

# **Maiden Bound**

## **By Danielle Fonda**



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**Published 2003**

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**Allure Books**

**<http://www.allurebooks.com>**

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# Chapter One

*Remember son, the certitude of a man's birth, his ascendancy, is the power he wields and the wisdom upon which he welds it.*

Hugh raised his head to the crescent moon in remembrance of his father's words. These were the last words his father ever spoke to him, for the Viscount of Avranché's was dead these many years. But, his words had lived on in the young son and heir, and had served Hugh bountifully through all the years since. The power he had forged out of gregarious wit, a forcefully trained body, and valorous deeds. The wisdom had come more slowly, maturing like a vintage wine matures from a swill into a more full-bodied ambrosia with age.

As it should be, Hugh considered, because when he was younger, the power of his knightly-warriors skills carried him through the battles that won him his stature in the land, and the power to hold it. Now the wisdom advised him on how to maintain his domain and he used that wisdom with greater and greater respect.

Not, Hugh mused, that he was ancient by any means at thrice ten and two. He was still in his prime and ready to wrestle onto and hold what was his with an iron fist. Nonetheless, it was the time in his life when he needed to consider the furthering of his lineage and more purposefully the securing of his dominion by producing heirs. Yet, his wisdom bade him not to carry this challenge frivolously. Many men would boast of wives who were dutiful within the world of arranged marriage for land and better provincial security.

Hugh's intended bride would bring such a match to him. Adeliza, the eldest daughter of Roger of Tosny, would as his bride, bring him further lands in Normandy to complement his own holdings there. She would bring a worthy lady's dowry and was said to be a dutiful daughter besides a comely woman. All of this pleased Hugh and pleased his sense of desire to strengthen his hold upon the world. Yet, it was not enough. Not for him. He wanted . . . nay, he demanded loyalty from his future wife. He insisted upon honor and complete control of this woman who would be the mother of his future heirs.

His wisdom entreated him to gain her complete supplication to him. A cleaving of her mind, body, and soul that would never need to be questioned. Yet, not through love, for that was foolishly weakening and

allowed his enemies an advantage to use against him. Nay, he could wish heartily, and perhaps would strive to claim Adeliza's love of him, however he would never return that affection for it being too costly. Yet still, while these thoughts were sound, they left him perplexed. It had come to him that thus far his lifetime had been filled with little but training, battle, and the securing of his position. Leaving him with an undeniable fact that remained.

He knew precious little about women.

Ah, but he knew how to fuck them rambunctiously. His cod loved their adornments of fertile buttocks, lustful slippery quims, and bountiful mounds of titties. Still not once, he must admit, had he ever seduced one . . . never to a completion that he had heard was possible for them to achieve.

In truth, he had never considered it being relevant, until now. He was lord and master over all he surveyed and could take any maiden he wished without much consideration. Not that he was cruel, nor had he overindulged through the years. To this date he had treated a good fucking on occasion, as necessary to a man's body, yet nothing to lose one's head over. However, it was just this proscribed attitude that left him with inexperience, now when he most needed expertise.

Yet, he was not a man to admit any encumbrance of defeat. Not in any facets of his life. He was bold and perhaps over dominating in the guise of his mantle as lord and master. Yet, he was just, as needs be. He would never admit inexperience on any realm to friend or foe. Never allow any man the upper guide, except perhaps his king. And even then, King William the Conquer held him in regard, placing upon his shoulders the properties of Marcher Lord as the Earl of Chester. Only the strongest man, would the king deem fit to hold English lands against the Scots in the northern borders and the Welsh in the west.

Nay, he would not admit his perplexity in a woman's body. He would train himself and explore the undiscovered until he reached the art of proficiency that would enable him to enslave his future wife to *his* desires. She would not merely be dutiful, but enthralled to him.

And as chance would take it, he had a very gregarious and witty scheme to pursue his lessons.

## Chapter Two

“It must be said, my liege, that I have found my eternal spirit of curiosity fascinated at this mission to which you commanded me. I have managed to perform it with excellence, even as my curiosity peaks, Lord Hugh. But, your command has been fulfilled, my liege,” Lazarus announced as Hugh watched Lazarus assume one of those unusual Mongolian stances, for which he was famous. His arms bracketed behind his back, hand to elbow on each side with his legs braced at a dramatic unbending V. The entire gesture expanded Lazarus’s muscle-bound chest and Hugh plied his forefinger and thumb in a V of their own, tamping his beard down with a familiar gesture, while he regarded his loyal friend and the commander of his legions. “I am held in suspense, sire,” Lazarus finished.

Hugh’s left eye twitched in irritation at Lazarus’s flummery of sires and my liege’s. The man was a menace in subtlety, and how well Lazarus knew Hugh. Too much, Hugh pondered, for he did not wish to hold this personal venture open to scrutiny. Be Lazarus friend or not. So, Hugh snidely blurted, “I have needs to fuck more regularly. Tis simple enough request.”

Lazarus raised a thin black eyebrow, with his entire personage otherwise immobile, flummoxing his half Mongolian heritage of ragers and passionate barbarians. The man was made of marble, Hugh maintained, bronze flesh colored marble, with devilish brown eyes that saw too much.

“To fuck a virgin, supreme sire. A Saxon virgin, a young virgin. A virgin without family ties.” Lazarus paused in his recitation as if in need of a large breath that he did not take, from such a lengthy list. “Somewhat shy, somewhat pretty, somewhat buxom *and* . . . extremely obedient.”

Hugh puffed out an irritated breath through his moustache. Hugh would not mention the forgotten, somewhat needy, poverty stricken, *and* clean.

“Tis unlike you to judge what I find fuckable, Lazarus,” Hugh replied eventually.

“Tis unlike you, my liege-sire, to need a permanent concubine to cloud your-.”

Sitting at the small bench table in his solar at Chester Castle having this inane conversation with Lazarus caused Hugh's temper to rise. Hugh's hand rose and slapped down on the table, interrupting Lazarus's veritable running off of his mouth. "We will not call her that!" Hugh eyed Lazarus. "What is her name? This maiden you've found me."

"Acquired, great liege-."

"Stop that! Before I draw and quarter you!"

"It has been tried, but I see your point, my friend. As I was saying, acquired lends a man's ear to the quality of whoring, and-."

"Lazarus!"

"Emma, my lord." This was finally expounded from Lazarus with a sweeping bow of hard edged mockery, before he stood straight and tall again in damnable Mongolian fashion.

"Hmm." Hugh pondered the name. It was a sensible name, possibly a likeable one. "Is she talkative? Did I mention that also?"

Lazarus's ebony eyebrow rose again. "Yes, my friend, an interesting combination, shy . . . yet, talkative. Yet, I could not say, I was reassured before money exchanged hands. She has, as of yet, been too afraid to prove it."

"Afraid?" Hugh muttered, he had not pondered, afraid. "What, by Christ's balls, has the maiden to be afraid of? I am an earl."

Lazarus chuckled in a most unusual offering for him. "She *is* a virgin, Hugh, and *that* demands fear, I believe. But of me, at the moment. The saffron-haired maid, fears me."

Hugh nodded his head in ready understanding of this. Most damsels feared his exotic friend to the point of swooning on occasion. It was the height and breath of both men that commanded it, with Lazarus's warm olive skin and his Asian slanted black eyes that held a type of sinister mystery, while Hugh's own auburn hair and azure eyes held the commonness of the Norman-English soil.

"And, you needed to pay for her? And, from whom did you buy her?"

"I know it strikes your vanity, Hugh, but the proper maid could not be found upon your vast holdings. So she does not come freely to serve her lord and master with joy." Lazarus's expression grew solemn. "I traveled to the old kingdom of Mercia, before I ferreted out this maid, and then I bought her from a willing enough hag, whom claimed to be the maid's put upon old nursemaid. Assuring me, the maid's entire family was long dead."

Hugh drummed the table with his fingers, finally deciding to be the least bit social with Lazarus as he poured two silver goblets of berry-red wine. "Have a drink then," Hugh said, shoving a goblet at Lazarus, whom picked it up from the other side of the table, as Hugh continued to question, "So my Emma could be a past lady of Saxon birth?"

"She has the bearing, my lord," Lazarus offered after a healthy drought of wine, whereupon he finally sat in the chair offered on the other side of the table.

