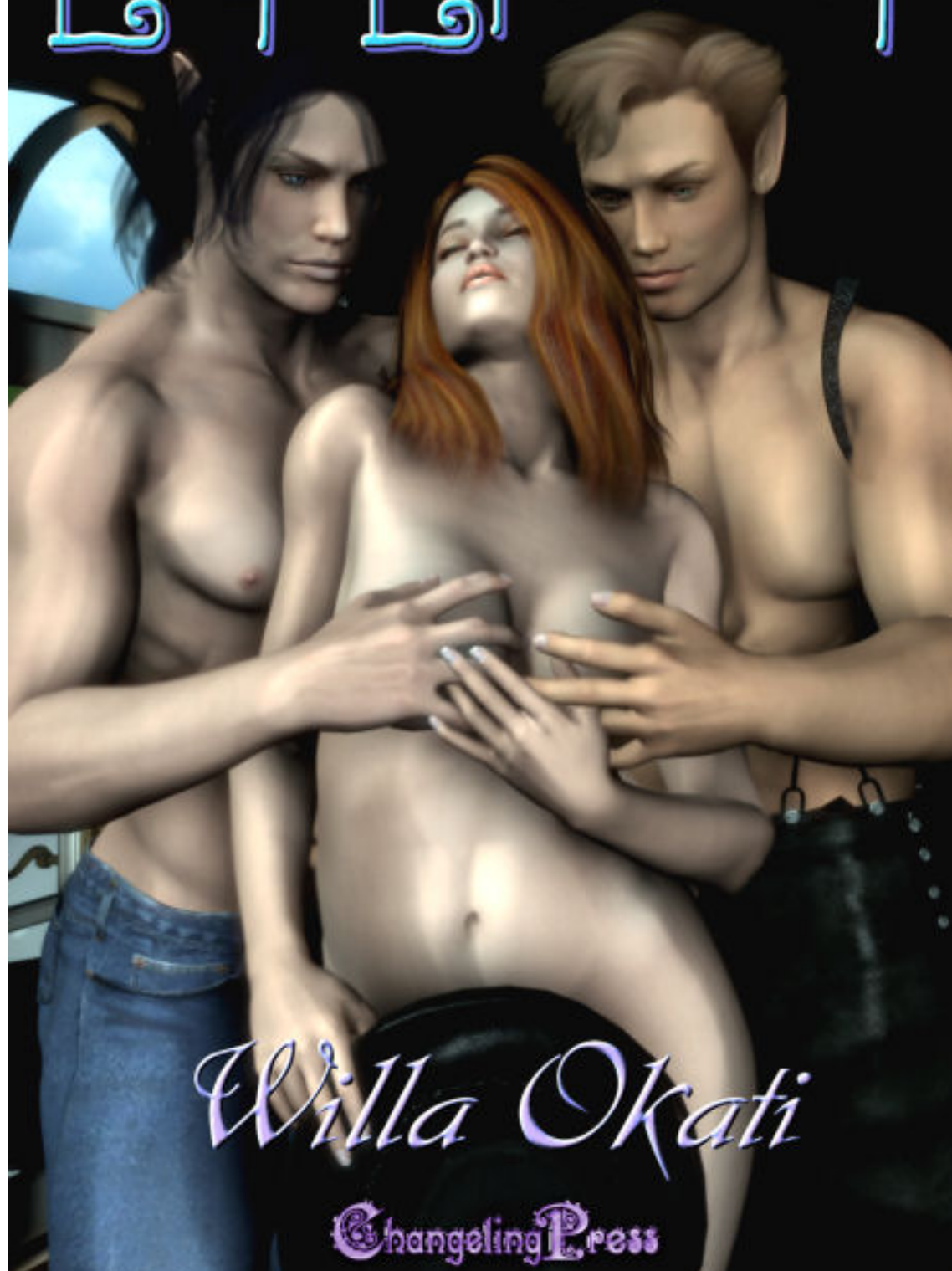


ELVEN EXHILARATION



Willa Okati

Changeling Press

Elven Exhilaration

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Elven Exhilaration

Willa Okati

Jewel never thought she'd get this lucky. All her life, she's dreamed about the handsome Prince Charming who'll sweep into her world and carry her away from everyday life into a magical world. She knew better than to expect it would *really* happen, but a girl can dream, can't she?

When Jewel decides to go spend a day enjoying the sights and sounds of a county fair, she spots instead a huge bear of a cowboy with a delightful if unusual Irish accent. He's everything she's ever fantasized about in a dream man -- and he's interested in *her*. Wow!

Jewel's ready to take Cullen's hand and let him carry her away to the land of fantasy, but there's just one problem.

Cullen's already attached. To a man named Declan.

That might not be a problem, since Declan's plenty willing to share as long as he gets his chance at Jewel. Two men! It doesn't get any better.

It also doesn't get any stranger. Cullen and Declan kind of lose control when they're lavishing affection on Jewel. They seem to have carried her away into a strange dream where the skies are silver and the trees are talking. Her men have a secret to share with her... if Jewel thinks she can handle the truth.

Chapter One

-- only five ninety-nine, can you believe it? I made out like a bandit --"

-- she is *so* sleeping with him. Come on! All the makeup in the world couldn't hide that love bite on her neck. And the beard burn? Please. As if she thinks she's fooling anyone --"

-- the dog goes insane whenever I bring a man home, it's like he's jealous of me or something --"

-- popcorn, yeah, but not that weird sugary kind, it's got to have butter, a lot of butter. Oh, and it needs to be fresh --"

-- you behave yourself now, my friend. You know what we're here for, so you just follow my lead, aye? Clear? And when she --"

-- my God, it's going to be hot today!"

Jewel let the chatter of the crowd surrounding her drift in and out of her ears, not lingering on any particular conversation. The voices, everything from male bass to alto female to a crying child, blended together after a while and made her think of waves rushing in to shore.

She stood separate from the masses gathered around the bus stop where they all waited, letting the sounds wash over her in soothing waves while she lost herself in fantasies that parted her lips and drew wetness to her pussy.

The dog-eared paperback -- her favorite -- that she held loosely by her side had captured her attention once again. For fun, Jewel imagined herself taking the place of the story's modern-day Cinderella in the City. The things that happened when her big, strong, sexy knight took her to bed filled Jewel's head with excitement and flooded her body with a sensual satisfaction better than anything buzzy or battery-operated could offer.

A sexy book, a sunny morning, and a free pass to the Tri-County Artisan & Craftsman Carnival & Fair in her pocket. Jewel hummed to herself in anticipation of the sights, the sounds, the smells and the tastes that lay in her future.

It was going to be a good day.

Tilting her head back, Jewel let the warmth of the morning sunlight play over her face. The rays tickled her cheeks like the brush of a lover's hair as he leaned in to kiss her -- or at least she figured that was how it would feel. The only men who'd ever kissed her hadn't been aiming for her lips, and they'd all had "sensible" short cuts besides.

She liked dreaming about what it would be like to have a man holding her, pulling her close, maybe running his thumb across her bottom lip, then tilting their heads *just* right so their mouths would fit together, and then... and then...

