingers over his belly. The muscles twitched and jerked, as did his erection. It bumped against her clit sensation shot straight to her womb. Her eyelids closed.

"I'm not playing." Zechariah kissed her chin. "Open your eyes."

His face made her want to weep. To gather him close. Zechariah looked like a man about to gain everything he'd ever wanted, knowing he would lose it. A sad contentment.

Her sweet, sweet, Zechariah. Heather ached over all he'd been through. She knew his history. Abandoned by his mother, used and cursed by his wife. Zechariah had never known what it felt like to be loved, cherished. Heather felt honored that she would be the one to teach him. That she would free him. "Neither am I."

He tasted of all she ever wanted. Heather lapped the plump flesh of his lower lip. Zechariah groaned, rotating his hips so that the broad width of his cock rubbed against her engorged clit. Swollen and needy it rejoiced at the attention. A dull pleasure-pain, ecstatic in its greed filled her.

Zechariah broke the kiss. "I'm cursed. I've no right to touch you. Shouldn't have even spoken to you that first day, but then, as now I'm selfish." Zechariah leaned his head against hers.

Anger edged pleasure over. "Stop that. You've every right to take what I freely offer."

"I don't want to have only this night." He looked like he wanted to weep.

Thank you, sweet goddess. Zechariah was old fashioned and honorable. He'd always tried to protect her. To him, touching her would be a big time breach. His admitting to wanting more than one night was major.

"Nor do I. I want forever, Zechariah." She traced a finger down the sharp plane of his cheekbone. "I love you."

She fisted her hands in his hair, brought her mouth to his. Amazing. "Two weeks ago I finished my last internship and made arrangements to move to Spellfire."

From her mother Heather had been gifted with magic, her father's genetics made her a healer. She'd studied both aspects of her nature all her life. "You know I've always wanted to open a research center dedicated to curing curses and other ailments caused by malicious paranormals."

"You will. I've already made sure of it, no matter what you decide."

"What's to decide? I love you."

Heather wanted to erase the sorrow that etched its misery upon his heart.

"Heather, I'm a ghost not a man. These hours once a year is all you'll have physically. I can partially manifest, but because of the curse I can never fully solidify."

He sat pulling her up so that they faced each other. Heather held back what she wanted to say. That Zechariah was willing to believe she could love him was enough. They'd almost met all the conditions of the curse now she just needed to get him to the consummation portion.

"The curse also prevents me from leaving my land and I'll never be able to give you children. We can adopt." Hope filled his deep brown gaze. "If it's okay with you I would love a big family" He stopped. "It's not all negative. Seven years ago, I started a small company. I make enough so that you can do anything you want. We can build a house and the center wherever you want on the land. And while I can't pleasure you physically..." Soft kisses touched the corners of her mouth and worked their way in. Arms straight, he pushed away from her. Firm hands covered her body. Mouths licked her nipples, suckled at her clit. Her body arched into the pleasure. Waves of ecstasy cascaded over her.

Moments later she came back. Zechariah waited, meeting her gaze dead on. "Everything I have is yours."

His closed mouth met hers then left. "I love you, Heather. Today, tomorrow, and forever. Will you stay?"

"Yes." Heather smoothed her hands over his shoulders. She stood, naked, held her hand out to him. "After tonight there is no way your going to get rid of me. Now come into the bedroom and make love to me Zechariah."

"No."

Nausea brought bile to the back of her throat. *Oh god, he loved her*, Heather knew he did. She could see he wanted her. Stretched out on the braded rug before the fire Zechariah's body was all long lean lines. His erection strained past his navel.

She needed him to make love to her in his bed or the curse wouldn't be broken. "Why, no? You want me."

Zechariah grinned. "Darlin' you can see I do. Come here."

"Wouldn't you be more comfortable in your bed?"

Quick as that a scowl replaced the grin. "That's not my bed. It's hers."

What? Heather felt her dreams begin to decay. Zechariah didn't believe she could break the curse. She knew she could. She'd done nothing but work toward removing it since she was five years old.

The legend stated it must be where he lay to sleep. That was as

much a part of his curse as the lines on his tombstone. She was positive the bed in the other room was original to the cabin. Zechariah told her once that he'd made one bed, the one in the bedroom was it. "Do you mean that's not the one you told me about? The one you made and slept in."

Without that bed the curse couldn't be broken. Heather felt like she'd been run over. Her dreams and hopes turned to ash. Zechariah would be chained here forever. Not that she was going anywhere bed or no bed. Heather loved him he was her heart.

"I made it. Just never slept in it. Don't plan on starting." Zechariah scowled. "Seen enough people rutting in it, including my wife and best friend. Far as I'm concerned you can burn it."

"What? You were married." Gut tight with hope. Was there another bed tucked in a wall she'd missed. A quick scan of the room showed two doors one to the bath and one to the bedroom. "Where did you sleep?"

"Here in front of the fire."

She didn't ask why he slept on the rug. Zechariah's marriage had been a sham from the start. "Are you telling me that all those couples hoping to 'fulfill' the legend and gain it's blessing slept in the wrong spot?"

"Yup, now come one over here."

Heather felt a giddy bubble burst. "I plan on *cuming*." Hips swaying, she took his hand and lowered herself onto the rug.

Orange light from the fire flowed over the angled planes of his body. Greedy for the sight and feel of him Heather's hands road over his skin, stroked his firm muscles, and the glided across the silk of his flesh. He was incredible. Her mouth ached to taste the long thick length of him.

Giving into her need Heather's lips stretched over the flared head. The rich scent of him filled her nose a groan vibrated his shaft against her lips. Salty pearls of pre-cum leaked down her throat. Her tongue gathered them. Heather sought more of his essence, taking him further into her mouth. Her tongue lapped at his shaft.

Zechariah bucked, his head bumping against her tonsils.

"Sweet lord, Heather." His hands fisted in her hair, half pulling half pushing as though he couldn't decide which he wanted.

The gentle pressure of his hands urged her off him. "Heather I need to be in you." One of his hands delved between her thighs

testing her. She could have saved him the trouble. She was so ready her cream spilled from her lips coating her.

Zechariah rolled onto his back. Heather needed no invitation. She straddled his hips. His hands guided him to her. The flared tip of his broad head parted her slick folds. Heather rocked back and forth working his thick width into her sheath.

His hands covered her breasts, thumbs working the ridged tips. Heather leaned into the caress.

"I want to pull you down on me so bad, darlin'." Zechariah hissed in pleasure. "Feel the silk and heat of you encase me. Slam my cock into you and make you scream and spill your juice down my balls."

Heather thought she would orgasm from the deep dark drawl of his words. His width stretched her and his length went on forever.

"Bend over, darlin'. I want to taste your nipples." The calloused pads of his thumbs sent jolts of electric ecstasy through her breasts. "Look at them, look how they beg to be sucked."

Heather glanced at her breasts. The sight of them swinging against his face his mouth and tongue, licking and nipping at them became one of the most erotic things she'd ever seen.

Heat encased one needy peak. His thumb and index finger plucked the other. Her pussy clenched in ecstasy. Zechariah brought his other hand to base of her spine urging her down while his hips pushed up.

They both groaned when his shaft filled her completely.

"You feel like heaven around me." Zechariah panted, his voice hoarse with need. His hands on her hips urged her to slide up and down his cock. With each stroke the flared tip of his head dragged over the bundle of nerves just inside her entrance. Spirals of rapture flowed from that special spot racing over her body. Release hovered. The muscles inside her sheath fluttered.