“Hmm.” Hugh’s calloused finger pads drummed the table. “There are many Saxon maids thus. It does not matter. Could be better than peasant stock?” Since the moment Lazarus had been summoned by Hugh and entered the room, his midnight eyes held their first tangible questioning glint. So, Hugh retorted, “Ah well, I only say it because a lady would be cleaner fucking than a peasant.” Hugh hedged as he tugged on his short blonde beard absently. Really, he was more than pleased. If he had thought he could get a lady to begin with, without getting tangled into marriage, he would have done so. It was a lady that he eventually wished to seduce to his will and it was a lady’s body he would learn.

“It occurs to a lesser minion such as myself, Hugh, that your future lady bride will be a virgin in your bed some day.”

*Damn him*, Hugh thought, eyeing Lazarus’s serpentine and devilish grin. Hugh slapped the table, and then turned the conversation elsewhere, which, Hugh was sure held no surprise or frustration to Lazarus. “About that Welsh Prince Rwyelledyn, Lazarus, he is becoming a nuisance with these raids on my western border lands. I think we must consider taking more of his land away from him . . .”

## Chapter Three

Emma stood by the shuttered window in the Earl of Chester's private bed chambers, peeking through the wooden slats down to the bailey below. She had been standing in this furtive position for well over an hour, waiting and watching anxiously each person that came through the keep's portcullis. It was a distance from this towering perch, yet she was certain that she would not miss the portly monk's brown robe, when he appeared.

"Where is he?" Emma whispered, with a husky and anguished tremor to her voice that revealed her concern as she twisted a strand of her blonde hair around her fist. She looked at that hair, free to cling around her small hand and condemned that barbarian calling himself Lazarus once again. 'Twas he who took her wimple away saying that virgin maids needed to display their wares. *Oh*, she disliked that barbarian for his arrogance and his blatant mouth. Nothing embarrassed the man, and she had spent the entire journey here in his company, with her skin flushed the color of red apples.

Not that she had any illusions about the nature of her boughten servitude. Lazarus had made that clear, she was to be the concubine of the earl. It had taken Emma a bit of time to understand this concubine wording that the Eastern man used, but she had finally understood it to mean, whore!

Emma shivered as she clasped her arms around her waist, still doggedly staring at the portcullis entrance. It is not as if she had a choice . . . she knew this. Mayhap, she was even surprised that it had not happened sooner. Her circumstances were limited now by events from long ago out of her control, and she had not had much choice since.

"At least he is an earl," Emma whispered, realizing that held no comfort, for a man was a man, be he an earl or peasant. But, she had not cowered, at least not much and she had not moaned or bewailed her fate. She came from the noblest lines and she would survive and protect the one thing dearest to her.

Emma's gaze widened at that moment. She saw him! Emma leaned her forehead against the wooden slats to peer closer. Aye, 'twas the portly Owain, and there he was upon the back of his little brown mule, Betsy,



as he called her. Oh yes, Emma sighed in relief, she could see him. He was here and safe. They were both safe, for who would *ever* think to look at the powerful Earl of Chester's holding for them. None! That is why she had been willing.

Hugh paused beyond the little used side entrance to his bedchamber, drawing the inside bolt firm again, before he turned and stepped to the side of a tapestry hung in a position to hide the existence of the entrance. He had come this way for a purpose, to allow himself an unguarded first view of his newly acquired maiden. He was surprised at his anticipation, it reminded him of the heated stirring of his youthful lust. Perhaps, the first time he had mounted a maid would be a better description of this excitement that he now felt. Yet, he was a man now and he would temper it to his will as he must. This was not some boyish adventure, but a logical expedition and he would pursue it as such.

Hugh took another step, which allowed his unfettered view to sweep the entire room. He saw the maiden immediately, for she was like a gilded beacon, standing there at the side of the room next to the shuttered window. It was her hair, he decided, that lent this eye attracting quality, for it shone like sprinkled sunshine, hanging in heavy waves well past her hips. His view of her was from the side as she peeked a well-turned nose nearly through the wooden slats of the shutters. Fleetinglly, he wondered what she found so interesting in the bailey below as he studied her profile.

She was petite of height, this Emma, but her body which was outlined in a snug fitting sapphire blue over tunic, was anything but petite in its endowments. She was not in the remotest obese, but had the ripe and well-rounded curves of a siren. Hugh caught an unexpected breath when the entirety of her figure settled into his mind. This maiden's body alone would turn masculine heads wherever she walked. It was one of those truly womanly shapes that called to a man's potency. Large of tits, a small waist, and hips of generous swell that curved into what must be long shapely limbs beneath the heavy blue brocade. Her face was fragile with the fine bones of quality that so many Saxon maidens carried. It was an utterly feminine face, Hugh thought as he considered that Lazarus had done his deed with serious thought. This maid was exquisite.

This realization caused Hugh an uncomfortable moment or two . . . he did not wish for exquisite. How would he temper exquisite, how would he bend exquisite to his will? Hugh toyed with his beard as he watched the maiden and he considered that he had never before been turned by a comely face and he would not be so now. Twas just a face . . . just a body, and he was the master here. He would go on as he planned, and perhaps find a bit *more* pleasure in the discoveries he wished to make. There was nothing wrong with that! He would find pleasure in his self taught learning. Nothing, wrong with that at all.

Decided in his own wisdom, Hugh strode further into the chamber, it was time to set the stage of his instruction. To that avail, he had neither

allowed the maiden to eat nor cleanse herself from her journey by bathing and dressing in fresh attire. He had a well-thought out beginning for them. A brilliant direction that would afford him the most advantage to learn the knowledge that he needed to know.

Hugh began speaking at once in a commanding bass voice, whose sudden sound caused the maiden to face him with a startled expression on her face.

“I am Lord Hugh the Earl of Chester. *You* will not eat that I do not feed you. You will not dress that I do not clothe you. You will not slumber that I do not allow it. Before this moment you were my chattel, beyond it, you are simply, mine! Intimately, to do with as I please.”

Hugh stalked around the golden maiden using his size and her petite height, gladly, to intimidate her. “Maiden, you are comely.” Hugh paused behind her, lifting a strand of gold-fired curls in his hand. “This pleases me. And, you are afraid of me, which you would do well to heed.”

Hugh paused a moment again to determine the order of his further directions as Emma’s silken curls of hair caressed his finger with a life of their own. She was buxom, this Saxon maiden and he had the perfect view with his height from behind her, down her sultry cleavage. Those pillowed twin mounds rose and fell in some agitation. Possibly fear or perhaps his nearness.

“I will allow no disobedience from you that you would not receive punishment for attempting,” Hugh paused and drew a deep breath, then bellowed, “*Is that clear?*”

“Yes, my lord!” Emma squeaked, juggling those handsome tits to distraction, until Hugh determined the very place upon her body where he would begin his instruction.

“Then *strip* this cloth to your waist, maiden.”

Hugh watched Emma’s startled blue-gray eyes rise to his, while her coral tinted bottom lip trembled. “N-Now?” she questioned with a wavering voice.

Hugh’s answer was to step ominously forward, his gaze fixed on Emma’s as if he looked at one of his knaves, who had dared speak out to him. Twas effective, for Emma’s quaking hand came up to pull the garment off one slender white shoulder, then the other. Satisfied with the beginning, Hugh stepped back and took a seat in the padded chair nearby, to observe her, silently. She was pink of face with her gaze lowered and that bountiful sunlight hair falling forward obstructing his view as she pulled the garment and the chemise beneath down to hang at her wrists.

“Shake back your hair, maiden. You know that which I wish to see.”

Hugh’s throat tightened and heat flushed his entire body. He could do nothing for a few moments, but stare. Stare at Emma’s tits, so large and firmly uplifted with pale near ethereal skin and small circular nipples of cherry blossom pink. The little nips puckered beneath his gaze with the hardening little buds stretching outward . . . longer and longer.

“How do you feel?” Hugh demanded in a voice that he pushed forth sharply.

“I-I,” Emma stuttered clutching her diminutive hands in her royal blue skirts.

“It is my command to you that you must speak to me honestly and completely about what you feel.” Hugh purposely unclenched his fingers from the fists they had become and rubbed one open palm on his thigh. “Tell me what you feel, Emma.”

“Cold,” she whispered.

Hugh nearly chuckled tensely, he could well see that there were goose bumps hardened around the fragile pink circles of her nipples. “And,” he prompted.

Emma peeked at him beneath golden eyelashes. “I do not like it,” she murmured.

“Are you sure?”

Emma raised her head looking at him fully for the first time and his breath caught once again at the sight of such a fair and bare-breasted maiden. “Yes, my lord.”