Jewel stifled a giggle. Twenty-seven and never seriously been kissed. It sounded like a made-for-TV movie, didn't it? Not many folks knew. They didn't think of her, good old Jewel, that way. No one ever had. She was the girl men came to for a beer and a laugh, not a kiss and a roll in the hay.

Oh, well. Jewel exhaled softly, not really sighing, as she turned to and fro to feel the light kissing eyelids, nose, and the base of her throat. *I like my life anyway. Besides, someday, my prince will come.*

Not that I'd mind kissing a few frogs along the way. The way I figure, you'd never know if you'd found Mr. Right if you weren't willing to pucker up and dive in.

She laughed to herself.

"Excuse me. Miss?" Someone nudged Jewel in the ribs right beneath her breast. A gentle prod, meant to get her attention, not to hurt. "Are you all right, then?"

Oops. Dagnabit, she got into more trouble when she was so lost in her dreams that she forgot where she was and that people might be watching her. "Fine," she reassured the speaker, too embarrassed to face him. "I'm -- um -- sky-gazing."

"Impressive, seein' as your eyes are closed," the person teased. Male, his voice as deep as the bottom of a whiskey barrel or the rumble of thunder. He had a heavy accent, something she couldn't quite place. Irish, maybe?

Curious, Jewel turned away from the sky to see what kind of person came along with a voice like this one. *Oh. Oh, wow.* She felt her mouth open slightly as she tried, in vain, not to stare. She'd never seen him before, and boy, had she been missing out.

Where did you come from? Can I keep you?

The man stood at least six inches taller than her, and she wasn't short. Too tall for a woman, she usually thought. Too tall, too plentiful in the chest and too wide in the hips with a little belly she hid beneath loose blouses and tunics. She thought she *might* make up for her body with hair *she* thought was nice, all glossy and bright, the color of the setting sun. Her face, though... well, she was 99.9 percent "girl next door," and she'd never be anything else.

She didn't waste her time crying over not being Miss America. There was too much else to life.

She *did* get lonely sometimes, though.

"Forgive me if I'm intrudin', but I had to be sure you weren't taken ill." The man tugged on the brim of his old cowboy hat. It barely fit over his thickly curled hair, the exact shade of maple sugar, threatening to burst out of its rough ponytail. He had a broad face with a generous mouth. Too off-beat to ever make the centerfold of GQ -- did they even have centerfolds? -- but he had *something* going for him that made Jewel go weak in the knees and fluttery in the stomach.

He tilted his head to the side for a searching look at her. "Seriously, are you all right, now? You've got the look of someone a million miles away."

Oh, yeah. No doubt about it: Irish. Jewel felt herself getting wet. She'd always been super-responsive to suggestion and had a definite weakness for accents.

"I'm fine," she said, hoping to wash away the concern she saw developing in the man's eyes. Who was she to get worried about? "Scout's honor."

The man shifted his weight from one leg to the other, drawing Jewel's attention to *oh-my-God-sized* thigh and calf muscles. *What would legs like those feel like beneath me if I were sitting on his lap, or... or...*

Her cheeks heated without any help from the sun.

Or if we were both naked and all alone somewhere, and I was on top of him. If he was hard for me and I was soaking for him -- okay, so I already am -- and I had my hands spread out on his chest, not touching his dick, not yet, making him wait for it, making him want me more than ever...

The man's deep chuckle brought her out of her daydream. He wrapped a callused hand around her elbow and stroked the tender crook with his thumb. Tingles ran up and down her arm, spread to her chest to set her heart beating faster and made her catch a sudden breath. "You really are one for having your head in the clouds, aren't you, then?" He didn't sound as if he thought that was a bad thing. "Were they good dreams?"

Oh, lordy, were they ever. Not that I can tell you. Eep! Jewel parted her lips, knowing for sure she was going to stammer and get her tongue tangled up. "I -- I -- I -- um. Yes?"

"Glad to hear it. A pretty lass deserves a good time." Hazel eyes sparkled at her. "You're too lovely to be left waiting by yourself in the heat of the day. What brings a fair miss like you to the festival, if I could ask? Here to see the sights or listen to the music or something else altogether?"

Jewel tried not to stare at the man, who turned her on more and more by the second every time he spoke. He sounded genuinely interested. In her. *This is new, but... I could definitely get used to it.* "It's something to do. I guess you're not from Stony Creek," she said, referring to the one-stoplight burg she'd driven in from. It would have been nice to drive right up to the festival grounds, but all cars had to be parked a mile or so out in a grassy field. Probably something to do with blocking out modern sights, sounds and smells. So then it didn't make too much sense to have a bus rumbling up every few minutes...

Oops. Daydreaming.

Jewel adjusted the heavy weight of her hand-woven twine carryall, keeping her fingers busy with that instead of giving in to the impulse to reach out and touch him. "There's not much to do on the weekends except read or go for a walk or --"

"Stony Creek, no," the man interrupted. He tugged at the brim of his hat a second time. Jewel followed the movement of his hand, big and square and solid. A working man's hand. A working man's hat, worn in after years of hard use. Not a weekend cowboy at all. If it wasn't for the Irish lilt, she'd have sworn he came right from the heart of Texas.

Or maybe he did. Wow. Jewel's wetness spread, dampening the curls between her legs, a pulse fluttering in her pussy. *An Irish cowboy. Wow.*

"When I'm at home, home's beside a creek, aye." His words rolled out lazy, slow, and tantalizing, his friendly smile broadening, making his eyes crinkle at their corners. "More of a river, actually. It's wide enough across you'd need a boat and two strong arms to row if you wanted to get from one side to the other. Stony Creek, though, I think I've passed through. Struck me as --" He paused. "Not to speak ill of your home, but --"

"It's as dry and brown as an old stick," Jewel finished for him, not minding his judgment because it was the truth. "Don't worry. I didn't grow up in Stony Creek."

"Really? Then what's a diamond like you doing in the rough and not set somewhere you'd shine as you ought to?"

Mmm, what a pretty talker. Jewel resisted the urge to fan herself. Just being near the man was enough to make her body sing, wanting to do things she'd only ever read or dreamed about. *Like dancing with him in a dark room, pressed so close together I'd be able to feel everything from that hard chest to... oh. Whoa.*

A glance down, purely by instinct, brought her in visual range of a hardened dick outlined in the man's jeans. *Is that for me?*

Her pussy clenched. A soft moan slipped from between Jewel's lips, which she bit when the man's grip tightened on her arm. She looked back up, knowing there was no way he'd miss what she was thinking and dreaming about -- both of them in that

darkened room, a bedroom, herself bold enough to drop to her knees, caressing the hard sinew of his muscles all the way down. Her fingers opening his zipper and fondling his dick, listening to him hiss in appreciation, and --

Was he laughing at her?

"Never stop dreaming, lass," he said, tapping her nose with the forefinger of his free hand. "What's your name, if I could ask?"

"Jewel," she said without thinking, the word popping out. "Jewel McCree."