Slipping his hand between them, Zechariah glided the tip of his finger over the swollen bud of her clit. Orgasm rolled over her in waves. Colors burst behind her eyelids.

Zechariah pumped his cock into her. Pulling her mound flush to his. Her name a prayer he chanted over and over as he spilled his seed deep within her womb.

Replete, Heather slid off Zechariah. His arm pulled her close her head on his chest. "Thank you."

“For what?”

Zechariah’s eyes were closed, his hands roaming her. “Letting me inside you.”

Heather grinned. “Of course I let you in me I love you. No need to thank me.”

“I love you too.” His eyes opened, his face serious. “But a man is always grateful for his woman’s gifts.”

He was just too sweet. Heather sent a quick pray of thanks to the goddess for blessing her with this man. She kissed him, a quick pass of her mouth then twisted to check the clock on the mantle.

“Sunset’s a little after six.” His fingers burrowed through her hair. “We’ve a bit of time. Rest, you’re still tuckered from all your studying. I’ll wake you before.”

She dozed content that the conditions of the curse had been met.

Chapter 5

Tacky warmth spread under Heather's hair and cheek. Confused by the sensation, they'd been sweaty. Sweat cooled not warmed and it wasn't sticky. Heather slipped her hand between Zechariah and her face. When she pulled it out to look at it blood coated it.

Heather shot up. "Zechariah."

Pain bracketed his eyes and dug grooves into his face. Blood flowed from a narrow wound over his heart. Grabbing the blanket, Heather quickly folded and compressed the area over the wound. "What happened? Why are you hurt?" She opened her senses and scanned the room for an intruder or spell.

Other than the constant taint of the curse the room was empty.

His lids fluttered. Dark red blood welled from the wound. It was rapidly bleeding out. A weak groan and words too low to be heard wheezed from Zechariah. Heather trickled power into the wound probing for its cause and extent.

"Damn it." Heather couldn't believe they'd all over looked it. Zechariah had been knifed through the heart. Like the tumblers in a lock it all clicked. So this was why Zechariah's wife made the spell so simple, she'd known he'd die once it was broken.

Changing the probe Heather turned it into healing energy.

"Ouch." Nasty thing tried to fry her. Damn, bitch ass wife of his placed some kind of anti-healing spell on it. "Dead and buried wasn't far enough." There was a special place for people like Zechariah's wife.

His hands tried to grasp hers. Pain twisted his features.

"Shh, it's going to be fine. Don't try to move sweetheart." Heather applied more pressure to the wound, her hands glowing pure gold as her magic poured into them. "I ask the blessings of the earth mother Gaia, Inanna queen of the moon goddess of water, Bast goddess of fire and healing, and Arianrhod goddess of air in her

healing owl form. Hear this healer's plea and grant me your protection and power."

Heather felt surges of power. Air rushed into her mouth, fire race along her spine, the thrumming earth beat up the soles of her feet and into her legs, and the power of water broke over her head and in through her tears. The strength and blessing of the goddesses poured into her so that she feared she would burst from the beauty of their grace. Twining the threads together, she wove a spell of healing.

"I call upon the cleaning essence of pure water so that this wound might be cleaned. I call upon the warmth of the air so that it might protect against shock and dry that which water has cleansed. I call upon the earth so that I might draw its healing nutrients and strength to make whole that, which has been rent apart. I call upon fire to seal closed the wound and lend its warmth and purification so that no infection may form and no chill felt. I give of my Spirit and twine it with the four so that it becomes five so that this wound might heal. As I will so mote it be."

Power flowed from Heather into Zechariah and the wound began to seal. Blood slowed and skin knit, then stopped. No matter how much healing energy Heather pumped into it nothing would heal the wound enough to bring Zechariah out of danger. Heather thanked and released the goddesses she called upon.

Undeterred Heather reached for her uncle's familiar with her thoughts. There was more than one way to heal and she knew them all.

Misty ran into the room and curled up on top of Heather's hands. "Thank you for the thought, you're not heavy enough. I need you to get my bag."

"Meow." Misty let Heather know she'd do what was needed.

"It's on the counter in the kitchen." Misty leapt up.

"Wait."

Misty hissed not wanting a delay. Drawing upon the earth Heather kissed the little marmalade's mouth, and passed her strength to complete her task. Misty leaped over the couch.

Heather heard a solid thump when her bag hit the floor.

Drops of blood leaked through the blanket. The magic of the curse began to unwind the threads of Heather's healing spell. "Hurry."

In her bag Heather carried healing spells, herbs, and human

medical supplies.

Zechariah shifted in agony and his wife's anti-healing spell made him fight her efforts.

"Stop moving, Zechariah. I'll bind you if I have to."

He stilled. Goddess, his face was so pale. "Hold on, Misty is bringing my bag. I'll be able to complete the healing when she gets here." Heather prayed there was enough time. Blood soaked through the compress.

"Hurry, hurry, hurry." She whispered.

Misty arrived. Heather resisted the urge to leap for the satchel. Shifting, she put one of her knees over the wound, pressed enough weight to keep up the pressure, but not crush. Precious minutes passed while she assembled everything she thought she would need.

"Zechariah, I'm going to take my weight and the compress off the wound. Then I'm going to finish healing you. I need you to do something for me."

Breathing shallow, his lids opened. Pupils dilated he held to consciousness by will alone.

"I need you to gather into your heart all of the love I feel for you and the love you feel for me. Bind them together and let it fill the wound." Like a moth Heather brushed her mouth against his. "Know how much I love you in your head and your heart. You must believe our love is stronger than all else."

Without his belief nothing Heather did would matter. Bile and pain rushed up her throat, Heather shoved it down. "Zechariah, can you do that?"

Eyes glazed with pain. Zechariah nodded.

Reinforcing the white light that surrounded her, Heather centered her mind and got to work. Knee and compress removed. She grabbed up a canister. Stuck the nozzle into Zechariah's wound and pushed the button. Foam the color of green gelatin filled the hole.

Between the wound seal and her healing spell Heather prayed they would hold long enough for her to unwind the anti-healing spell.

"To undo a wrong that has been done.

I call the goddess so that she may aid me."

The white light surrounding Heather pulsed and flared until no corner of the room lay in darkness.

A thread at a time Heather teased apart the anti-healing spell. Blood leached around the green wound seal. Heather kept working.

By the time she finished, lines red ran from the wound down the side of his ribs.

Please let him not have lost too much. She snatched up the pack of herbs mixed with honey that she made and placed it over the now open wound. Drawing the white light into her hands she shaped it into healing energy. In slow increments she repaired his heart then worked her way out repairing the veins, bones, muscle, and flesh. She chanted a spell to replace his blood loss and energy.

With the last clean corner of the blanket and some help from air, water, and fire Heather removed the blood, herbs, honey and wound-seal off. Pink skin covered the wound. Zechariah's chest rose and fell in the even rhythm of sleep. Heather cleaned up.

Unable to move him she shoved a clean blanket under Zechariah then curled up beside him.

* * * *

Sunlight stripped across Zechariah's face. Pressed against his side Heather slept. She shifted almost climbing onto him. Zechariah gathered energy and started to direct it to support Heather where her body touched his. The smooth satin of her skin brushed against his cock. Zechariah hardened. Still asleep her hand drifted over his chest, grazed the muscles in his stomach, down to the head of his penis. The tip pulsed under the feather like strokes of her fingertips. Reaching for her, he dragged her across him.