“This is honest, maiden. What else?” Hugh asked, while trying for a bearing of nonchalance as he stroked his short beard.

“I-um,” Emma stuttered, looking frustrated and helpless at the same moment, before she inhaled a bracing breath that raised her melon shaped tits high. Hugh’s cod suddenly awakened and stirred meaningfully. “I cannot help but think, ah—I w-wonder, perhaps if you could or might, ah-.” She stopped speaking, and then she squeaked, “Like them.”

Emma was flushed now, as flushed as Hugh felt as he shifted his ankle up and across the other leg superciliously to hide the evidence rising in the crotch under his cod covering. He watched the flush on Emma’s porcelain skin move downward to tint the top portions of her bold tits, whilst his fingers itched in a mysterious fashion, and he strove to control the tenor of his voice. “I do, maiden. I have never seen such plentifulness in a woman’s tits before.” Hugh searched his thoughts for clarity, then said, “You *should* be proud of them.” *And he meant this deeply*, he thought as his gaze remained riveted to the enchanting view.

Emma could not fathom what was wrong with her, but she found herself thrusting the shameless bareness of her breasts forward beneath his lordship’s praise, whilst she peeked at him beneath her eyelashes. He was a very large man with thick rich chestnut hair and startling blue-green eyes. It was obvious he was a warrior-lord, not paunchy and pallid, but sun browned with a healthy muscular shape that made her feel frail. His beard was short and blond compared to his dark hair, over a strong square jaw and his brown-sandy moustache topped his smooth and expressive masculine lips.

“Thank you, my lord,” Emma fairly squeaked, not knowing what to think of herself or this muscle-bound lord who gazed at her naked breasts with a green fire in his vivid blue eyes. She felt so strange, embarrassed,

yet seemingly proud. Perhaps hot was the word she searched for, to be so exposed to his more than manly staring.

“Come here, maiden.”

*Oh Gods*, Emma pressed her hands to her churning stomach and inhaled a gusting breath as she hesitated.

“Now!” he commanded sharply. Emma flinched and shuffled forward to stand at his knees. He was so potentially male that the heat from him seemed to wash over her in waves, making her faint. “I wonder why these nips harden so,” he muttered as he stroked his rich straw-colored beard as though pondering a great unfathomable question. “Do you know, maiden?”

“N-No, my lord,” Emma whispered in a waver, trying to hold her knees from collapsing.

“Hmm, I suspected you would not,” he muttered, leaning back to catch her gaze. “Where would you most want me to touch them?”

## Chapter Four

“Oh, my lor-.” Emma began to sink into a faint, but suddenly wide callused hands were hotly pressed around her bare rib cage as her hands faltered forward, and then clasped sinewy banded shoulder muscles.

“Forsooth, maiden, steady yourself,” he commanded in a deeply strained base voice. However, Emma could not, and he seemed to realize that he was the only thing holding her up. “I need a clear head, not a swooning maiden,” Lord Hugh muttered, with a near growl, vibrating deep in his chest.

Emma could not speak, her breathing came so rapid and shallow that it heaved her naked breasts directly beneath Lord Hugh’s aquiline nose. He held her firm between his thickly muscled thighs and she dared to peek down at him. The motion caused her hair to fall forward nearly encasing them as some of it skittered across the tips of her nipples. She gasped at the aching sensation that twittered across her belly and pooled deeply between her thighs.

“What is it?” Lord Hugh demanded so sharply that she-.

“My breasts,” Emma gasped. “My hair across the nips is-is-.”

“Is-?” Lord Hugh questioned, with a drawn out breath.

Yet, before Emma could speak a reply, which she had no wish to give, she was suddenly lifted quite bodily into Lord Hugh’s strong arms as he stood. She felt the strength of that muscle held beneath her knees and at her back as he strode to the high bed. Emma squeaked her surprise, a literal mouse sound, as she clutched Lord Hugh’s neck. Never had she seen more power in a man, to carry her so. Yet, more alarming than this was the bed! Lord Hugh carried her up the three steps provided and set her into the middle of the feather stuffed mattress. Was this the ravishing? *Now*, so quickly, Emma wondered, trying to catch her breath? She was so tense with anxiety that she never let go of Lord Hugh when he lay her down, and he ended braced on one arm above her.

“Forsooth, maiden. I will never gain any proper education if you keep as frightened as your stormy, gray eyes proclaim. I need honesty, *not* fright.”

“I-I do not understand,” Emma stuttered unable to take her gaze away from Lord Hugh’s deeply shifting evergreen eyes. He was so close

to her that the errant nibs of her breasts were nearly grazing his chest as his hot breath warmed her chin. She could smell wine and cinnamon, but there was something much more. It was a humid smoldering male scent. Encompassing. Bold. So frightening, yet alluring as it filled her senses. To have the vitality of a man's strength and sinew lay against her so closely was wrought with confusion because of its sudden headiness.

"Perhaps we will negotiate," he muttered.

Emma felt his fingers and hand so wide and strong splayed from the bareness beneath her breasts, to the firm curve below her waist. His thumb, which was thick and calloused, rasped the edge of her belly button with a restless movement. Her eyes fluttered close as her breath caught and her tender belly trembled. The suffering between her thighs thickened deeply.

"Negotiate?" she puffed breathlessly.

"Mm," Lord Hugh thrummed deep in his throat. "I will give you something in return for something from you."

Emma's eyes came open, beneath a quick and sudden flash of hope that this inspired. *Her stepbrother*, she thought excitedly and Lord Hugh was powerful enough to protect them! She needed, never to be afraid again and *what* would she give for such a boon?

"I can see, Emma, there is something that you desire greatly," Lord Hugh said with satisfaction.

*Emma.* He spoke her name so deeply. Yet, in that instant Emma realized with anguished regret that she could *not* ask Lord Hugh for her boon. It would be *too* foolish to trust him. To trust anyone with her precious secret. Her fingers tightened on his strongly muscled shoulders.

"Tell me," he urged.

"I cannot," she whispered, turning her face to the side.

Lord Hugh huffed an exasperated sound. "Well then, lovely maiden, I will outwit you," he proclaimed deeply.

Emma turned her gaze back with her eyes widening. *Lovely?* "You w-will?" she stuttered senselessly.

"Mm," he murmured, gazing at her intensely. Emma felt Lord Hugh's thumb touching her belly button now. "I can force you, coerce you, or compel you, maiden. All this is easily within my power. Yet, as satisfying as this would be to my authority, it would still leave you in this irritable and frightened state. So, I will negotiate to wipe this fear of yours aside." He paused meaningfully, "Rather than beat it from you, which is a parody of itself. To beat fright from a slave."

The sound Lord Hugh made then, in his throat, was superior wit at his own humor. "Be that as it may," he continued. Emma was beginning to realize Lord Hugh was a very intelligent and complex man. "I will give you any one thing for which you ask. And, I will not require the knowledge of it now." Emma gaped at him. "Anything, maiden," he murmured in an enticing manner.

“For what?” she gushed, with her mind whirling in possibilities. In truth, she could see that she needed *two* boons.

“I can see that you have shrewdness and wit, Emma,” Lord Hugh pronounced with an intrigued gleam in his eyes. “Most people in your position would tumble over themselves to claim my outrageously generous boon. Yet, you would know the price, and I say that is shrewd.” Lord Hugh lifted several strands of her hair near the ends, studying them as he continued to speak. “I believe if we seal our negotiations I will have less fear from you because you will always be reminded about what you will gain. With that given, all that I require is your complete obedience and honesty.”

“But yet, that *is* two,” Emma blurted quickly.

“Maiden, you intrigue me,” Lord Hugh responded as quickly. “Finer men have never negotiated this well with me,” he said as he lowered his gaze to her breasts. Emma had nearly forgotten that she was so exposed. “Hmm,” he murmured as though pondering great events, before he continued. “You are right, and I will concede the need of two boons, yet . . . I cannot, considering my own self preservation, allow them both to be secret from me. What say you, Emma, will you tell me of one of your wishes that we may seal our negotiations?”

“A home,” Emma whispered.

Lord Hugh raised his dark eyebrows to this. “Of stone and mortar, maiden?” he asked in surprise.

“Yes,” she gushed. “Of my own, with a bare bit of land to sow a garden for food. And, your protection from all that would dare to take me from it.”

Oh no! Emma realized that in her passion of the spectacular moment, she had revealed too much to Lord Hugh’s keen mind. But, to come so close to fulfilling her dream of a home and security was truly overpowering. And, he knew. He knew so much that she would never be able to hide.