"Ah! A name to match your face." The man slid his hand down the length of her forearm and had raised her knuckles to his lips before she realized what he was doing. He pressed a kiss to them, flickering his tongue ever so quickly over her skin. "It's my own pleasure to meet you, Jewel, and I hope I'll be seeing you soon."

"What?" The touch of his tongue, hot and wet, had catapulted Jewel into a fantasy about how that tongue would feel between her legs, teasing her pussy while his big hands pushed her thighs apart; about the way his words would buzz and his breath would inflame her pulsing clit while he teased her with promises of what he was going to do, and... "What?"

The man laughed. "I'm called Cullen." He kissed her knuckles again with another tantalizing flick of his tongue that made her sizzle on the inside. "*We will* be seeing each other again soon, Jewel. Mark my words."

We can't see more of each other right now? she wanted to ask, and would have if she hadn't registered the sound of a rumbling diesel engine and heavy tires crunching over gravel. Exhaust fumes tainted the air, making her realize that she'd been savoring the man's scent. Smoke and rawhide and pine. She missed the smell now that it was gone.

"Aye. Our ride's here." Cullen squeezed Jewel's fingers, then lowered her hand to her hip. "Until later, Diamond."

Cullen turned to walk away, making for the back of the crowd instead of forward to the beat-up secondhand school bus, painted a shocking purple, that grumbled to a halt in front of the waiting throng of passengers.

"See you," Jewel whispered, almost unconsciously touching her lips. He'd kissed her hand, but she could have sworn she felt the heat and pressure of his mouth on her own. *Wow.*

He was a prince right out of a fairy tale. And he'd called her a diamond. And he'd been hard. He'd *wanted* her. Maybe he'd been thinking the same things she had, but even better.

A delicious spasm rippled through Jewel's pussy as cream trickled between her thighs. *Talk about fun at the fair,* Jewel exulted, riding the ebbing waves of her climax. *Who'd have thought all those stories of men being able to get you off with just their voices were true?*

She watched Cullen, wickedly checking out the way his firm ass moved inside his faded jeans, imagining how the solid muscle would feel to the touch. Who knew? Maybe she'd get a chance to find out for herself. Maybe --

Oh.

Oh.

She saw then the reason why Cullen had gone to the back instead of the front. It wasn't manners or offering others a chance to find their seats first. Nope, he'd made a beeline to a long, tall drink of gorgeous who'd lit up like fireworks when he'd seen Cullen coming.

When the two men met, Cullen cozied into the second man's opening arms and groped his ass. Long and Tall laughed at something Cullen said -- Jewel couldn't hear -- and his own quirky features became a work of art. He pushed his fingers through the tangle of curls escaping from Cullen's ponytail and pulled their heads together. Their lips joined in an easy kiss, Long and Tall's eyes closing ecstatically as his hips shifted forward, pressing into Cullen's.

Jewel wanted to look away, but couldn't, stunned. *What... what was all that about, if he already had someone? I thought he was for real. And the hard-on! What about the hard-on?*

As she watched, the two men separated. Long and Tall wore an expression of complete satisfaction. He slapped Cullen's cheek, a love tap, while his slightly swollen

lips moved in the shape of a question. Cullen nodded, seeming to give a reply that drew Long and Tall's interest in a big way.

Bracing his hands on Cullen's biceps, he looked past Cullen -- right at Jewel. His curious stare met her fascinated gaze and held her there despite her immediate instinct to look at something else -- *anything* else. His irises were green as the bright moss that grew by forest lakes, the perfect match to the softly curling waves of honey-colored hair falling to his shoulders.

Jewel's pussy clenched. *Huh?* Far from malicious or jealous or mocking, his expression sent out the unmistakable message that he was just as interested in her as Cullen had been. Maybe more. He traced his upper lip with the tip of his tongue and nodded to Jewel. One eyelid closed in an ungodly sexy wink.

When he spoke, she could read his lips: *see you soon*.

Jewel took a step forward, straw sandal scuffing in the gravel and almost tripping her up. She started to reach for the tall man, not knowing why, only knowing it was what she wanted, and then --

"Hey! Are you getting on the bus or not?"

Jewel flinched as the spell holding her and the two men together popped like a soap bubble. Looking back over her shoulder, she saw the haggard, sweaty bus driver drumming his fingers on the open doors. "I can't wait all day," he grouched. "Either you stay here and wait for the next bus or get on. I don't care, lady, but make up your mind."

"Sorry." Jewel took one last look at Cullen and his -- what? -- lover, boyfriend? They had stepped away, not interested in the bus anymore. From the way they moved, groins rubbing together, they had something else on their mind.

Ooh. Another spasm of sensual high pulsed through Jewel's pussy. She drew in a sharp breath, stumbling back until the edge of the bus door pressed against her shoulders.

What a time and place to discover a kink that went above and beyond her sexiest dreams!

"I'm coming." *Am I ever. Wow.* Jewel summoned up a smile for the bus driver as she made her way up the worn treads of the steps. "Next stop, the fair?"

The driver grinned back -- reluctantly, but he did, transforming him from *tired* to *friendly*. "What about those two guys?" he asked, pointing. "They coming too?"

"I'd bet good money they will be," Jewel said without blinking. She headed for the first available seat she could find, hiding the laugh that wanted to bubble up and break free.

She knew she hadn't seen the last of Cullen or his man. More than that, she had a feeling this was going to be a day to remember.

"Once upon a time," she said to herself, under her breath, as she settled into the hot plastic seat. "Once upon a time in a kingdom far, far away, there were two princes..."

The older woman sitting next to Jewel threw her an alarmed look.

"It's not the way stories usually start," Jewel said, enjoying the way the words felt on her tongue and not caring what anyone thought about her, "but I believe I might just be up for something new."

Chapter Two

"Popcorn! Get your fresh, hot popcorn right here!"

"Cotton candy, two sticks for five dollars!"

"Caramel apples! We've got caramel apples for sale! You never tasted anything this good!"

"Funnel cakes! Who cares how bad they are for you? Live a little! And hey, while you're at it, try one of our deep-fried Mars Bars!"

Jewel giggled as she passed by that particular stand. All the vendors were more or less young and more or less wired on whatever they were selling, but this guy almost bounced up and down in place as he hawked the wares. And you had to love truth in advertising.

She was tempted to buy a fried candy bar just to show him she appreciated his enthusiasm. *Wonder what they taste like? How does the grease mix with all that sugar? Would it give me a stomachache or an orgasm?*

Fumbling in her woven bag for her wallet, Jewel took a step toward the vendor.

"You don't want to do that, ma'am," a voice rebuked her. She turned to see a small man with a disapproving frown. He carried a tray of plain old apples, no caramel at all, plus some bananas and oranges. "All-natural, good for you, no fat." He scanned her without bothering to be sneaky, shaking his head almost too slightly to be seen.

Jewel definitely noticed. Her hand pulled slowly out of her bag, a crumpled dollar bill clutched loosely and forgotten in her fingers.

"Apple, orange, or banana?" The sour man shook his tray at Jewel. "Come on. I don't have all day."

Jewel didn't want a piece of fruit. She wanted a hole to crawl into and hide. The extra weight on her belly and thighs felt incredibly obvious and ugly. If she didn't buy,

though, she didn't know what the man might say, and enough was enough for one morning. "Ap -- apple," she stammered.