Mid pull he froze, realization slammed him. His energy was still gathered and held. Her body distracted him and he never directed it to solidify his flesh where she lay. Stunned. It was at least ten a.m., the day after Valentine's Day. He shouldn't be solid. His rod twitched, reaching for her mound suspended a breath from it. Supposed to be or not Zechariah was one hundred percent flesh. Flesh that ached to be in his woman.

"Are you planning on using that or keeping me near enough to go crazy?" Light streamed across her hair, highlighting the sun kissed strands. A gentle smile played over her mouth and brought its joy to her sea colored gaze.

"Not that I'm complaining but how?"

"I broke the curse." Her voice smug, she wiggled in an attempt to bring her sheath closer to his rod. "Not only did I break the curse but as of last night we've fulfilled all the terms of your legend."

"Why aren't I dead?"

She laughed, her breasts bouncing with her mirth. She used his distraction to toss her leg over his hip. On her knees she reached between their bodies and grasped him. "I healed you."

Firm strokes of her hand up and down his shaft made Zechariah's hips start to buck and his mind not care about curses. His balls tightened and tingles raced up his spine. "How can you heal a dead man?"

"Sweetheart you were never dead. That's why your body was never buried. In that instance she wasn't being malicious, just smart, she cursed you before you could die. You were never a ghost."

Heather rubbed the tip of his cock between her lips. Her thick cream spilled over it coating his head. Zechariah felt his eyes roll back in his head at the pleasure of her teasing.

"She didn't count on a sorceress, who is also a trained surgeon and expert healer, falling in love with you."

"I'm a lucky man."

"Yes, you are, my love." Her face radiated love and happiness so pure it shone like the brightest star. "A man with his whole life before him."

A life he planned on spending with her. Zechariah took her face between his palms. "I love you so much."

Sheathing him in her warmth, Heather twinned her tongue with his. Her channel hot and tight and so wet that Zechariah felt his balls tighten and his spine tingle. Not wanting to go over alone he played his index finger over her swollen nub until they both groaned.

Sated Zechariah gathered Heather in his arms, enjoying the feel of her skin. For the first time in one hundred and ten years Zechariah was able to touch without focusing. Enjoy the warmth of the fire, the feel of the rug against his back, the silken texture of his woman's body against his own. His Heather had done it she'd freed him from his prison. The pain of the past faded, his wife's betrayal now a blessing that brought this woman to him. Love for her flowed over him.

"Come and live with me, Heather." Zechariah cupped her face in his palm. "Marry me."

Moisture gathered like dew along her lashes. Happiness curved her lips up. "Yes and yes."

Capturing her mouth, Zechariah Taylor was no longer a cursed man. Thanks to his Heather, he was blessed.

Tricks of Love

By

Mae Powers

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Tricks of Love

Shai sat at her booth, sipping on her Chocolate Crème Cookie shake. No one made better shakes than the staff of Sinful Sundaes. With a mischievous lilt to her pouty lips, Shai glanced around the large ice cream shop. Its proprietor, Electra Spellfire was busy elsewhere today and for that Shai was glad. Electra and she didn't get along too well, sometimes. So, Shai only came in mostly on Fridays when the fairy bunch came in for the new flavor of healthy Cherrie-Sherrie Pies and Goodies.

Of course, she stayed afterwards for her alone time and to partake of ogling the busy afternoon clientele. The staff changed a little, with a ghost running the evening shift, and Harpy Collins now being the day manager of Sins. Electra and her new hubby (the scrumptious vamp, Shai drooled), had gone and opened up a new swanky restaurant at the end of the town's borders, near Interstate 45, which led down towards Galveston. Shai wondered how she could finagle an invite to the new place's grand opening. Cuddling up to Electra's hottie wasn't the answer.

Electra's previous marriage didn't last, but not because Shai romped with Electra's ex. Well they were divorced then, and the dratted man shouldn't have come on to Shai with sweets and flowers. Everyone knew that Fairies couldn't resist sweets and flowers, especially buttercups, and bon bons in her case. She supposed she should have left the ex alone, but one bite of those homemade bon bons and a sip of buttercup ambrosia did her in.

Still the fling was nearly worth it, and she had been in her summer heating phase. The shape-shifting jerk had already been messing around on Electra too, before the divorce. Oh well, he wasn't

worth much now and no longer lived in Spellfire. Nope, he was sent back to the underworld beneath Spellfire, where the ratfink should have been incarcerated a long time ago.

Shai's short-spanned attention was drawn to a couple of beings entering the shop. Fairy friends, not particularly hers, were visitors by the way they oohed and ahhed a bit too much over the shop's delicacies and sweets, and lunch fare. Faeryville, below Spellfire, just hadn't been the same since one of the lead fairies allowed some dingy human to come live amongst them. Shai shrugged her shoulders and forgot about that incident as Horrible Henry gushed into the place and began harassing the new guests. Shai notice Harpy's wings flapped angrily and then subsided. Harpy and Henry didn't always see things in the same light.

Shai almost felt sorry for the halfling harpy-human, half-breed, because Harpy couldn't fly. (Probably because of the human strain in her too, evidently.) Shai couldn't imagine ever not being able to fly. The creature was lucky Electra allowed her to work here after breaking Derek Spellfire's heart. That one was a hottie too, Electra's younger brother. However, no accounting for tastes, since the man always had eyes only for Harpy Collins.

She slurped down the last of her shake, looking out the large windowed front of Sins, which overlooked the older downtown area of Spellfire. She saw humans and trolls strolling to and fro, going about their business and pleasure. Wizards on borrowed witches brooms swooped down to land in front of Trinket's and its sister potion and adult play shop, Nightshades. Shai didn't like wizards much, nor their apprentices in particular. Those wannabe wizards were always toying with fairies affections, or that of pixies.

A few witches holding up wizard airbag seats dropped down too, reclaiming their brooms from the wizards and giving their airbags back to them. Shai recognized a few of them as teachers and students from the Alchemy Academy. She didn't like witches much either, they didn't know how to take good joke. Well most of them anyway. She espied two of her few witch friends Candy Piper and Jaleena Trinkets nearer to Nightshades. Candy owned a sweet shop in town and always gave Shai goodies. And Jaleena, just out of college, and home for all the winter and spring holidays, was always kind to her, especially when she got in trouble. She'd hid Shai in the Trinkets'

attic when Electra stormed the town the day she'd found out the ex romped with Shai.

Many other shops aligned the different streets leading into town and along the main thoroughfares. Shai had been to other paranormal and magical towns and places, but none held her attention more than Spellfire, Texas. There was just more to do and people to play jokes on here than anywhere else, most of the time. Moreover, she loved the shopping here. Shai glanced down at her pearl gilded watch and grinned. It was time for her shopping spree of trouble making.

She liked the Friday afternoon time when most of the town shoppers came in to do their business and have an afternoon of fun. Some came in on Saturdays too, when the main theater in town was showing a double run of movies, or the game shop next to it was having a creature wars marathon and free pizza supplied by the all-night pizza place.