His firm lips pondered, and she held her breath, waiting the question. “I can see this means much to you as your vow equally will mean to me.”

Emma watched him bring the end of her hair to his lips. He brushed the curls over the firm texture and she thought that he did not realize that he was doing it, as his great mind turned. Then, suddenly his pine colored eyes sharpened and he pinned her with his gaze. “Do you believe that I have the power, the will, and the strength to protect you, if I so choose?”

Emma felt all those so strongly. It was saturating in an aura from him to her. She believed, with no doubts. “Yes, my lord,” she answered firmly.

His head nodded once arrogantly as though assured of no other answer. “Do you believe that if I gave a vow that I will hold it strongly with all my might?” he asked.

“I-,” Emma hesitated, the ways of men were too corrupt to believe so quickly. But then, when she thought that her hesitation could bring anger from him, instead he smiled. Not a large smile, but a potent one.

“I will consider that a man’s worth and his word must be earned. Yet, I now vow to give you your piece of land with dwelling. The deed will be recorded this day in your presence. I also vow, bare-breasted Emma, to protect you, but perhaps for you to believe that vow you will have to find ways to keep me interested to do so.”

The turning of his wit completely enthralled Emma. She had never felt the pull of a man’s mind before and strangely her body seemed to flush. Her lips felt fuller and her nipples peaked more into the shape of small lances. Her gaze fluttered downward, but the firming of Lord Hugh’s sinew tensed in all the places pressed against her and she knew he was aware of the barely perceptible changes. Man to a woman. Woman to a man.

Her body knew. Even if her mind hesitated. Yet, to do justice to his offer and her position, she had to be honest. She had to be more forthright and open than she had ever imagined being. He was her lord and her master now by virtue of his power, strength, and arrogance. Nay, and right. The great lords of England had the right now of conquerors, but this was a boon. To find herself with an offer from a powerful lord, and not a demand.

Only, she was woefully untried in the ways of men and women together. Men and women copulating for romantic intimacies. It was a fearful thought. Truly, it was a vulnerable one. Yet, she had wished for attraction or the knowledge of it in her life. She was young and healthy. Of course, her mind wandered to men. However, her future had looked bleak on that venue, considering the lowly existence in which she had survived. Nay, she had tried to keep thoughts of men and any yearning of them at bay. It had been too unrealistic to hope. Her lot had seemed more realistic to end the slave of a swine farmer, rather than ever to chance upon proper courtship to a proper man. But, then like some fateful miracle, one week ago, her entire life had been changed. This handsome virile lord asked much of her. Yet, the reward was tenfold to her.

“And?” Lord Hugh cocked his head at her with his hand lowering and spreading out over the cloth, still barely covering her lower belly. He was completely masculine with a man’s rough edges, shrewdness, and intensity. A woman certainly and quite easily could be lost in his male effervescence. “I am impressed that you ponder it, Emma, without snatching it outright. This, fawn-look that you give me, coupled with the turning of your mind, leads me to trust your word. Once you give it.”

“Three questions or statements I have, my lord, if you will allow me to make them.” Emma prayed that she did not gamble too far. Yet, for the sake of an honest oath, she needed clarity.

“If only for the sake of your complete honesty, maiden.”

Emma sensed that Lord Hugh’s mind bordered on being perturbed. A man such as he commanded, but did not answer. So, she rushed to get it all out. Taking a large breath, which raised her belly and the hot imprint of Lord Hugh’s hand. His irises turned to the movement.



“If I were to become seeded with a child, what then?” Emma had many questions on this count, but she rushed on. “I would enjoy freedom of movement about your demesne.” This was paramount. “And, I request-. Nay, I hope for laughter in our interactions.”

Once Emma asked for the presence of laughter, she knew she had been thinking correctly. For herself and for her needs, laughter would make any hesitations bearable. Laughter between a man and a woman would mean friendship.

Lord Hugh tilted his shoulders back with his gaze turning from his hand, out into the room in general. The sight of his profile was sharp angles and this close, Emma could see the darker roots of his short blond beard curling closely to his skin and his moustache equally etched in his profile. She held her breath with her belly concaved in the effort. Had she gone too far?

*The maiden was wondrous.* Hugh realized that he had never associated intelligence with a woman. Slyness, yes. Hordes of pettiness, greed, and avarice. Always. But, wit. Never. He had learned something new. And, it stirred him.

*Hmm.* He wondered if he was as attractive to her? That was the point, wasn't it? His attractiveness and his skill. The point of laughter that Emma requested had wholly surprised him. The point of a bastard babe had stunned him. He was an idiot. In his lust for knowledge and competence, he had overlooked a monumental obstacle. He could never allow a bastard babe. And, he considered with mild disgust at himself that he was quite fortuitous to not have yielded a bastard child to this date. For all his largess in heralding himself a shrewd man, this pointed out even more gaping holes in his common knowledge of women, maidens, or fair-breasted demoiselles.

*Blue ballocks.* He would simply not swive her. And, did not that leave a yawning hole in his entire plans. *Aye.* Intolerable! Yet, he would deal with that later. The question of Emma's movement about the demesne interested him. Nevertheless, the little that he did notice of women, such as his widowed sister-in-law Bernadette, was that they did like to move about, while prattling incessantly.

Hugh's eyes scanned back over Emma's enticing figure beneath him. His gaze lingered on her bountiful bare tits. The thrusting blush red nips intrigued him no end. Then, his gaze lifted to her deep cerulean tinted gray colored eyes. “I will *not* hold for anyone grasping my affairs. *Are you a gossip monger, woman?*” Hugh realized the question came forth more sharply than he intended, But, it was a sharpness that he felt.

“No, my lord, if anything I am too quiet and will have to strive to be more talkative with you for our bargain.”

The perfect answer, Hugh thought, and he wondered at its perfection. Yet then, he scolded himself. He was always too cautious. “I will allow you some freedom and shall we see more if you earn it. But, I will

allow *no one* to know of our relationship or of what we say together. You are simply my new slave woman, mute on all, but frivolous subjects.”

Emma’s hand lifted suddenly, then came to rest over the back of his hand resting on her belly. “You have my vow of discreetness, my lord, that I can easily give.”

It was an intimate sealing of a vow over the belly of life, Hugh thought. “I will not seed you, maiden. I cannot allow a bastard. As to laughter, I am too serious for such, however, I will not quell yours.”

Hugh’s gaze asked for her answer. Then, he watched Emma hesitate one ivory tooth over her full bottom lip in an attractive gesture. Yet, she surprised him again with determination sparking in her irises as she raised his hand to her bare tit. Her hand on top cupped his hand over the fulsome mound. “You have my vow, Lord Hugh, to all of which we have spoken.”

And, was he not a strong man, Hugh thought, he could have lost his way beneath the feel of a soft and supple tit that spoke directly to his ever stiff cod. A cod that bespoke of demanding release. A dard that wanted to rule and throbbed with arrogance. He was thoughtless once again. He should have taken the pole of his dard to hand and pumped the will out of it before meeting, the succulent and bare-titted Emma. It did, however, give a man a sense of power to ride on the pulsating peak of his unbending cod, yet control it. Ever before he had simply fucked. Swift and completion had been his goals. Never control. He may be embroiled with powerful concerns for a fortnight before he considered release. It was an afterthought to him. He had been too busy building and defending a small empire, while raising his noblesse higher among his peers, to give fornication much consideration.

However, Emma’s lovely countenance coupled with her possibly more handsome and intriguing mind, had his narrow, but long dard’s full attention. She was just to damn comely, he thought again in irritation. To which his heated cod paid no attention. His fingers chafed to explore the healthy female globe lying with warm and creamy firmness beneath them. Instead, he lifted his hand, brushing Emma’s hand aside as he further rose to stand.

He ended looking down on Emma, whose gaze showed surprise, while interestingly her hands had lifted to attempt to cup her bare tits from his view. Hugh kept the evidence of his lower portion turned away as he spoke. “We have a bargain then, maiden.” Hugh paused. “Are you embarrassed then, for me to view your naked tits?”

Hugh watched Emma’s fine-boned facial features hesitate, nonetheless, then she nodded obediently. This pleased him, as he realized that his future wife would not start out bare-titted this way with him. Nay, she would be fully clothed and most likely shyer than sweet Emma. Well, he envisioned coy shyness, coquettish ways, and a winsome countenance. She would be, after all, set to secure him . . . the prize! He *was* a prized catch as they measured these things. So, he and his future wife would

likely meet over a meal gazing at each other and gauging each other. Then, later they would make time alone for themselves to stroll together, with the idea of becoming better acquainted.