"Umph," the man grunted. He held his tray out for Jewel to choose, thumb crooked to point at a Granny Smith.

Pure perversity made Jewel reach for a Red Delicious instead. That earned her another dirty glare, but the man took her dollar all the same before walking away. Watching him go, Jewel noticed how he zeroed in on another Fair-goer who carried a few extra pounds. *Great sales through intimidation*, she thought, a dark cloud settling over her bright morning. *I guess I shouldn't knock it if it works...*

"Ach. I'm not sayin' there's anything wrong with a nice apple, but lass, I could see the yearning in you for a real carnival treat from a dozen steps away."

Jewel's eyes opened wide. She dropped her apple.

Cullen?

Yep, sure was. He circled around Jewel, picking up the apple and polishing it against the T-shirt stretched sinfully tight over his hard stomach muscles. Jewel's mouth watered, but definitely not for the mealy crunch and mild sweetness of the Red Delicious.

More for the big hand that held her "treat," dwarfing it in comparison to the size of his palm. A scar across the back caught her attention, making her hiss in sympathy. Whatever that had been must have hurt to leave that kind of nasty, jagged reminder.

"This would be a souvenir of the time I was daft enough to get into a pub brawl." Cullen winked at Jewel, tossing her apple from one hand to another to show off the scar. "Here, now, don't blush, though you're pretty as a rose when you turn pink."

"I'm -- I'm sorry," Jewel got out, looking down. Right at the crotch of Cullen's jeans. Her throat went dry. *Wow*. Did the man walk around with a permanent erection or what? Didn't that make it hard -- er, difficult -- to present himself -- um -- to expose himself -- *oh, crap*. Jewel gave up.

Cullen chuckled, the sound warming Jewel from the inside out and giving her the best goose bumps ever. "Do you like what you see, Diamond? Or should I call you

Rose? Lovely pinks and reds, and your emerald blouse even gives you a stem. You're the best sort of rose, I think, as for the life of me I can't find a single thorn."

Jewel's pulse raced, pounding in her ears. She didn't dare look up at Cullen. *What if he's joking around?* she wondered, wanting so much to believe him but not quite daring to. *He can't be serious, not really, saying those kind of things about me.*

"I'm serious as the grave, my rose." Cullen drew closer. He pressed the apple between Jewel's breasts. "Would that I could give you a better token, but it's all I have on me at the moment. Well." He laughed again, doubling Jewel's goose bumps and drawing an ache to her pussy. "The apple's not *all* I've got to offer. There's something else, if you'd like."

"You..." Jewel found herself staring at the already impressive swelling beneath the zipper of Cullen's jeans, and be damned if it wasn't growing as she watched. Fascinated, she couldn't tear her gaze away and she recognized the ache.

She wanted that cock inside her. *Oh.* Jewel started shaking at the thought. She could *feel* Cullen's cock nudging the lips of her pussy, the heat of his breath against her skin. Feel the burn of faint stubble grazing her breast as he rubbed his cheek there, and then the sweet sting of his teeth when he bit at her nipple. Then the pressure as he sucked and thrust at the same time. He'd stretch her wide, so wide -- it would almost overwhelm her at first -- but he'd kiss her and stroke her and whisper wicked things in his sexy accent until her body let him in and the stretch turned into perfect fullness. He'd rest inside her, letting her adjust.

Forgive me, Jewel, he'd say, strained to the limit. *You feel too good; I can't wait. Wrap your legs around my back and let me show you how I care for you...* Her ankles would lock together right above his ass, her heels feeling the way those muscles bunched and flexed. He'd kiss her, long and deep, whispering into her mouth, and then... *oh, God...*

Jewel shuddered, backing up a step as she came, cream drenching her panties and dripping down her thighs. She realized she was breathing heavily, struggling for air, and that her skin had grown damp.

It didn't end there. The climax swelled and broke over her time and time again, refusing to quit. She forgot to care about what she looked like or if anyone heard her whimpering things like "please" and "don't stop" and "more, more, more." She was shaking, splitting in two, the imagined feel of Cullen fucking her so real she almost believed he was inside her.

Cullen's breath ghosted over Jewel's cheek, his lips hovering so close to the skin that they tickled her when he whispered, "If you think that's good, Rose... you've seen nothing yet. Wait until I'm fucking you in truth, your sweet limbs pinning me so tight I can barely move yet I still do. You'll be hot and tight and wet. Aye, you're already wet, aren't you? I can smell your perfume and it's enough to make me dizzy, longing for a taste."

"Oh!" The gasp flew out of Jewel's mouth as she came again, the orgasm hitting her hard and fast. Her legs refused to hold her any longer. She fell to her knees, only vaguely aware of Cullen following her down, although she did know he was the only thing keeping her from writhing in the grass. "Cullen."

"Aye." Calluses caught and tangled in Jewel's hair as he stroked the back of her head. She felt so tiny next to this giant of a man, yet safe, like he'd protect her no matter what. "You needed that. I could tell. You'd the look about you of a woman who's desperate for love and sex, starved for a man's touch. Not desperate enough to take anyone who came along, no, you're too smart and proud for that, but you recognize the right one to make you bloom."

Jewel shuddered one last time, the tremors racking her body. Her pussy was soaked, throbbing with pleasure. She could *still* feel Cullen as if he were really there, every inch of him stuffing her full.

An impulse struck her, and she didn't think about not doing what she wanted. She was just close enough to reach between Cullen's legs. Her breath caught as she felt the weight of a man's swollen cock in her palm for the first time ever. It pulsed exactly like she did, jerking in a rhythm that made her bite her lip to keep from crying out,

especially when Cullen swore under his breath and caught her wrist, pressing her hand hard against his cock.

"You'll make me embarrass myself as if I were a boy again, but Mab help me, I can't bear to think of you not touching me. Sweet hands, so brave to go where they are; oh, aye, I'll love teaching these hands how to please -- although I can hardly think of how this could be better."

"It'd be better if you fucked me for real," Jewel blurted. She didn't blush. She couldn't. She wanted this too much, and the power went to her head when Cullen swore louder and his cock grew impossibly harder. It beat against his zipper, wanting out, out, out. "Please? Will you fuck me?"

"Ah!" Cullen pushed Jewel's fingers away. It was almost *too* good, listening to him struggle for control. He fought to master his breathing, slowly going from ragged panting to quick but steady in-and-out. "Modern women -- how they talk! The words they say. Back in the day I'd have been shocked, but now, I'm loving hearing these bits of wickedness in your silver voice. Fuck you? I will," he promised. "I will, and I'll take you so hard and so well you'll feel me for days."

Jewel went momentarily limp with relief. If he'd said no she would have bawled. As it was, the thought of Cullen's heavy bulk on top of her, the cock she knew had to be gorgeous pushing inside -- wow. Scary? Sure. A stallion and a virgin mare. Or a guy hung like a stallion, anyway. No toy she'd ever used could possibly compare.