The mini mall down at the end of the town's main road was a great place to spend the day for mischief shopping. Of course, Trinkets across the street was too. She'd gotten some fun in there a few times with that menagerie of spell books. She looked to her right and saw couples strolling along the town square park. Now there was a place to get people riled. People in Spellfire were always having some party or festival in the Town Square Park, which was not far from the larger Spellfire Community Park, just behind Town Hall.

The winter holidays had already passed and now the folk were getting ready for the Valentine's Day Picnic. An impish glee filled Shai. Oh, she loved the holidays with all its gaiety, food, and people. Oh, what fun she was going to have frustrating all the partiers and picnickers. Didn't matter to her if they were human or paranormal, Shai knew she would find a way to cause a little havoc in their lives.

Ok, sometimes she felt a little bad and helped some misfortunate souls out. However, for the most part, she was like the Prankster Pixies who also lived below in the underground realms like some of the fairy folk. Like them, she often gleefully stirred up trouble. After all, she did have a strain of pixie blood in her, and everyone knew that pixies loved playing shenanigans on unsuspecting people.

Sometimes, those around and in Spellfire didn't know all the trouble she caused, or could cause. Especially in lovers' lives. Occasionally she didn't mind the notoriety of being caught making trouble. Sometimes she had fun being in the spotlight. Yet, partially

shy, like her name, she still had a lot of fun being a nuisance while being quiet with the spicy stirs she made. Sly Shai was her Internet handle, after all. However, that was another way she caused mischief. Today, she wanted to go out and have some fun.

Her lovely, wispy wings rose and fell, as they glittered in tune with her thoughts. *Today, I'm really in the mood to pull some pranks and stir up mischief.* Perhaps her friend Peter the Pixie would join in. Or, maybe she could get raunchy, Horrible Henry to cause a ruckus along with her. Sometimes he was in the mood, and liked to get invisible and pretend to be a poltergeist. They often tormented Frightful Frieda and the town mayor Perry Normil. Better yet, she'd just go on an outing by herself. She needed some practice for tomorrow. Saturday was the big Valentine's Day Picnic. Then, like her Shakespearean hero Puck, she intended to cause a helluva lot of trouble for those silly human lovers all the way up through Valentine's Day.

She looked to make sure no one was watching her and quickly shifted into an unassuming human form. Letting out a soft chuckle of impishness, Shai left the booth and Sinful Sundaes. With a bounce to her step and a sparkle in her eyes, she went on her shopping spree of mischief.

* * * *

As Shai walked down the sidewalk after leaving Sins, she looked to the Town Square Park and saw people setting up things for tomorrow's annual Valentine's Day Picnic. She chuckled to herself, and recalled the time she nearly destroyed the Valentine's Day Picnic when she turned into a dust storm and nearly blew the picnic to smithereens and uprooted some of the gaiety. However, that was only one year of fun. She'd been in this town almost since the Spellfires and Havocs had. She didn't think anyone, not even the elemental wind sorcerer Derek could have done a better windstorm. Well maybe his cutie elder brother, Electra's twin, Damien Spellfire could have come close. Or Electra's friend and the town newspaper owner, Maejika Maelstrom, could have. Well there was the European cousin of the Havocs, whom she dated once, Morgan LeHavoc, who created a pretty powerful thunderstorm on New Year's day once. They were all ferociously awesome and had some fairy strain in them.

Of course, no one did it like her. Shai was proud of her abilities. They were such fun to have. Her shopping spree was temporarily

forgotten as she recalled other good things from the picnics. She loved food and everyone always brought such good things to eat to the picnic, plus there were always food stalls and food contests, like chili cook offs, which most towns in Texas had at some point or another. Even in rain or slight cool days like today, they had them. Texans barbequed and cooked no matter what. Or they went out and ate a lot or ordered out.

Of course, besides switching delivery and take out orders, some of her best pranks were on lovers who came to the town picnics, especially Lovers Day. Valentine's was going to be fun. There would be all kinds of special events here in Spellfire between now and Tuesday, when it was officially Valentine's Day.

Whether the townsfolk or couples or family go to this Saturday afternoon's Valentine's Day Picnic and sit in the warm sunlight or go to the evening one by the light of the moon, sparks will fly with romance and bliss in the air. Shai liked getting invisible and causing havoc with the romantic adults. However, sometimes, she also liked to just watch them. Not many people knew that she was a big romantic at heart, but she didn't want them to know she was a softie either. She liked how at the picnics, some couples often brought along a basket of their own, complete with a bottle of wine, while others partook of the festivities and catered fair-type morsels they could buy. Shai was glad that, with as much as she ate, her Fae metabolism kept her slender.

Along with savory dishes from many of the eateries and newer upscale restaurants around town, many succulent dishes would be served and sold in order to whet the appetite of the picnic partier's palate. She heard her stomach gurgle as she passed the workers setting up things, and recalled some of the delicious foods she'd had at other picnic jamborees.

Things like, Roasted Pepper Pork Strips were delicious to eat with pitas or toasted Baguettes. Spookman's Strawberry Shortcakes went nicely with those tasty fixings. Then of course she couldn't forget some of the best barbeque in Spellfire and that would be the award winning, finger licking Boodoirs BBQ. They won first place in the BBQ Cook-off contest for years now. Of course, she thought, they may get beaten this year if the Deadman's Delicatessen enters again. Shai thought they made some of the best-grilled chicken legs around. In addition, if they make that razzle-dazzling strawberry-que dipping

marinade, she was certain they'd win in one of the meat categories.

Shai made sure they had come in at least second place one year. Why she'd tasted that yummy stuff on Frankie Stein's lips and had gone lust-bonkers for days afterwards. She could just imagine tasting one of her other lover's lips after that mouthwatering cookery.

Of course, she wouldn't forget Trinkets' side dish entry, which won last year—pineapple and chive potato salad with pearl onions and a roasted honey garlic sauce. Yummy enough to magic any lovers away to their own special treat-land. It certainly had with her and the Trinkets part-time cashier, Iman Mummies. Too bad he went and got married recently, she'd liked the way he'd licked her body clean with pineapple flavored sweet lips.

Shai's brows furrowed as she saw in the distance the mayor and Frieda Faraday walking towards the town hall. She didn't like those two that much. About the only thing Frightful Frieda could do good in this town, besides stay out of people's ways, was that she could make some tasty fried jalapeno cheese corn on the cob.

Shy ignored them as she walked near the Old Cronies Country Café. They always sold stuff to the picnickers. Even now, she could smell the flavors of subtle mesquite-spiced meats grilled over slow-burning oak wood pieces. They did a lot of home cooking there and were often glad to see her come in and eat some their savory, poppy seed rolls or toasted onion rolls. They also served up their fruit and raw veggie platters with cream bacon ranch dressing at some of these events. The Cronies made some of the most scrumptious minced peach tarts with swirls of gooey marshmallow topping.

Shai saw other stalls up and it made her think of the other goodies that would be sold and brought to the galas. The normal festival foods associated with any of the townsfolk outings were some of her favorite foods too. Her mouth watered more when she thought of things like hot steaming chili, smoky grilled hot dogs or sausage on a stick, pickles, hamburgers, southwestern fried chicken, deviled eggs, apple and cherry pies, potato chips and a variety of sandwiches, coleslaw and creamy potato & ham salad.