Hugh wondered why he fled the need to explain his reason for leaving to Emma. Nonetheless, he did. Quite odd. He would have to ponder that. "I would see the deed signed to your name." Hugh considered this a more plausible explanation than one saying that he had to go whack his boarded cod to release, before he could control looking at her again. Or the other equally revealing one that he was pondering placing Emma in the imaginary role of his future wife. "We will dine together here for the late meal. You may bathe and rest. You will find an appropriate assortment of gowns in the chest."

"Yes, my lord, thank you."

Hugh hesitated. Why did he still feel it necessary to say more? He wondered if this was what intimacy wrought between men and women? "I am pleased with our bargain, maiden," he finally said, and then he forced himself to quit the room and Emma's appealing presence.

## Chapter Five

Lazarus slowly sucked on a peach pit, while he leaned back in a rough-hewn chair with deceptive insolence. His lazy gaze was following the movements of Lady Bernadette or *Bayan* Bernadette in his own tongue. She was across the long length of the main common room in the demesne. No one could miss her tall figure among the different seated groups throughout the hall. She stopped and conversed for moments here and there with different clutches. However, Lazarus knew that her ending direction was to him.

He smiled. He liked nothing better than to banter with Hugh's widowed sister-in-law. Ruffling *Bayan* Berny's feathers and tweaking her ire was an endless source of amusement for him. A weaker man would turn tail knowing of her approach with her peppery tongue and acerbic wit.

He was not a weak man.

He also knew that the demesnes gossip mills would have reached Berny by now. The angel-haired Emma's presence was no longer a secret. Berny would be as curious as he was as to what the Earl of Chester was up to. So, he pondered as he watched Berny's graceful approach. Should he try to throw in with the whipped-tongued, beautiful opponent, Bernadette or should he try to piece together the mystery on his own. He lived for intrigue. It was part of his culture. He really cared little about the answer one way or the other. It was simply the fact that there was a mystery.

"Heathen, you *have* returned." It was not a sweet welcome from *Bayan* Berny's flushed lips, but an accusation.

Lazarus smirked, while propping his feet, clad in knee-high, coca colored hide boots, upon the oak plank table in front of him. The gesture was perfectly impertinent with masculine superiority. And, he knew it was a silent affront to *Bayan* Berny's oh-so-English sensibilities. His very choice of day to day dress offended Berny's gaze. He did not wear the hose of an English man, but the loose balloon type trousers of his culture. The light silkiness of the material was much more comfortable. Nonetheless, what really seemed to irk Berny and provoke her gaze was

the style of his sleeveless loose shirts that laid open in a wide V across his chest down to his thick leather belt. Englishmen did not bare their chest or upper arms.

"Lady Babette, *you* missed me," Lazarus drawled, in the voice of a simpering lord, while watching Berny's budding lips purse with irritation, as her light green eyes sparked. Lazarus bastardized Bernadette's name any chance he could, and then he waited her stalwart correction. She never gave up. She always corrected him as though it was a challenge between them.

"Bern-a-dete," she pronounced in syllables.

Lazarus's dark eyes narrowed. This had been Berny's new tactic, pronouncing it slowly as though he was an idiot. She nearly had him too. Every time she pronounced it like that he found himself wanting to say it correctly.

"Bunny-dete, fulsome sister-in-law, of my great friend and liege, Lord Hugh. Is this some Norman custom I have yet to learn? Saying ones name after someone else has said it?"

"Bunny!" Bernadette sputtered.

*Ah ha!* He had caught her. Lazarus grinned inwardly. It was unlike Berny to acknowledge or exclaim at his concoctions this way and he watched with amusement as her freckled cheeks turned pink. He had pondered it on his way to secure Emma and it seemed that he had come up with just the thing to catch Berny off guard.

Lazarus answered quickly as though Berny had stated it rather than exclaimed it. "Yes, I agree, we should shorten it to Bunny. Your English ways are so cordial and this humble servant of Allah is in your debt for-."

"We will *not* shorten my name to anything, you over sized, heathen!"

"Heathen," Lazarus said quickly and loudly. Berny blinked at him with her mouth open like a baby bird. Lazarus nearly laughed outright as he offered an explanation sure to irritate her. "I did it properly, yes? Saying heathen after you said heathen. By the way, Lord Hugh's most succulent sister-in-law, that is *not* my name. Is this another way to shorten names that you English have? But, going from Lazarus to heathen seems, hmm . . ."

"Stop!" Lady Berny held out her hand as she snapped her order.

For once Lazarus complied as he noted that the redness in Berny's face had crept up into the hairline of her rich auburn hair. He liked the way the shape of her breasts heaved beneath her emerald colored gown.

Had he never noticed them before? Perhaps it was the angle? Lazarus quickly looked lower, down to Berny's slender hands curled into fists. Yes, surely that was it, Lazarus thought, he had never been slouching back beneath her in such a fashion before. Lady Berny was a tall woman, yet he topped her by a head. The thought that he could notice Lady Berny's breasts in any desirous fashion acted to strike him silent for a moment.

“We will leave the name debate until another time. I simply forced myself to speak to you, to ask if I should have another trencher set with yours at the head table for the main meal.”

So, this was Berny’s approach. Lazarus was immediately impressed as he pondered his answer. He finally found it in deflection, which was much more entertaining when dealing with Berny. “If you wish to sit beside my humble self, Lady Bunny, you only need to ask me.”

“*Pffft*,” Berny’s outright feminine sputter, caused Lazarus to lift his gaze quickly up over her perfectly pert breast to her outraged face. “Not for me, you, barbarian! But for your blonde whore!” Berny challenged.

Lazarus frowned. There were lines to be drawn in every man. “It is beneath you to call any woman this,” he said lowly.

Berny frowned at him. “But every man around calls such women . . .” Berny looked out across the room, then back to him. He had never seen Berny quite so stymied before or so close to admitting a wrong doing. “They all do,” she finished.

“But, I do not, and certainly another woman should not.” Lazarus wondered why he suddenly felt the need to soothe Berny’s discomfort. That was unlike him. Especially with Berny.

Berny folded her hands one over the other above the V between her hips. She gazed at him, troubled, but still steadily. She would not shrink from difficulties. “You are right, sir. I should not speak so tawdrily about a woman. Any woman.” Lazarus had to admit Berny surprised and impressed him once again. Yet, before he could speak it, Berny added, “Tell me her name and I will be happy to use it.”

Manipulated! Berny completely molded him within her crafty hands. Lazarus stretched his shoulders back, tapping his thigh as his black eyes, he knew, sparked dangerously. All while, Berny looked down on him with an oh-so-innocent gaze. “Emma,” he finally said. “The woman’s name is Emma.”

“Are you to finally marry then sir? Now that I realize your great respect for women, one would assume-.”

At that moment, Lazarus nearly leaped from his chair with his hand aiming for Berny’s slender throat. His sinew expanded twice-fold with the effort not to do it.

Bernadette congratulated herself inwardly. The oversized heathen had nearly had her. It mattered not that he looked ready to do serious harm to her. He would not dare, yet for some unfathomable reason she like him best this way. Which was saying a lot because she did not like Lazarus, the honey-tongued trickster, one bit. For one thing, there was entirely too much of him. Bronzed and overwrought muscles everywhere. It was disgusting. Further, the arrogant man bared every bulge of sinew that he possessed. Really, where could anyone look when trying to speak to him without being bombarded by supercilious displays of his male swagger. He was entirely too cagey, too munificent with his opinions, and too exotic, and he offended every one of her more civilized

sensibilities. Why Hugh had to pick Lazarus to be his closest confidant, friend, and commander would forever be a thorn in her side.

Thank goodness in her life she had once had a civil and mild-mannered man as her husband, compared to Hugh and Lazarus. She forever wondered how Roger could have been Hugh's brother. Roger had been restrained and conservative. A very quiet man. Too quiet, too soulful, and now quite dead. It bothered her about his death, still two years later. Of course the death itself would yet pain her, but she found it was more the manner of Roger's death that still troubled her. She, who was his wife, while being too talkative, too animated, and really not quite proper at all.

It just seemed so odd to her that Roger, of all people, could have engaged in a warriors practice bout with Lazarus. Hugh had told her that they had been using the butting staffs. Agility training, Hugh had said, and Roger had taken a tragic fall, breaking his neck. It had not been Lazarus's fault, Hugh had said. But, an overwrought back swing on Roger's part that had not connected with Lazarus at all. The force of it had sent Roger tumbling. There had been actual tears in Hugh's eyes.