For one thing, he'd be warm. No. Hot. Searingly hot. There would be a condom, sure. She knew better than to do what she'd always dreamed of without protection. Even through the latex, he'd burn her up and she'd combust.

Oh. So strange. He wasn't there, and they weren't naked. How was it she could feel his cock filling her pussy? Oh!

Cullen held her as she giddily rode the next wave. "You tempt me almost too far." His need for her was almost tangible as the distortion in his jeans. She wanted to touch him again, to mound her fingers over his cock and feel the fascinating hardness. "Jewel, no. Ah! Yes, oh, fuck, yes... no. Stop. Stop, for the love of mercy." He held her

hands out of range. "Jewel, please. No matter how much I'd like to strip you naked and lay you down in the grass right here, right now, taking what I want -- before this goes any further, there's something to get clear between us first."

Jewel didn't understand right away. When she puzzled out what Cullen meant, her heart sank. "Oh." Her fingers curled back, abashed as the rest of her. *Guess I couldn't expect this to last forever, huh?* "You're talking about the man I saw you with. Aren't you?"

"Aye." Cullen drew Jewel to him, resting his forehead against hers, moist with sweat and hot to the touch. His breath, spicy with cloves, tingled on her cheek when he spoke. "We must discuss him. He's my mate, you see, my lover, and you need to know how the land lies."

He's already taken, Jewel. Use your common sense. She knew she should pull away from Cullen. She knew better than to get involved with someone who was already taken, especially if she was going to be the dirty secret in the equation.

But... it didn't feel that way. She didn't know why, but felt sure this wasn't wrong. No disgust, no disdain. Nothing but more *wanting*.

"Okay," she decided, licking her lips, dried out from too many rapid breaths. Jewel had no doubts: she could trust Cullen. Didn't mean she didn't have questions, though. "Tell me. Who is he? And --" she stopped.

"Go on." Cullen tilted his head to brush his lips against the tip of her nose. "Ask, my rose. I know what you'll say, but it's for your own sake you need to give the question a voice."

Jewel gathered her courage. "If you have *him*, why do you want *me*?" she said in a rush. "Why do you want *me*, period? I'm -- I'm not a -- I'm not --"

Cullen put a finger to Jewel's mouth. "Why would I want you? Those who don't or didn't, well, they're fools. You're exactly as your name describes you, a jewel beyond price. The sort of prize a man would sell his soul for, if he had one to give."

If he -- that didn't make sense. Jewel frowned, but Cullen's finger prevented her from asking him what he'd meant.

"Not now, my rose. There's time for that later." He inhaled deeply. "You asked about Declan, aye, for that's his name, and you're right to wonder what I'm doing if not why. I've told you 'why', but let me be plain: I want you so much I'm about to burst before I so much as see you bared of all these clothes."

He stroked her arms, pushing up the sleeves of her tunic and kneading the soft skin beneath. "So rare. So fine," he breathed. "Soon as I have the chance I'll use my mouth to lap up all this juice you've spilled, and it'll be sweet as honey on my tongue. And then I'll be after drawing more and more until you're screaming beneath me and I can wait no longer to --" He stopped. "There I go again. I'll not end this before it's begun."

Jewel could barely breathe. Her body was on fire, demanding what Cullen promised in his sinfully sexual whispers. She didn't care if they were in a public place. If she were strong enough, she knew she'd knock him on his back, open his jeans and lower herself onto his cock until her throbbing pussy lips had swallowed all of him.

How much more of this could she take?

Cullen laughed, a rueful sound, squeezing Jewel's forearms. "Ach. I'll never manage to tell you what's what so long as we're here and the scent of you is driving me clear out of my rightful senses. Come."

Already did, Jewel thought, giggling to herself. More than once. I think I've lost count.

Out loud, she asked, "Where?" No questions about whether or not this was safe, or even sane. None of that mattered.

All she wanted was Cullen.

"I believe," a new voice said as the heat and pressure of a second body came to rest behind Jewel, leaning into her and pushing his rock-solid cock against the curve of her ass, "I believe Cullen here was going to take you to meet me so a cooler head could explain how matters are arranged between he and I. More fool him, the great lunkhead, to not realize how I've watched you both from a short distance. Seen your hand on the

cock I've sucked and ridden too many times to count. I burned as if it were me you touched. I've felt the arousal pouring off both of you in rushes and it's set me ablaze."

"Declan?" Jewel whispered. *Oh, wow.* She didn't know this man -- had never spoken to him -- but he felt so good behind her, so hard as he rocked his solid erection against her ass -- *oh* -- she wanted him as much as she wanted Cullen. She *needed* him without even being kissed.

Wow. When I go from famine to feast I do it right, don't I?

"Don't think," Declan murmured before using the point of his tongue to trace a line up the back of Jewel's neck. "We're past the point of thinking, and I believe we've passed the line where speech had the power to stop this."

He teased the shell of Jewel's ear with his forefinger. She leaned into the touch, wanting more.

"All you need to know is that I'm as eager for the taste and feel of you as Cullen. We're agreed on this. We want to share you between us and make you come undone, for you've already shattered the pair of us with one look, one touch, one... kiss..."

Jewel arched as heated lips fastened on the curve of her shoulder, her pussy spasming fiercely when Declan sucked and bit her skin.

"Come with us, lass," Declan urged, rocking into her, leading with his cock. "There's a place I know. Will you trust us enough to follow where we lead and let us have our way with you?"

Jewel moaned, almost a whimper. She was going to scream if she didn't have one or both -- *oh, oh, oh, God! God!* --

Cullen and Declan held Jewel steady despite their own shudders as she came, gritting her teeth to keep from screaming the way they'd promised she would. Soft cries escaped her lips all the same, the climax too much to handle. She was burning to death from the inside out. Both men quaked, muscles convulsing against her breasts and her shoulders; she could feel them fighting back their own blinding urge to orgasm.

For her sake?

"Enough of this," Declan ground out. He stood, lifting Jewel to her feet, feet that refused to hold her up. "Can you walk?"

Jewel shook her head. "I'm -- I'm lucky I can -- no, I can't answer that because I can't *think*. I can barely breathe. What are you doing to me?" she asked, struggling to speak between pulses of the *too-good* orgasm that she realized wasn't going to stop, but keep flooding her in surges until -- until -- she didn't know. "No. I can't walk."

"Then I'll carry you." Cullen swept Jewel into his burly arms. He paused long enough to savage the tender spot beneath her jaw with a frantic kiss, then straightened. "Declan, go. The sooner we're in private, the better."

Jewel rolled her head to look at Declan. Up close, the unique appeal of his face and the way he grinned, savage as a wolf, turned her bones to water. She crooned a wordless song of lust, reaching out to try and feel his skin.

Declan let Jewel rest her hand above his heart, letting her feel how fast it beat, and then seized her fingers for a kiss. "Follow me," he ordered, "before it's too late. Follow me *now*."

Chapter Three

Jewel had lost her mind. If she'd known it would be so much fun, she'd have done it years ago. *But then it wouldn't have been Cullen and Declan I was with -- and I'm glad this didn't happen until they came along.*

They're worth the wait. Every Saturday night alone was counting down the days until I met them.