Even now, around in the crispy, fresh country air, she could see a few families with their children playing horseshoes and Frisbee, or taking walks around the fountain and stream. Spellfire was a lovers town, but it also was a family town too. People took time out to be with their kids even on a Friday. Especially around any holiday or

during the summer here the kids (much like a fairy), might be up to mischief or playing at the playground across from the gazebo-pavilion in the town square. But on this Valentine's Day Weekend, Shai was sure that at night the glorious sunsets would unite lovers who like to take strolls and walk around the medians of the town square courtyard. She knew they even liked to sit on a blanket near the fountain or around on one of the wrought iron or concrete benches holding hands and sipping wine or some other cooled drink. Picnic hours tomorrow would be a fun venture for her to cause some mischief in Spellfire.

Although if tomorrow was anything like today, people would be out in droves. It was an unusually warm but slightly windy day, yet the Invisible Men's quartet band still played music in the smaller gazebo. Some times, they just appeared out of nowhere to play some blue grass or one could see their waltzing air-fiddles dancing around the air. Shai move and walked along the paths where there were flowerbeds all around. She saw a few community workers setting up some patio styled lawn chairs near the bandstand. A few birds whistled past her and she looked then moved further down the tree-lined paths.

She walked near the other park, that lay behind the Town Hall. Over at the midsize park, people often played horseshoes; or other activities were going on. Such as a game of volleyball, football, baseball or other such events for family, friends and lovers to have fun. Shai let out a contented sigh. She loved walking through the parks, even though it often took her mind off mischief making. As the wind blew around her sandaled feet, she could feel closeness of summer's approach. The soft winds of spring in Spellfire often tantalized people's hopes of a brighter tomorrow. It would be like that tomorrow, she was sure when the picnicker and lovers looked up and saw clouds painted by the hands of an ambient artist. It would make the day go by serenely, while people lazed around with stomach's full, relaxing contentedly with family and friends on a wonderful day.

Shai sighed. Spellfire was the only family she knew. Her wings flapped and she realized she could no longer tarry. She had an evening date with Peter the Pixie and it was on his town home patio. He was away for a few hours, but he left her a key so she could use his place when she wanted to. She had time to get to his place and fix dinner for them both. She was getting hungry after her park

meanderings. Her mischief making could wait until tomorrow's actual picnic. Tonight she wanted a different kind of fun.

* * * *

Peter the Pixie was in a frustrated fit. Morgan LeHavoc, one of Peter's oldest friends, watched the young-looking sprite pace rapidly back and forth over his hotel room carpet. Well his cousin owned hotel room. He was a distant cousin of the Havoc's and came for a visit from France. Tris and her new husband Adam were delightful hosts and he'd been glad the old family feud was finally put to rest. He went out at one of the malls today and ran across Peter in one of the Food Court stalls, and then the two of them had a few drinks at Barnabas' Bar. The poor guy, all five foot five of him, looked bedraggled and sad from head to toe. His normally curly blond locks were hanging limply and his blue eyes were distraught. Morgan had never seen his age-old friend in such straits.

He ran a hand through his long brown locks and bade the pixie to sit down at one of the chairs in the room. "You've mumbled absently all afternoon since we left Barnabas' Bar. Now tell me again about your problem, maybe I can help."

Peter flopped down in one of the two hotel chairs situated on either side of an old oak, but well kept up, small circular table. Morgan tried not to stifle his grin at the pathetic look Peter gave him. It wouldn't be a chivalrous thing to do right now. Peter was evidently very disturbed by his romantic dilemma.

"I went and did it this time. I actually fell in love and now I don't know how to tell my best friend and um..."

"Former lover." Morgan supplied.

"Yeah. Shai's gonna kill me if I stand her up tonight. I haven't seen her in weeks, but we'd planned to have some fun tonight. But I don't think my fiancée would like it if I kept that date. I just can't be unfaithful. Had it been a fling, I wouldn't think twice, but this time it's for real, Morgan. I asked Katie, a cute leprechaun from Ireland to marry me. It was a whirlwind courtship, but the most incredible experience of my life. I totally forgot about Shai. What am I to do, Morgan?"

Morgan recalled the delectable Shai. For some odd reason, Peter's dilemma suddenly appealed to him. "I think I can help you, Peter. Why don't I visit Shai and tell her for you. I'm sure she'll be

understanding, especially as you two are such old friends and not that romantically involved. Heart-wise that is.”

Peter suddenly grinned. “You think she’ll take it well then? I think Shai is one of the sweetest people I know, but if Katie got wind of me even visiting Shai again, I’d be in a hell of a lot of trouble.”

“You go back to your sweetie. I’ll handle Shai.”

Peter gave him an odd glance. “Weren’t you and Damien Spellfire rivals for her affection at one time? It was some years back, but I was away from Spellfire at the time.”

“We three had an interesting ‘to-do’, but never mind about that. You’re my friend. And, if Shai has been such a good friend to you all these years she’ll understand. I know some leprechauns are much more temperamental than others.”

“That’s for sure. You sure, Morgan? I mean once Katie and I are married and she doesn’t think Shai is an interference to our marriage, I’m sure she won’t mind if I’m normal friends with Shai. I hate not telling her in person or standing her up, but right now, it’s just too important to me not to hurt Katie’s feelings. She’s insecure, but a sweetheart.”

Morgan nodded. “You leave everything to me. I’ll go to your place tonight. You go back to Ireland and I’ll contact you in a few days.”

Peter jumped up and grabbed Morgan’s hand, shaking it vigorously. He looked down on the shorter man and chuckled. “Thanks old friend. Later.”

Peter disappeared, as Pixie’s were wont to do, and Morgan finally laughed out loud. He moved over to the dressing table near the bed and sat in front of the vanity part. He glanced hard at his six-foot frame and grinned. He liked his long wavy brown hair, because it often had soft hands of the feminine kind running through it, their lovely faces and hands delighting in his hair. He wasn’t vain, but he knew his hard physique and old world charm had gotten him into many a lady’s boudoir over the last few centuries. He studied his square face, with his deep-set eyes of chocolate brown and full lips a woman loved suckling on. He’d never been disappointed by or disappointed any of his several lovers, he knew, except for one fickle fairy who had tricked him into her bed.

Not that she hadn’t been worth it, but he usually liked to do the pursuing. However, he’d felt for a long time he’d been under her

special Fae Glamyre. Most female Fae, to human and other paranormal males, were quite lovely and easily able to influence males with their bewitching and magical beauty. However, he had known, somehow, that Shai was a strong Fae who didn't have to use her mystical beauty deliberately on a man. She had a natural innate charm that naturally cast a sexual allure on most unsuspecting men she caught the fancy of. In addition, he caught her fancy, and that of Damien Spellfire about the same time.

The two made asses of themselves over the fickle Fae beauty and she laughed at breaking their hearts. Morgan never fell in love again. Yet, he was glad he hadn't asked Shai to marry him. Fairy females didn't stay in love with a man forever. He'd hoped Shai had been different. She was notorious for her affairs in the fairy and other realms. He half believed they were just stories. However, with a luscious body like hers, and those hypnotically alluring aqua eyes, and that lustrous long red-gold hair of hers, she was a seductress he hadn't been able to get out of his mind or body for a long time. Moreover, after the way she'd stomped on his heart, he had an opportunity to get back at her now.