Manly. Masculine. Powerful, Hugh with tears in his eyes over his brother. Who could deny the truth of that? It was not that she didn't think Hugh had any feeling for his brother. It was more rather that they were so different. Bernadette wondered if anyone had understood Roger. And, the fact that she acknowledged that void, his own wife, not comprehending her own husbands needs, had sent her to Lazarus time and again.

In the first year she had finally learned that it was a wager that had set Roger to the unlikely warrior's bout. A full year and Lazarus finally admitted this. Nonetheless, in the second year she had the sinking feeling that the first year's revelation had been subterfuge. She would hear it from the heathens mouth eventually. She would keep returning to spark his ire, until he relented and told her what she knew must be the truth. Lazarus had goaded Roger into the mock fight, but then Lazarus's superior skills had been too much for Roger. She would not call it murder exactly, but Hugh and Lazarus were covering something up.

She had to be careful with Hugh though. She lived on his largess. She could not trick Hugh into revealing the truth, but she could needle Lazarus. And, she did, regularly. It actually irritated her that she had to be careful with Hugh. At this stage in her life, she bristled at the fact that she could not live under her own means and her own power. At least Hugh did not seem inclined to foster another marriage upon her, which was normally the case, and that was a blessing.

She did not want to marry again. Basically, she enjoyed the freedom of being a widow. Hugh paid little attention to women, so she could follow those pursuits that interested her. She was partially in charge of the household affairs here, but without a husband to complain to her about what she was doing right or wrong. So, as far as her options went, she was in the best position she could achieve, except for two things. She

really did miss the availability of sexual congress, and if Hugh found a permanent woman, marriage or otherwise, her entire fate could easily change. That was why this Emma interested her when otherwise she might not take notice.

Pulling her thoughts back, Bernadette could see that Lazarus was not going to answer her provoking question about his marriage. She had really infuriated him, and she guessed, by the look on his features, which were turned to chiseled immobility with pinpoint diamond sparks in his black eyes, showing that he was restraining himself forcefully. While that was a victory and she enjoyed bringing the Mongolian rapsallion to heel with her wit, it would not serve her purpose at all. The immutable fact was, as much as it irritated her, she needed Lazarus. He was the only way to discover the facts about Emma, and further about Hugh's purposes.

Bernadette had known that too, when she had approached Lazarus. She'd had a plan. A plan that had gone completely awry. But a plan that she needed to return to, she cajoled herself. It might be better now for the complete surprise of it, even as difficult as it would be, because her plan involved being, "nice" to Lazarus.

Bernadette nearly groaned out loud. But, she could do this, she encouraged herself. She had fortitude. So, she began with a forced smile. "Lazarus, I really would like to meet her. I realize it was a leap in the first place to assume that Emma was here because of Hugh." But, it was *quite* obvious, because Bernadette knew exactly where Emma was staying, which was in Hugh's bedchamber. Yet, she was not certain if Lazarus assumed that she knew that.

Lazarus's slanted eyes narrowed. Then, Bernadette picked up a wine pitcher and an extra chalice from the long table at which Lazarus sat. She stepped closer to his angled legs and bent over them with more of a forced smile as she filled his chalice with wine. Then, she filled her own chalice and she sat near to his propped up feet. The entire production was showing companionship, as she sipped some wine, looking at Lazarus over the brim of her chalice.

"You were gone a long time. Emma must hark from a faraway place," Bernadette began, hopefully . . . nicely.

Lazarus looked suspicious and as if he was calculating something. He did not touch the wine and when he spoke one of his long brown fingers tapped his thigh. "*You* need me," he stated baldly, then before she could retort, he continued, "You have no hope to find out anything about the angel Emma without me."

*There it was*, finally stated between them, both their purposes. Yet, Bernadette wondered why she felt a sudden spike in her belly, because Lazarus called this Emma an angel? Why did that bother her more than anything else? "That is not true, sir. All the servants speak to me and I am certain at some point I will have a chance to speak to Emma myself. Woman to woman," Bernadette added this to the negotiations.



The trick now was to actually reveal something and who would be first to do so. Bernadette reminded herself that she was trying to at least act nicely. Then, she sighed. She disliked being nice to the heathen, but she already knew that to serve herself she must, and he was too stubborn to start. "Lord Hugh has ordered an intimate meal set for two this evening in his solar." Bernadette knew more than this that was compelling, but she would not give away the cart before the apples, and the breath of Lazarus's compliance remained to be seen. He was after all Hugh's friend and therefore he balanced cautiously. Strangely enough, Lazarus was honorable.

Lazarus did look surprised at her revelation. "My humble self would bed the beauty and be done with it. Hugh is set to marry next year."

Puzzles, puzzles, the man spoke in puzzles. Bernadette fumed inwardly, while she showcased a smile outwardly. She supposed he could not just say it outright, so when he said his humble self, he really meant Hugh. "Would you really go so far to find a woman?" Bernadette tried.

"So far as Mercia to find the particular qualities I am looking for? Yes."

Bernadette actually smiled this time. Lazarus and she had become cohorts. "Would it surprise you to know that the lady you would journey so far to find, would have companions following her back here?"

Abruptly, Lazarus's feet fell to the floor and his large body jerked toward her like a striking snake as his wide hand grabbed her wrist. "What?"

It was the snapped command of a commander and if Bernadette had not had more fortitude, she would have yelped by being so startled. Lazarus had never touched her before. "I-I." As it was, she stuttered.

"Bernadette, this is not witty male and female challenge between us now. If Emma was followed, has companions, I need to know immediately!"

Bernadette was not thinking clearly or why Lazarus should be so intense, but his passion propelled her. "Emma, asked a maid, where a monk named Owain, and a boy newly arrived, might reside. It seemed obvious to me that they must have followed her."

"A boy and a monk?" Lazarus repeated as his fingers loosened to a lighter touch on her wrist. His intensity, shown in the tautness of his muscular frame loosened quite a bit. He seemed to realize the strength of his startling reaction as she blinked at him. "You understand there are people at all turns ready to do mischief to your liege? To bring him to whatever foul ends they can stir."

Bernadette felt her pulse beat beneath the touch of Lazarus's fingers. It had been a very long time since she had been in this close proximity to a man. Their breath heating each others breath in the space between and Lazarus was not backing away. "Nay." She had truly never considered it. Hugh was the Earl of Chester, a powerful marcher lord. Perhaps out in

the countryside, other cities and lands, but here in his own demesne, it had never entered her mind.

Lazarus suddenly moved then, patting the top of her wrist as though she were a puppy. “You will overlook my reaction, Bunny, I am too highly strung. A worrier at heart and nothing for you to be concerned about. I overreacted.”

Bernadette did not even care that the lout called her Bunny as she watched him stand to his full imposing height with the intention of leaving. What she cared about was that he tried to coddle her as though she was weak, or a child. *Just like Roger*, popped into her mind and it startled her. She missed Lazarus telling her goodbye and when she looked up, she saw that he was already several paces away. Quickly, she set aside the tingling-on-the-edge of a revelation in her mind about Roger, Lazarus, and what had happened, to stand and hurry after Lazarus.

“I am not naive, Lazarus. You cannot treat me like some callow virgin. I have an investment here just as you or Hugh. You should use me. Involve me!”

Lazarus tried to ignore Berny circling him like humming birds seeking nectar, while he walked forward and she spoke. It was as though she flitted around him in a dance, trying to gain his reaction. And, he wondered why the words she used such as, “virgin,” and, “use me,” stuck in his mind like insidious lechery.

Then, Berny did the unthinkable and grasped his bare upper arm. “Lazarus!”

It was a plea and Berny never pleaded anything. Lazarus stopped, he could feel the intense vibrations in the quality of her voice, and feel the softness of her hand on his flesh. Her intensity was palatable, and she did not remove her hand. This meant much to Berny. “The Earl of Chester’s opinions never involves women. His opinion is that he sees their frivolities in need of protection, if anything.”

Berny’s wide green eyes spoke candidly to him asking, *but do you?* Lazarus found himself answering as though he could read her mind. “I do not. I believe in using women’s talent. Yet, that is not the point. I follow my liege.”

“Of course,” Berny replied, looking disappointed as her hand dropped from his arm. “I will speak to Lord Hugh.”

“It means this much to you?”