She laughed, pure bliss bubbling out in chiming bells of sound. Felt the prickly burn of stubble as -- Cullen? -- yes, Cullen; she thought she remembered Declan being clean-shaven -- kissed her hard on the corner of her mouth. "Beautiful," he whispered. "Fairest of them all."

"Get a move on, love," Declan ordered. Fondly, but definitely not about to play around during their trip to wherever it was they were going. "Not far now."

Mmm. Jewel wished she could purr as she snuggled up to the brick wall that was Cullen's chest and listened to his heart thumping fast, fast, fast. *Not far* sounded good to her. Better than good. *Fantastic.*

What had she been thinking... oh. She'd gone crazy. As Cullen and Declan rushed her along, Jewel could have sworn she heard the forest talking. Its faraway whispers carried over the noises of twigs breaking underfoot and brush being pushed impatiently aside.

Oh, yes. She is the one, the wind said against her bared throat.

I thought they had waited too long, that they'd missed their chance, the sun said, warming her cheeks.

No. They were only waiting for her, the trees said as their leaves brushed Jewel's body.

This will be the best of all, a brook said, completely sure of its opinion. *All hail the Queen.*

"Can you hear them?" Jewel asked without bothering to think. She knew quirkiness wouldn't throw Cullen or Declan for a second. "They're talking to me."

"Who's talking?" Declan stopped short. Jewel arched into the firmness of his palm cupping her head. "What are you hearing, Rose?"

"The forest," she answered, fascinated by the rushing whispers. "They're saying such amazing things..."

"Cullen." *Uh-oh*. Declan didn't sound happy. Why? Jewel looked up at him, her vision blurry for some reason. It didn't worry her. Declan did. "Cullen, look around you. You see where we are? Did you do this?"

"Ah." Cullen rubbed his thumb in circles on Jewel's knee. "I think I must have."

"You know better."

"Aye, I do."

"We should go back, you know," Declan warned.

"We should. Are you really wanting to make the trip a second time?"

What? No! No going back! Jewel struggled in Cullen's arms, then latched on and held him tight. Cullen petted her, making soothing noises. "I think we have our answer." He chuckled. "And I'm agreeing. I'm not stopping long enough to concentrate on crossing the bridge a-purpose. Not when there's a toothsome morsel like her begging for the both of us."

"Crossing the bridge?" Jewel questioned, feeling her giddiness start to waver. "Cullen?"

"Shh, lass, shh. Rest easy." Cullen readjusted his arms, holding Jewel as firmly as she held him. "Declan? What's done can't be undone, you know. And is it a bad thing to have her here? She belongs. I can see how she fits in this place the same way she fits between us."

Jewel kissed Cullen's chest, wishing his T-shirt was out of the way. She wanted to taste the salt on his skin.

"Save some of those kisses for me," Declan said. He thumbed Jewel's cheekbone.
"Aye. All right."

"Yes?"

Declan's shadow blocked out the sunlight. Jewel heard the sound of lips meeting and knew he was kissing Cullen. The harshness of their breathing doubled as she listened to their mouths moving together. Cullen shifted so that Jewel's head rested on his chest, understanding why when Declan pressed close enough to all but squash her between them -- she bet that he couldn't resist touching both of them at the same time.

Jewel was vaguely aware of the way Declan clutched the sinew-hardness of Cullen's shoulder while they kissed, and *definitely* all there when it came to feeling his hand cup her breast, fingers teasing through the lace on her bra and tweaking her nipple.

They parted, laughing shakily. "Weren't you saying we should hurry?" Cullen rumbled.

"Well, you will keep distracting me, the both of you," Declan scolded.

Jewel giggled. "Are we there yet?"

"What -- ach, you. For that, you've earned yourself a spanking, so you have."

Jewel considered the idea. Nope, not a problem. In fact, she got butterflies of anticipation. She licked her lips again, slowly, trailing her tongue along the plump bottom. "Promise?"

"You have my word." Cullen stood up straight. "No more interruptions. *Go.*"

Jewel stiffened as something -- odd -- rushed over and through her, leaving her briefly chilly. "Head rush," she complained, fisting her hand in Cullen's shirt.
"What's..."

"No need to walk any further. I've brought us where we need to be." Declan was laughing at something. Mischievous. Teasing Cullen.

"Do you want a spanking of your own?"

"I do, and I'll hold you to the vow. First, though --"

"Aye. First, we see to the lady."

Oh, yeah. Now that's what I'm talking about. Jewel squealed, delighted, as between them the men lowered her. She didn't like leaving her cozy, exciting spot in Cullen's arms, but she had an idea that what was to come would be even better.

The two men nestled Jewel into what felt like a bed of the softest grass on earth, lush and springy. Better than any satin sheets she'd read about, and she thought she liked the summer's morning light more than she would the glow from fragrant candles.

Ridiculously happy, Jewel opened eyes that had closed again when Declan cradled her breast. Cullen and Declan stood over her, side by side, gazing at her with a mix of worship and pure lust. *They look like they belong together*, she decided. *And I can be part of this for a while.*

"More than a while, if you're willin'," Cullen replied. Jewel realized she'd spoken out loud without thinking. "You're far gone, aren't you?"

His amusement warmed Jewel instead of embarrassing her. "I think I'm drunk," she confessed, giggling. "How? I didn't even have a beer. Tipsy, though. Feels good."

"This place will do it to you, Rose."

"Uh-uh." Jewel shook her head. "You two are the ones giving me a buzz." She bit her lip, then went for broke. "You're making me sing."

"Sing, lass?"

"Uh-huh." Jewel gave in to the need she suddenly understood, running the flats of her hands down her belly and the tops of her thighs. She caressed her pussy through her jeans, then slipped her hand inside to penetrate the swollen lips. One touch to her clit and she'd...

"Ah-ah-ah!" Cullen caught Jewel by the wrist. She hadn't even seen him move, much less bend over her. "That's for us, now. Sometime I'll watch you put on a show, and gladly, but for the moment, you wait."

Jewel mewled in protest. Cullen tapped his thumb in time with her pulse.

"Will you be a good girl?" he coaxed. "I've an idea. I could feel you tremble when Declan and I kissed. I could smell how it excited you -- aye, and surprised you too. Never knew how hot it would be to see two men go after one another?"

"No," she admitted, then, eager, wanting to see, "Do it again."

Cullen exchanged a meaningful look with Declan, who laughed quietly and nodded. "Not like I need much of an excuse to jump these bones. Nor you in turnabout."

"Not wrong there."

"Shall we, then?"

"Save the best for her, and aye, you had better, or I'll box your ears."

"And that would never do," Declan murmured, turning into Cullen's wonderful embrace. Only slightly shorter, he still had to tilt his head to meet Cullen's mouth. "Kiss me."

Time stopped. Jewel stilled. "Oh," she breathed. *Wow* wasn't good enough. She couldn't think of any words that fit. "Oh."

What these men shared was magic. Lust? Absolutely, but more than that alone. Love. She could see the way they loved each other in the way they didn't hold back a single thing. Fighting for dominance in their kiss, grinding their erections together, hands groping everywhere, hard enough to turn their knuckles white and rough enough to make them curse fit to color the air blue.