He glanced at himself again. Oh, he was going to have fun getting back at Shai. She wasn't the only seducer with magical powers. He was one of the strongest witches in the Havoc family line. He would show that little imp that you didn't mess with the heart of Havoc. Even a LeHavoc. He thought of Peter and was glad his friend finally found some happiness. Shai and he were friends for centuries, but never truly madly in love. He chuckled to himself. It would be appropriate if Shai did fall in love and then realized she couldn't get her heart's desire. He closed his eyes and concentrated. When he opened them again, he grinned widely.

Before him was the spitting image of Peter, but slightly taller. He knew Peter could shape-shift to human form for short periods. Shai probably knew this too. However, Morgan intended to do just a bit more. Peter told him that Shai was expecting Peter at the Pixie's townhome here in Spellfire. He checked his watch and realized it was mid-evening, about the time Peter would probably have shown up for his time with Shai. Morgan chuckled.

Fickle Shai wouldn't know what hit her tonight, and Morgan was going to enjoy every minute of the evening. He would make Shai fall in love with him as Peter and then break her heart as she broke his so

many years ago. Then when she admitted she loved him, he'd appear as himself and go off merrily on his way.

The thought pleased him very much. It was time someone gave that mischief making wench a taste of her own medicine. Oh yes indeed, he was going to taste those sweets again and make her squirm. With a flicker of his hand, Morgan made himself invisible. Then he flew out the open window. He liked the fact that he was one of the few witches around who didn't need a broomstick to ride the winds.

Morgan knew Shai probably expected Peter to come through the front door. Pixies liked to make a main entrance even more than fairies did. Yet, after scoping out the house with his sensory powers, he knew she wasn't inside the house. He delighted when he saw her on the upper patio balcony, stretching out on a wicker chaise in the early dusk evening, her eyes closed and with comfortable lounging clothes on. Oh his cock started to harden into a large, popsicle of pleasure when he saw her stretch outwards. She possessed a scrumptious body, one made for a man's hands. He tried to remember Peter's mannerisms. The Pixie did have the power to be invisible for short spells, so it wouldn't throw Shai off, with Morgan being invisible.

He admired her long graceful curves, and lusted still after her well-toned thighs and high plump breasts. He did not see her wings exposed and figured she kept them sheathed and invisible. It's what modern day Fae-kind sometimes did. And they'd grown beautiful as a species over the centuries of interbreeding with other paranormal folk. Maybe soon, he'd have her fawning over him for a change, but for now, it was greeting and fun time.

He kept completely invisible and zoomed down on her. He swooshed above her, and compressed himself into a viable enough form. He didn't drop on her, but stood over her letting her see his soft silver glow. When she finally realized he was there, her lovely aqua eyes sparkled with surprise and anger and her luscious lips had been a perfect O.

That's when he bent down and kissed her erotic mouth. She'd groaned into his kiss and then he deepened it, his solid but invisible tongue exploring hers for the first time in a very long while. She tasted of sweet honey. Honey had always been one of his favorite sweet treats. He was hungry for her delicious morsels. Like a godling

of the winds, he *brrred* in pleasure against her. His unfleshy hands roamed over her body and he didn't let up on her.

She squeaked only for a moment underneath his amorous surprise. Then she squeak-groaned in a high-pitch and groped him. Morgan's cock hardened immediately. For one split second, he wished it were his own image, albeit invisible, feeling her hand closing in around his shaft. Then she caressed his shaft, making him harden even more. He traced every inch of her supple body, enjoying her delectable shivers of desire. She didn't seem to mind when he started unbuttoning her silky lounge top. He bent his head and licked her hard, thick nipples, each in turn. He fondled their plush base, one at a time as he suckled her nipples. His free hand he caressed and explored her sensational body.

She arched against him and her hands splayed across his back. "Invisible and naked. I think I like this new way of greeting me, Peter."

He chuckled at her words, but kept his thoughts hidden. Unlike most Fae, Shai could empathically read emotions and sometimes thoughts. He put a heavy guard on himself and made sure he acted and sounded like Peter as much as possible. "Good, my pesky pet."

He knew from previous visits with Peter over the years, a few things that had transpired between the pixie and the fairy. He used it completely to his advantage. Then he proceeded to open her lounging shirt further.

"I've missed you, Shai." He said between the kisses he trailed over her taut stomach.

She was perfectly tanned and smooth like a silken caramel ice cream topping. And he found her just as tasty as one. He licked and nibbled his way down her body, slurping her up as he would a delectable double-layered mound of butterscotch and caramel flavored ice cream on a cone. Like he knew she did, he too had sweet and luscious cravings for various pleasurable things. Such as her body.

He helped her to squirm out of her lounge pants. He gasped with pleased remembrance of her sensationally seductive lower torso. He couldn't wait to taste her magical delights. Then he slowly, almost tentatively caressed her lovely gold-red curls, exploring her pagan forest of desire. He slowly rubbed two fingers up and down the length

of her labia, and she purred in pleasure at his soft invasion of her inner moist depths.

As he caressed her with his right hand, his other raked long caresses back up her body. He lathed her luscious breasts again and then reached over to once more kiss her fiercely. He loved her full lips entwined with his, heating his body to just the right hot burst of desire.

His body wanted to nearly explode right now, with what her luscious hands were doing to his body. Especially, when she started teasing his pubic curls near his shaft with her long nails. Oh, she was a temptress and new how to make a man feel alive with those legendary, loving hands of hers. She found his shaft again and slowly, agonizingly to him, stroked him up and down. It nearly undid him, but he was too far-gone to stop the ruse and reveal himself as Morgan.

He returned the deed, stroking her deeply between her plush lower lips. Oh, she felt hot and slick over his fingers. Her own rhythm of rubbing his shaft matched his own. He pressed into her hand as she pressed up against his fingers. Their tempo increased, as did their breathing. Like a hard, forceful sea wind during a tropical storm, the two came with strong gusto. For long moments, they lay panting against each other.

“Ok, can we visit normally now?” She chuckled during her question.

Morgan groaned and pulled away from her. Slowly he made himself visible. She looked at him curiously then smiled at him with a deliciously wicked smile that had him hard all over again. Damn he wanted her like no other woman before. Shai was a fickle seductress and he needed to remember that. He grinned down at her and acted as Peter would. Yet, all the while he still wished it were his own image in natural persona that she was greeting and loving so implicitly.

* * * *

Shai felt less tense, than she did earlier that day. Peter’s impromptu greeting pleased her. Long minutes after they finished, she gave him a quick kiss and told him to go get cleaned up. She went to do the same before they ate a late dinner. Yet, as she showered and cleaned up in one of the townhome’s two bathrooms, she felt a trickle of something not quite right bothering her. For one thing, she knew Peter couldn’t stay invisible for more than five to ten minutes at a time. And secondly, her pixie friend didn’t ever smell as

scrumptiously good of licorice and cinnamon. However, she did recall a man who did smell that yummy. She stood underneath the warm water in a pleasant state of shock as it suddenly dawned on her who she had made out with on the patio.

Why the nerve of that European gigolo! Not too many magically powered people could keep up being invisible and shifted at the same time. Well if it indeed was Morgan LeHavoc whom she just let please her, then where the hell was Peter? Well being mostly of Old Fae power, she grinned impishly to herself, she knew for certain how to find out what was up with Peter and why a talented male witch like Morgan was trying to impersonate her old Pixie friend.