Berny’s delicate chin raised a notch. “It is my home also,” she replied with clear pride. “I want to have the right to defend it and the men that keep it so.”

## Chapter Six

Hugh paced the length of his solar. The way of a thinking man could be a quagmire at the best of times. Normally, he could make quick necessary decisions, organizing and overcoming them. Organizing and making decisions about women, he had lately discovered, was an entirely new breed of perplexity. Where to start? He realized that he really had not thought this through. Once the maiden was at hand, he had certainly assumed it would simply come to him, and why had he demanded a virgin? That was his first mistake. A more experienced woman could have helped guide him through the elusive qualities of women.

But of course, his wife would be a virgin. He had thought it the logical place to start. Nevertheless, he was on his own, completely, and he was still not inclined to seek obvious help. Perhaps it was his ego? Ah, but then so be it! However, he refused to show his ineptitude or lack of knowledge. Any show of weakness in a man could be used against him.

Lazarus was the obvious choice, but there was not a chance this side of heavens gates that Hugh would admit or allow Lazarus more superiority than himself. Nay, he had to think of something else. By god, he had the ripe fruit at his fingertips, now he simply needed a proper logical direction. It did not help that he simply wanted to devour the luscious fruit basket of Emma's succulent tits, berry-ripe nipples, and fecund cavern hinted at between her lush thighs. And, the bargain was sealed. He had full access. However, without direction it meant little. What was it he was after? *Hmm*. Hugh pondered and paced, while stoically ignoring the lingering palpitations still flagellating his balls, where his now limp dard's arousal had pooled.

He wanted to enslave a woman with his skill!

"Aye," Hugh breathed as he stopped pacing with that dramatic and quite compelling thought. He wanted a lush woman like Emma beneath his masculine control. "Yet, I have that . . . or could have hundreds more like her."

Nay, it was more pungent than just that, he wanted to ensnare them sexually. Surely it could be done, they had not the strong will of men. Looking at it from his point of view, he could see that without his innate willpower as a man that he could easily be ensnared to pleasure. That was

likely why he had not allowed himself to touch to closely in those areas of his life. He had felt the undercurrent and the hinted power of it.

“So,” he mused, beginning to pace again. He needed to give Emma pleasure. Powerful and overwhelming pleasure that she associated only coming from him.

But how? He could not ask her. But, he assumed being a virgin that she did not know either. He remembered that a few women he had fucked, had bucked beneath him and carried on quite vocally. Now, he wished perhaps he had swived one of them face to face instead of always from the rear. Yet, he had been protecting himself, had he not? Without consciously admitting it. Hugh shook his head. He was in a dilemma, and he still had the problem of not sticking his stiff cod *into* Emma’s quim.

“Blast!” Hugh cursed, halting his pacing with his hands on his hips. Unfortunately, he admitted much to his ire, that was the *one* thing that he wanted to do.

Then, Hugh heard a light scratching sound on the door to his solar. “Enter!” he commanded, much more strongly than necessary.

Nevertheless, Corbin, his squire paid little heed to the sharpness in his tone. All Hugh saw was Corbin’s mop-topped blonde head as Corbin leaned it just past the open door. “Cook Tomil’s going on about the huntsman. Brought in a fat buck, he did. But, late according to cook Tomil. Sides the huntsman’s says important ta see you or Sir Lazarus. Somthin’ about a poacher or other. You want ta see him or should I fetch Sir Lazarus?”

“I’ll come along and see him,” Hugh responded.

The kitchen chamber was as big as a large field. One couldn’t see from one end to the other unless standing in the very middle of the chamber. Which was where Tomil directed the activities of the kitchen and kitchen staff. Part of that staff, included Tomil’s plump and merry wife, Lambkins. Hugh was certain Lambkins was not Tomil’s wife’s name, however, Hugh had never heard the portly and somewhat balding head cook call her anything else. They were a coddling couple together, and somehow being around them made people feel good.

So it was after speaking to the huntsman about two poachers that he had brought into the demesnes mews, Hugh traveled on to have a word with Tomil. Yet, before Hugh turned the corner into Tomil’s central space, he heard Tomil say, “These cherries remind me of your lil’ cherry, Lambie. I’d like ta sweeten yer cherry like this pie.”

Hugh stopped before becoming known to the two as he raised an arched eyebrow. This was sexual? Hugh heard Lambkins excited and somewhat breathless giggling. Hugh looked about himself. He could see workers further off in the bowels of the kitchen, but in his immediate area he was alone.

“Would you lick my little cherry, like your doing your fingers there, Tommykins?”

Tommykins? Hugh felt a tad uncomfortable, but continued to listen, completely intrigued by cherries.

“Ack, ya knows I would be Lambie, sucks on it till you wiggled.”

Suck on her cherry? Did Tomil mean a woman’s quim? To suck on the entire lips and all? Hugh leaned forward, listening intently.

Lambkins return giggling was delighted. “Oh then, Mr. Tommykins, you’ll eat my pie and suck on my cherry tonight for dessert.”

“Lambie, Lambie, you know I will. Come here and give me a kiss, ya lovely pudding.”

“Oh, Tomil! Some’ll see!”

“No one’s about, love. I could just flip your skirt up a bit.”

“Oh—don’t your dare!”

However, Hugh thought Lambkins did not sound reluctant at all. He nearly dared himself to peek around the corner and see. But, instead he turned around pondering what he had overheard. It seemed certain that Cook Tomil intended to suckle his mouth over his lady’s mons, and that she was looking forward to it. It made sense, Hugh thought, that the rosy quim between a woman’s thighs would harbor the wealth of her pleasure. He had just never thought of it before, except how it felt enclosing his dard.

He had heard of busting a cherry before, but not this sucking one. Was there a cherry to find? He really was not certain about putting his mouth there and had to admit surprise that men did this, normal men, like Cook Tomil with wives. Hugh wondered how long one sucked at such an endeavor?

But then, as he was passing near the long line of dishwashing troughs, Hugh heard one of the male kitchen scullions say, “Ya got to use yer tongue when kissing them sassy ones. Just be rollin yer tongue along hers, I tell ya the knights all do it!” The group washing cups and bowls were too far off to realize that Hugh had overheard them as he moved slower hoping to catch any more.

“I heard the French knights can make a bird come by just those tongue kisses.”

*Was this all anyone talked about in his demesne*, Hugh suddenly wondered? Sex? He had always thought that he’d had his hand on the heartbeat of his people . . . Yet, he had never been aware of this undercurrent of sexual predilections before.

Then, as he past the Saucier, he heard, “I like em tits small, I say. They can feel more on the bud tips.”

The castle’s Rotisseries had this to say, “A good fuck from behind lad, and ye’ll never go back!”

Two kitchen maids said, “I let him touch my kitty I did, but no swiving!”

The response came, "Oh a good man's fingers in yer twat and you don't care about his cod fucking ya!"

*By god*, they were even fornicating in the halls and cubbyholes of his stronghold, Hugh thought a few moments later as he traversed a lesser used back way to his rooms. Hugh had before this, noted with a pleased and lordly attitude, that his people were prolific. However, he had never applied, in his mind, the further conclusions of why. Nonetheless, as he halted in the back way hall, and then moved to make his presence less noticeable, he had a full view of two ardent young pups. The maid could have come from any of the working class within the stronghold, be it weaver, chambermaid, dairy girl, or the lot. She was young and slender, with dark hair. The man, Hugh guessed was from the stables. Those lads wore muck boots as this one did and he was older than the maid by a few. He was tall, but wiry, with a mane of black hair.

It irritated Hugh that a stable hand should be dallying the halls and not out attending to his duty. However, it intrigued Hugh more to witness the proceedings. He had seen men and women fuck before, of course. Yet, this scene playing out was more than that, then added to his new found intrigue on the subject, and it found him being a voyeur.

At first view it appeared that the stable hand had the maid at a disadvantage. She was backed against a wall with the top of her gown pulled down to her elbows in a fashion that bound her arms behind her. With her outer gown pulled down this way, it left the maid's small, yet upwardly tilted tits barely covered by a sheer undergarment. The neckline was scooped low with only a small tie holding back the material from falling away to complete bareness.

Hugh could see the curving bottom slopes of the maid's tits through the gauzy material and the nips poking outright against it. She looked up at the tall stable hand with her dark hair flowing against the wall behind her, while he held her pinned with his knee and an upper thigh wedged between her legs and the skirts covering them.

"What will ya do to me, Ian?"

"I won our wager dinna I, Mary. It means ya has to let me do anything I want."