Declan broke the kiss first. "Too many clothes," he growled. "Better not be attached to these, Cull. They're going." Grasping Cullen's shirt in his fists, he started to tear the fabric.

"I *am* attached to them," Cullen protested. "Here, you impatient wretch." He backed off and shucked out of his shirt, tossing it to one side. His chest was better than Jewel had dreamed, each big muscle defined beyond perfection, shiny with sweat. You could slice tomatoes on his stomach, he was that cut.

And Declan? Jewel looked to him, hoping he'd follow Cullen's example. When he did, she undulated excitedly. They weren't a perfect matching set -- Declan looked somehow tidier and more refined, and he had less hair -- but she couldn't have decided which one she liked more if her life depended on the choice.

Seeing those chests clash together was even better when they slammed into another brutal kiss. But not happy with only mouth on mouth, Cullen took charge. He held Declan still, using strength that must have been just enough greater to do the job, and went bananas over the man he'd called his "mate." Declan arched his neck and shouted as Cullen attacked his throat and shoulders, going all the way down to raised nipples that he caught between strong white teeth and bit, hard.

"Oh, so that's how we're playing, is it?" Declan gathered enough self-control to scoff. "Think you'll undo me so easily? Let's see how you stand up against this." He dropped gracefully to his knees, tugging Cullen's zipper open and catching Cullen's cock in his mouth.

Watching Declan blow Cullen, Jewel almost forgot how to breathe. The two men were on each other like wild animals -- kneading thighs, thrusting between widely parted lips that left behind gleaming wetness covering Cullen's shaft. Grunts and growls filled the air as they savaged one another. Finally, Cullen roared like a bull before shoving Declan away and pulling back.

Jewel whimpered. Cullen's cock was hard enough -- and long enough -- to press against his stomach. As she watched, unable to look away even if she'd wanted to, creamy whiteness rose up to decorate his cockhead. She could smell the pungency of his sweat as he gritted his teeth and tensed from head to foot. Cords stood out in his neck. His Adam's apple jerked. He held the air in his lungs and didn't let go.

Declan froze in place. Jewel held still. She could feel Cullen fighting the point of no return, and maybe it was selfish of her, but she didn't care: she wanted him buried in her pussy when he shot.

Almost unconsciously, she moved her fingers back to where they'd been before Cullen stopped her, but didn't do anything more than rest her hand over her soaking thatch, so hot against her palm.

The moment seemed to last forever, but finally, *finally*, Cullen relaxed, shaking his head. Drops of moisture went flying from his hair. One landed on Jewel's lip and she swept her tongue across on reflex, the flavor of salt filling her mouth.

She wanted more.

"Are you all right, then?" Declan asked, quiet as a mouse.

Cullen clenched and unclenched his hands. "Aye. Can't hold out much longer, though. It's the wanting, you see. Wanting the both of you."

"And her most of all?"

"I want you no less for wanting her desperately. Don't lie to me, man. I know you crave her just as much."

"I do. And I'm done waiting. Join me?"

"Race you."

"Oh, boyo, you're on, you are."

That was Jewel's only warning before Cullen and Declan pounced. She squeaked with glee and reached out, wanting to touch absolutely everything possible. They laughed as they wrestled her back down, so much gentler with her than with each other.

Treating her like a princess. A rose. A genuine jewel.

"You were saying something about clothes?" she suggested, loving how good it felt to be bad. She wanted to get rid of the sticky weight of her tunic. Wanted to feel the sun on her breasts and belly even more. Wanted them to see her naked most of all. "Get rid of this," she said, plucking at the fabric. "And don't be shy about tearing. *I* don't care what happens to this stuff."

Cullen hooted. "Lords and ladies, a woman after Declan's own heart. And mine," he reassured before she could doubt him. "And mine. I lay claim to this, love."

"Then I'll have the first taste of her breasts."

"Ach!" Cullen protested. "That's what you think."

"'Tis what I know." Declan's accent deepened. "Unless..."

Cullen lit up with a wicked sparkle. "Unless..."

"She does have two of them, after all. Share and share alike."

"The way it always has been, love."

Jewel looked up to see Cullen stroke Declan's cheek. Declan flushed and turned aside. He chuckled while Declan shed his jeans, and oh, didn't he have the other best cock in the world? She wanted to taste him right away but couldn't reach.

"I know, I know, I'm being a softy again," Cullen grumbled.

Jewel couldn't resist. Declan might be too far away but Cullen was *right there* and who'd ever heard a better leading line? "This isn't soft," she pointed out as she wrapped her fingers around Cullen's cock and squeezed. He felt amazing. Way better than toys. Silky, tissue-thin skin pulled so taut over the iron core she thought he might break through himself. "Not soft at all."

"With you around, how could it be?" Cullen pried Jewel off. "Stop, wench, or I'll be lucky to stroke inside you once, let alone give you the seeing-to I intend. And that happens now. No going back, lass. Are you ready?"

Jewel couldn't stop him or herself any more than she could slow down her breathing or the racing of her heart or the tension burning her pussy, warning her she might not be able to handle the orgasm it was going to deliver.

Would there ever be a better way to go? Not that she knew of. She looked from Cullen to Declan and back again, drinking in their desire for her. *Her!* They made her feel like a woman, they made her feel like a sex goddess, and they... they loved her, didn't they? How, so soon?

Didn't matter. She cared for them as deeply as they did for her, if not more.

Jewel nodded. "I'm ready," she said, sitting up to give them total access. "*Fuck me.*"

Cullen turned into a whirlwind, Declan helping all the way. Her tunic came off in two pieces, split down the back and the front and drawn off her arms. While Cullen laid a stinging line of biting kisses from Jewel's wrist to her shoulder, Declan nuzzled into the base of her spine and ran his thumbnail to the top of her neck, following with the tip of his tongue, hardened into a point.

The men met across Jewel and kissed each other, growling; then, they kissed her gently, urgently, in so many places she stopped counting and lost track. Her skin

hummed with the feeling of their lips, the sting of their teeth and the burn from whiskers. She had lifted her arms at some point, she realized, digging her fingers into Cullen's thick curls to push him closer and scratching Declan's neck as he sucked the curve of her shoulder.

"Jeans," she begged, whimpering as between them Cullen and Declan did away with her blue lace bra and dove to wrap their lips around her nipples. The feel of them drawing the hardened flesh into their mouths sent a pull through her womb and deep in her pussy. So good. Too good. She'd fly to pieces, and she couldn't do that before she had Cullen -- Declan -- *both* -- inside. "Jeans!"

Her men released her reluctantly. "I'd have these tasting of milk," Cullen murmured, the roughness of his calluses tingling where he held her breast. "Milk and honey. One day, d'you think?"

Jewel knew what he was asking -- realized what he was planning -- maybe both of them -- "One day *soon*," she said, covering Declan's hand as he scratched light trails over her belly. "Don't wait. I want what you want." And she did. This was fast and this was crazy but it was too perfect to question.

It was everything she'd ever wanted, and what they were asking was buttercream icing on the cake they offered.