Shai giggled loudly. So Morgan was playing a trick on the Shaister. Oh, he wouldn't get away with this. Nevertheless, for now, she'd play along with the seductive witch. This weekend was going to be a lot more interesting and mischievous than she could have hoped for. The only thing that would make it perfect, is if Damien Spellfire were in town too, and she could get the old rivals to both try and seduce her. With a glee of sheer selfish pleasure, Shai hurried to finish her toiletry and made some delicious plans of her own.

* * * *

Morgan felt a little easier with the prank after he'd refreshed himself and shifted into Peter's normal image, complete with blonde curls and a dark brown set of clothes. He loved her long slender limbs all decked out in a crisp short sheath of white silk and sandals. She wasn't much taller than his Peter persona, but he still had to admit this form looked good next to Shai's as they had a quiet dinner together. Of course Shai looked good against any man she wished to.

"You're very quiet tonight, Peter. Usually you talk a mile a minute about your leisure times away from Spellfire." Did you enjoy Ireland? Dublin this time wasn't it?"

Morgan tried not to sweat and hoped she wasn't seeing through his disguise. She might be fickle and flighty at times, but she was a smart and clever woman. Even if she was a ditzy fairy at times.

"It was fun. But I'd rather talk about what you've been up to. Mischief as usual and breaking some poor soul's heart, I bet."

Her eyes sparkled with mischievous sparks. What was she up to now? Why had poor Peter put up with her all these years? And why was he falling in love with her all over again, like the first time he did? Oh, he had to get away from her alluring spell of sexuality. The

woman was almost too hot and seductive for any normal man to handle. *Wait, I'm not a normal human.*

"Well dinner and the greeting was fun, Peter, but I've some shopping to do before the picnic. Will I see you there later?"

Morgan felt suddenly flabbergasted. Shai had been the only woman to ever keep him speechless. She was definitely up to something, but she still showed no signs that she knew of his deception. He'd keep believing that for now.

"I am going to be there, if you are."

"Well why don't we meet up here first for a cup of coffee and then we can go together. Say around noon or earlier. I'll just let myself in as usual."

"Yes, that will be fine." He thought quickly. "I look forward to seeing you there."

"Good and don't forget about the Valentine's Day present you promised me. Be ready."

Before he replied, she leaned over and kissed him, and then like a brisk wind, she flapped her wings and was gone in a whoosh into the cool night air. He suddenly chuckled and realized he was really, truly looking forward to seeing the impish beauty again. They had unfinished business and loving to take care of. Just thinking about being inside her hot sweet depths again, after several long years of being with out her, gave him an aching hard-on.

Damn he wanted her already! The tease. The thought made him remember why he'd taken on Peter's disguise. He still intended to give Shai her comeuppance. She'd been toying with too many lives and hearts over the years. Still, one had a hard time staying mad at the lively beauty.

Damnation, he thought. *What was it I'm suppose to give her for a present. Or what was Peter going to give her.* Oh well, he'd just have to find out later. He sighed and decided to get back to his hotel room. He waved his hands over the table to clean up their meal. Seconds later he disappeared and reappeared back into this hotel room.

* * * *

Damien Spellfire couldn't believe what he was doing. Even if the damn pixie was an old friend of his, he didn't like doing this. Sure he owed Peter a favor, but this wasn't how he expected to repay the favor. Still it would even him with Peter. He'd only been back in town for a few hours to visit his family when Peter looked him up. Peter

was getting married and he had to break it off with Shai. Damien had no desire to be back around that heartbreaker. She needed a taste of her own medicine. It suddenly struck him that he had the perfect opportunity for her to give her tit-for-tat now.

His groin ached as he thought of her tits. He'd love suckling on them. He sighed and decided it was best to get this done and quickly. Peter said that Shai was meeting him today at his townhome for an early cappuccino before the two were supposed to be going to the picnic together. Perhaps he could break it to her gently that Peter was engaged. Shai didn't hold a grudge for long. Why hadn't Peter just told her outright instead of asking him to do the deed? Peter should just deal with a jealous fiancé and go tell Shai he was breaking it off with them. Still, he guessed he could do it and perhaps play a joke on Shai as she did him and Morgan LeHavoc years ago.

He thought of his old friend, and though they hadn't spoken in years since their rivalry over Shai, he hoped Morgan fared well. He was determined to get this done quickly, because it would be hard to be around Shai and not feel her fairy allure. Still, the thought made him horny to see if she was as sexy as he remembered.

Near eleven, he was inside Peter's townhome and fiddling around the living room and waiting on Shai. Peter had said she had her own key. Within minutes, the lithe beauty was opening the door. He didn't doubt his shifting powers could hold the image of his blonde hair and short height, long enough to break Shai's heart. She was dressed in a short red dress and matching slip on shoes and it looked fantastic on her.

His heart did summersaults as she moved seductively towards him, sashaying those tempting hips of hers with every step she took. His cock ached immediately. He sweated and nearly lost control when she smiled sweetly at him and then licked her lower lip with that deliciously talented tongue of hers.

"Oooh you look great today, Peter." She stopped only inches before him. "I've got something for you. I've missed you, you sexy thing."

Was this how the two really acted together? Damien didn't like playing Peter. "I um missed you too, pet. Ready for that cappuccino?"

"After you give me my Valentine's Day gift early that you promised me." She pouted. "Surely, you haven't forgotten."

He started to sweat. Why hadn't Peter told him this part? He

thought quickly. "I was making sure you remembered."

She pressed herself up against him. "Why, Peter, you naughty pixie. You promised to shape-shift into Damien and kiss my ass and more."

Damien had no idea Peter had promised that, but it made it easier for him to be himself and still pretend to be Peter. "You're sure you want that, sweet Fae-girl?"

"You know how much his black hair and midnight blue eyes and hard body turned me on, Peter dear. You watched often enough. Surely you won't deny me a little bit of fun before I decide if I'm giving up my wanderlust ways."

"You are." Damien nearly squeaked out the words as his disguise fell off and he was his own six-foot-two inch person again. He was glad to have back his taller and more muscular physique, complete with his dark blue eyes and wavy, black hair again. "You're kidding right?"

"I'm impish, my sweet pixie, but no, I never kid about something so serious as giving up philandering. Surely you know fairies aren't like that, no matter how fickle we can be."

He gulped and his groin tightened as she put her arms around his buttocks and brought their bodies closer. "Uh, Shai, perhaps this isn't such a great idea after all."

"Why, love, sure it is."

He started to back away, until she reached up and brought his head down to hers. Then she gave him a deep, erotic kiss that melted his resolve. He groaned and wrapped his arms around her. As Peter or himself, he wanted the frolicking, sexy fairy. In fact, he'd never stopped wanting her. He tightened his arms around her and returned the kiss, sliding his tongue deep into her throat in much the same way he wanted to slide it into her pussy.

"Oooh, yes, sweetums," she mouthed between kisses. "Now why don't you kiss me like that even lower."

Damien didn't have a problem with that. He lowered them both to the floor and immediately started undressing her. He suckled hard on her jutting breasts and feasted in caressing her body. Oh, he recalled how hot and sweet her cunt was. He kissed and licked with long teasing strokes every inch of her from her neck down to her stomach. He quickly shifted out of his clothes and parted her legs. She opened up completely for him.

His erection grew until he ached to plunge himself inside her hot Fae depths. He'd do that after he suckled on that fiery womanhood of hers. He needed to taste her sweet wetness now. He lowered his head and parted her labia lips with his fingers. Then he kissed her teasingly there, and finally thrust his tongue deeply down into her. She arched up against his mouth and tongue. His fingers played with her pussy too, stroking and making tiny circles of feathery caresses all over her luscious slick passage.