"Then I won't hold back." Cullen licked her nipple. "Between us, lass. Lie down again and let us love you."

Finally. Jewel flopped down with a laugh and let the pair of them manhandle her. When they fumbled her jeans open and tugged them off her legs, she only had a second to gasp at the kiss of the sunlight on her soaking center before Declan made a "tch" noise. He made her sodden scrap of underwear vanish like magic and replaced both cloth and sun with his lips.

Cullen seized her mouth in a hard kiss, swallowing her scream. Declan tormented her clit with tongue and teeth and thrust two fingers inside, pumping with fast jerks. Every howl disappeared down Cullen's throat, one for every time Declan thrust. She'd tried toys, sure, but they weren't anything like the touch of a man's hands.

She'd probably lose her mind when she finally got to wrap her fingers around his cock, weighing the mass and measuring the length, but what a way to go! She felt a faint sting of surprised pain when Declan delved inside, too needy to be gentle; it only lasted a moment and was then quickly forgotten as he pushed her far as she could go.

She couldn't take anymore. She couldn't. Sobbing into Cullen's kiss, Jewel begged without words for what she wanted.

Cullen shuddered. "Declan," he said, lifting his lips from Jewel's. "Declan!"

Declan paused, sighed, and stopped. His mouth shone with juices as he came back into view. For all he hadn't wanted to quit tasting her, his eyes gleamed avidly. "Who?"

"Me." Cullen's voice brooked no argument. "As the elder and the one to lay original claim, she's mine to take. Mine to bear the first. You'll have your chance, and..." he turned sly. "... I'm thinkin' our Jewel wouldn't object to a taste of you as you've tasted her."

Jewel's eyes opened wide. Was he... oh, yeah, he was. Not trusting herself to speak, she scrabbled to reach Declan's fingers and compress them between her own. He returned the pressure despite examining her face in wonder. Jewel managed an encouraging smile and beckoned him closer.

She lost herself, then, nothing left of her but one huge knot of mounting excitement. She felt everything, every whisper of bare skin on her own and the pressure of their hands pushing her thighs wide apart. She inhaled greedily as the scent of Declan's cock flooded her senses when he braced one knee on either side of her shoulders and lowered the organ without waiting. Tasted his bitter-salty flavor when he traced a wet line over her lips.

Took him into her mouth, knowing Declan didn't care if she was clumsy. She made up for that with eagerness and from the way he groaned when she tried sucking, she didn't do bad at all for a beginner.

Cullen was so big, so broad that Jewel's thigh muscles burned with how far apart she had to stretch to let him get where he wanted to be. She didn't care. She was drunk and high and nothing mattered except --

"Ready?"

Jewel dug her heels into the slick skin of Cullen's back. She was ready, she was so very ready, and --

Cullen slid home, gliding on her wetness, one strong stroke that bumped something deep within. The shock set a match to the fractionally short fuse waiting for this moment. Declan's cock popped free of her mouth as she bucked back, spine arching and screaming to the heavens, a cry that jerked and echoed until it sounded as if it were coming from someone else. The heavy bulk of Cullen's cock finally where the cock belonged, replacing the phantom fuck tormenting her until now, was the last thing Jewel could take.

She saw herself as from above, feeling wet heat coat her lips and throat when Declan lost control. Felt Cullen pistoning in her pussy, too much, too much, not enough -- saw him stiffen, every muscle knotting --

-- returned to her body just in time to feel the rush of his seed flooding her and his lips suckling her breast.

And came again, the aftershocks of her earthquake turning her vision white, then dark.

For a long moment she hung dazed, unable to speak or think.

She slowly ebbed back into her body. The sexual frenzy curled and uncurled, feathering away. As it went, it left her warm and limp in every limb, happy as she could be to lie there forever with Cullen still hard in her pussy and Declan braced on his hands, chest heaving for air.

They didn't let her. Drawing out and drawing off, they writhed into place on both sides of Jewel's sated body, wrapping her in an embrace that included one another, binding them together almost as close as a single being.

Jewel kissed first one sweat-soaked head and then the other, whispering nonsense words when they burrowed deeper into her chest. She gazed at the sky above and laughed, thinking they'd actually fucked her blind. Sort of. More like they'd distorted her vision with what they'd done and...

She blinked.

Cullen and Declan immediately picked up on Jewel's sudden tension. They linked hands beneath her breasts and sighed into her neck. "She's noticed," Declan muttered. "Don't be afraid, Jewel. We didn't mean to bring you here so --"

Jewel stared at the brilliantly silver sky, white-silver, not clouds as she might have thought. She couldn't look away from the blazing purple bands of light that took the place of sun or moon -- although there were stars by the thousands, brighter than Roman candles going off.

"We should tell her," Cullen said. He sounded determined and resigned, but his hand squeezed Declan's all the harder. "Everything."

"No."

The men stilled. "What?" Cullen asked cautiously.

"No." Jewel let herself smile as bright and wide as she wanted. "I always believed in fairytales," she explained. "I knew that one day, my prince would come. I got lucky. I got two princes."

"You're righter than you think." Declan mouthed the top of Jewel's breast, sending a sizzle through her that let her know they weren't anywhere near done yet. "Princes, aye, and..."

"... we'd been looking for the noble lady who'd complete us for, oh, ages now."

"And that's me." Jewel spoke with utter confidence. She drew a deep breath of the fresh, clean air, tasting cinnamon and cloves and the flavor of rain, wondered why she hadn't noticed before, then decided it didn't matter. "Let me see?"

She didn't have to explain. As one, Cullen and Declan nodded and sat up. Jewel drank in the sight of them, wanting to laugh for glee at the changes she saw. Tattoos,

elegant Celtic swirls decorating their cheeks and throats and arms. Ears that came to delicate points. Faces ever so slightly different -- unearthly -- no less handsome.

Jewel clasped one of each man's -- no, she knew what they were -- Elves -- hands in her own. "Thank you," she said quietly. "Thank you."

"No, lass." Cullen lifted Jewel's fingers to his lips and kissed them, just as he had when this whole thing started. "We're the ones who owe thanks to you." His face crinkled in a grin. "You really are an extraordinary woman, aren't you, then?"

Jewel laughed. "I think it'll only get better from here," she said, knowing as soon as she spoke the words that they were true. "And they lived happily ever after?"

Cullen sucked one of her fingertips into his mouth, pulling fiercely, then letting go. "Almost," Declan said, winking. "Almost."

Willa Okati

Willa Okati is made of many things: imagination, passion for manlove, creativity and sheer bloody-minded determination to keep writing, getting out all the stories in her head.

The only problem with that clever plan is that as she writes, more story ideas pop up...

She's getting into ménage these days, and finding that it's really peachy to write female leads -- but these leading ladies have always gotta have their two men (who are into each other as well as her). That makes for extra-special spicy good times!

Willa, by the way, looks nothing like her picture -- but she wishes she did! You can reach her at willaokati@gmail.com, visit her at her website (<http://www.willaokati.com>) or join her Yahoo! Group for updates at http://groups.yahoo.com/group/willa_okati/

May the force be with ya'll!