She tasted of wild honey and her heated scent drove him further to please her; as well as driving him nearly mad with desire. He slid his tongue deep down into her, as deeply as possible. Damn it was like tasting heaven and hell all at the same time. Her wild bucking both tormented and pleased him. He wanted her to be even wetter when he thrust his engorged cock inside her.

She shifted slightly and surprised him when she took his erection in her hands as he continued to lather her hot cunt with attention. He liked it as she stroked him up and down. Damn her hands were good and she knew how to use them. Just as she was getting her relief, his was building up too. Her elegant hands worked wonders and as she bucked under him with an explosive orgasm, he vented his needs into her hands.

He lay back panting and she curled around to look at him. "That was fantastic, Damien. Thank you. And you can come out from being an invisible voyeur now, Morgan."

Damien got up into a sitting position as his old rival Morgan LeHavoc appeared into the room. Damien groaned and looked from a grinning Shai, whose wings were slowly flapping with mirth, to the surprised male witch. Evidently, Shai had once more played a trick on the two of them. Yet, for some reason, he didn't think that Morgan minded one damn bit this time, any more than he did, that Shai tricked them.

"Well it looks like she got us again, Morgan."

Morgan nodded, slightly grinned at him, and then turned back to Shai. "You knew all along I wasn't Peter?"

She shook her head, her sweaty curls falling around her shoulders. "Nope, not with you, at first Morgan. But when you got here last night, I discovered right away it was you. Peter doesn't smell of luscious licorice and cinnamon like you do, nor of apples and mint like Damien does. I use Glamyre to find out where he was. I met his

fiancée Katie and she was irked he couldn't tell me himself the truth. So, we devised this plan and made Peter find you Damien and then set up this meeting. I don't know about you two, but after I clean up, I could use some of that good food from the picnic. Maybe we could all come back here afterwards."

Damien started laughing. "Oh don't scowl, Morgan. You know you lust after this wretch as much as I do."

Morgan sighed and set down on the sofa. "I'm afraid it's more than that, old friend." He looked from him to Shai. "I'm afraid I actually am in love with the wretch."

"Oh." Said Shai and Damien at the same time. Then he looked from her to Morgan and let out a long sigh. "I've never stopped caring for her either, Morgan."

"Oh dear," Shai's bottom lip quivered. "Things are really getting complicated now."

"What are you talking about, Shai?" Morgan frowned at her.

Damien pulled his pants on as Shai quickly put her dress back on. "You're not usually this contrite, Shai, unless you really are serious about something. What are you up to now?"

"I don't think you're going to believe me if I tell you both."

"Try us." The two men said at the same time.

"I think the joke is on me this time." Shai's face was a soft becoming pink and her elegant hands splayed in the air. You see, this time, I've gone and done something I have never done before."

Damien glance at Morgan, then asked. "What's that, Shai?"

"Do tell us, Shai. You've got mine and Damien's attention completely."

"Uhm, Peter didn't tell you that we haven't been lovers in years did he?" At both of their shaking of heads "no", she continued. "Well it's because of something that he knew happened to me before I did."

"Don't stop now." Damien urged her to speak up.

She gulped deeply, and then blurted it out. "I'm afraid, I'm in love with both of you." She jumped up quickly. "Uh can we go to the picnic now? I'm even more famished now, what with being so horny and nervous."

Damien suddenly grinned. She'd played a prank on him and Morgan, but somehow it had backfired on her. He glanced over at Morgan and opened his mind to the older man.

"I don't think she's lying. Shai never gets this nervous about

anything.”

“I quite agree, old friend.” Morgan said into his mind. “There’s only one thing we can do then.” And Morgan told him explicitly in his mind just what that was. However, when they turned to look at Shai, all they saw was fairy dust evaporating from the room.

“Shai can put away the food. I think she’s going to be at the picnic.”

“So do I, Morgan. I think it’s time, Shai makes a choice.”

“You knew I was there didn’t you?” Morgan asked.

“I felt a presence.”

“So what if she wants us both?”

“With anyone else, I’d have a problem sharing.”

“You mean get her to live with, and love both of us.” Morgan rubbed his dark goatee. “Hmm, that’s got some possibilities. Think she’d go for that?”

Damien chuckled. “It does indeed have some potential. Let’s get cleaned up, I think the two of us need to talk things over.”

“I quite agree, old friend. This time we can’t let Shai have the upper hand.”

“Nope, this time we do.” Damien agreed as the two of them went up the stairs to the top floor. “I’ve no doubt we will find her at the picnic.”

Morgan chuckled. “Picnic’s can be lots of fun. Shai’s not going to know what we’re up to for once. That’s going to be an excellent change.”

“Indeed it will be.” Damien put in and quite liked the way his friends mind was working. The two of them would make Shai tremble before them. Oh and what fun that would be.

* * * *

Shai sat on a blanket near the Spellfire River’s edge, her feet dangling down in the cool water. All the while, she suckled on a big fat juicy piece of barbeque chicken leg. She licked her lips off and a large smile of satisfaction widened her lips. It didn’t get any better than this—a beautiful clear day and pleasant thoughts to ponder.

She especially had two good things to think about. Namely Morgan and Damien. Out of all her lovers, she’d found those two bewitching hunks the best ever. They’d touched her body and soul very deeply. Just as important, they’d also broken the defenses around her heart. Shai chuckled while she licked the tips of her fingers. Fairy

heck and damnation, those two made her heart and wings flutter more than anyone else had ever been able to.

She could no longer deny what was in her heart.

She loved them both, in a very deep and emotional way.

She would never be able to love this way again. The tricks of love she'd concocted with Peter and Katie had indeed backfired upon her. She'd felt the two hunks emotions, as deeply as only a fairy could, and knew that they still were in love with her. She believed all three of them had suddenly realized how deep their love went too. She was certain that they'd find her soon. Her wings rose and fell.

Shai looked very forward indeed to what they had in mind for her. This was going to be the best Valentine's Day weekend she'd ever had in a long time.

She glanced up into the bright afternoon sun for a split second. *What was it that Electra had said to her a couple of years ago? Oh yes. One day she'd find love, more than she bargained for.* And Shai did indeed. Electra warned her that putting love spells on people eventually backfired on someone.

Had Electra foreseen this happening then? Shai wondered. She folded her chicken in a napkin and laid it beside her. Shai took a sip of sweet blackberry wine to wash it down with. Suddenly she realized that she was in debt to Electra. The woman's prophetic advice was never wrong. Shai giggled. Somehow, she felt right inside. Mostly, she felt at peace here within Spellfire.

This town would always be her home, no matter how far or where she strayed from time to time. It was going to be a very good place to eventually raise a family. However, that wouldn't be for years yet. She still had more mischievous fun and pranks to get into and make happen. However, for now, she didn't feel like being naughty.

Except to the all-consuming loves in her life, Morgan and Damien. Oh did she have some delightfully wicked things in mind for them. She trembled with glee and desire. No doubt, they did too. Indeed, this day was just getting better and better. When she saw the two materialize in the distance, she leaned back on her elbows and joyfully waited for them to find her. It was going to be a sinfully, glorious day after all. What more could an impish fairy want?

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