*A wager and game between them?* Hugh relaxed a bit.

"But my arms, Ian?"

"Will stay right as they are, Mary."

Then, Hugh watched with an arched eyebrow as Ian lifted his hand, first tracing Mary's parted lips with his thumb, before Ian pressed his thumb into Mary's mouth.

"Makes ya feel helpless don't it?" Ian murmured, while his thumb slowly slid in and out of Mary's mouth. Mary nodded with a small moan that tingled in Hugh's belly. Hugh realized that he had been wrong, this was not fornication, but seduction. Hugh watched Ian lift his knee higher between Mary's thighs gathering her skirts as she raised up on her toes. Ian shifted the angle of his thumb higher so that Mary had to tilt her head

back further exposing her slender white throat. Mary's moan increased and strangely Hugh's heartbeat thudded.

"Girl, and don't ya know the thoughts I have of ye, and the naughty things I'd be doing to ya?"

Mary's supple chest heaved as Hugh realized that words alone could be seductive. Ian's free hand raised into the fray, while his thumb lifted out of Mary's mouth, but pressed quickly to Mary's open lips, tracing them around with more force it seemed. Force enough to press her head into the wall, while Ian's free hand with the palm flat, brushed over first one nipple tip, then the other. Mary moaned with a rough unbidden sound as Ian chuckled and Hugh clearly saw Mary humping her crotch over Ian's thigh.

"Hot little cunnikin," Ian chuckled, then he pressed his thumb past Mary's reddened lips again into her mouth. "Suck on it, dainty," Ian commanded in a low forceful voice. Then, Ian's free hand curled inwards and his fingers latched onto one of Mary's nipple tips.

The harsh, "*Mmm*," that escaped Mary's mouth around Ian's thumb told Hugh the biting nature of that pinch. Hugh wondered that Mary did not try to twist away as Ian switched nipple tips, pinching the other one. Yet, instead, Mary moaned with the type of female sounds and quality that Hugh had never heard before as she undulated her crotch over Ian's thigh and suckled, it seemed, eagerly on Ian's thumb.

"I'll have ye good this day and night, Mary. So many ways will I take my cod to ya. Ye'll be sore for days."

"Mm. Mm."

Hugh watched Ian's fingers suddenly leave Mary's nipples as Ian's hand jerked downward and he grabbed the maid between her thighs. "*Mmmm!*"

Hugh was certain Ian squeezed Mary's mons and he squeezed roughly as Ian's thumb left Mary's mouth and she panted, while he chuckled and said, "Hot wet little cunnikin, Mary."

Abruptly, Hugh heard, the scuffling advance of footsteps, behind him, heralding that someone was approaching. *Bullocks*, Hugh cursed silently, but he knew further viewing of the carnal tryst was at an end.

"Quick with ya, Mary, someone is a coming! We will have ta meet at the pond during midday meal. You be there ya hear, and no wear that under thing. I want ye naked beneath yer gown until then!"

Hugh decided that both he and Mary were surprised at Ian's instructions. Then quickly, Hugh used their tussle to straighten their garments as a way to pass by their alcove without notice. His mind was a maze of thoughts as he continued to his chambers.

Hugh arrived in his solar and he felt as though his cod got there before him, because it was rigid and demanding again. Yet, as much as his turgid cod pursued him, his thoughts baited him more. Hugh realized abruptly that he felt excited in an odd, but overstimulated way. The only thing he could liken it to, was when he was near to winning on the

battlefield or in the court of political finesse with his peers. Of all the sexual innuendo that he had been a party to this day, even considering his first encounter with Emma, nothing had struck him so fully as seeing Ian and Mary's encounter.

"By Christ," Hugh uttered, clamping his hand onto the wooden mantle above the fireplace as he stared down into the flames. "That is the way a man acts. Leading, not following or cajoling."

Hugh felt the conviction of Ian controlling and turning his woman beneath his command. Hugh felt the rightness of it deep within his own nature. He had gotten sidetracked with Emma through their negotiations and his indecision. But, seeing it in Ian had called to the seed of it inside his own inner workings. Hugh understood now that he would always demand to be master. That the workings were a bit foggy in his mind, would not change his natural inclination for dominance. It was in fact, why he sought the knowledge to begin with, so that he could achieve domain over his woman.

Just the thought of enacting a scene with Emma as he had seen Ian and Mary do, tantalized him. His dard agreed with a weighty throb, bringing his mind back to its attention. He needed no further knowledge to understand that a man with an avidly aroused cod was not a man in command or control.



# Chapter Seven

Emma forced herself away from the window. It was fruitless to look with unseeing eyes out into the demesne central courtyard, wondering where her stepbrother Edwin and the Brother Owain were residing. It was enough to know that they were here and she had no hope to visit them this eve. She would have to work on achieving that goal tomorrow and she was angry with herself for allowing her worries to go so far astray as to ask the maid about them.

How completely foolish of her when she needed to keep their presence and connection to her a secret. It was simply that they had been deceptively safe in obscurity, but now coming to a heavily populated demesne and a Norman one at that, gave so many possible chances for renewed discovery. If anyone, and particularly a Norman discovered her stepbrother's bloodline, she would never forgive herself. She knew well that it would not matter to powerful men that Edwin did not know of his noble bloodlines, and she never had any intentions of revealing it. They would always see the son of one of the old houses of noble high Saxon kings as a threat, no matter how long ago they had trampled those great families into obscurity.

Emma halted her wandering by the high bed with her gaze settling on a gown laid out upon the feather quilt covering the massive bed. A maid had come and gone a short while ago, leaving this dark blue gown and a wooden tub filled with hot water behind. The water had been too scalding to use upon arrival, so Emma had let it cool with her wandering thoughts. The gown was rich with soft velvet material and beading on the bodice and cuffs. She had never worn a gown so fine before, except perhaps when she was a child.

Lord Hugh was a prosperous man, Emma mused, with a small uplifting of her lips. If one was to be a kept woman, the better it be a rich man, than a poor one. He was powerful too, besides his station in life, his mere presence was consuming. Even now she could still feel the thrill of it tingling in her belly. She was attracted to him and fascinated by him. Somehow having him in complete control was luring to her. It was not just the enticement of his masculine face, the breath of his shoulders, or the heady aura of his maleness. Yet, she would agree with surprise that those were compelling. But, it seemed, that it was also the circumstances he molded them into. Where he was the master and she was to serve his pleasure. It was shocking to her that this excited her. But, it was an

undeniable fact that it did and her first inclination was to hide the effects and let no one discover them. She should be stronger and wish to be in more control. She should not be secretly, and she must admit sexually thrilled, at being a man's intimate chattel.

"But, it is not just any man," Emma murmured as she fingered the soft material of the gown. She could still feel the persistent ache in her cunny. It throbbed on her cupid lips, making her acutely sensitive to their outline and their flushed shape between her thighs. Her fingers trembled to touch the ache and invigorate it. The pull was strong as she looked past the gown to what must be Lord Hugh's night shirt thrown in a crumple on top of the quilt. It was a gauzy weave as were all undergarments or night shirts, and her fingers dropped the gown, reaching toward the night shirt.

How could just touching the cloth Lord Hugh had worn buffet her cunny, Emma wondered as her inner thighs trembled, while she gathered the cloth into her fingers? Then, it was as if a fit seized her, rallied by secret and amazing new passions. She looked about the chamber furtively as though she might get caught right before she lifted the material in a rush to her nostrils. It smelled of Lord Hugh, but with a deeper and heavier musk. Immediately, Emma's mind conjured the dark and heady recesses of Lord Hugh's body where this scent would linger. His hairy armpit or in the humidness of his crotch. Emma gasped at the earthy rawness she experienced, but still she guided the material against her mouth, nose, and cheek, nuzzling it. She inhaled smoke and pungent sweat, pine scents, leather, and male humus. Emma trembled.

She was surprised at her feelings. Mayhap, they came from the security that a strong man could provide or mayhap they had always resided in the depths of her desire, but she had yet to discover them until now. She did admit in the privacy of her own thoughts that pulling her gown down and revealing her bare breasts to Lord Hugh had been surprisingly arousing. Just the thought of it now agitated her cupid lips more and sent a tightening ache thronging in her core as she set Hugh's night shirt down and turned toward the bath. It was singular to her, this enlivenment of desires that she felt with only thought of a man and her reactions to him.

"Silly," Emma muttered as she untied her gown and let it drop to the floor in a puddle about her feet. But, as silly and irrational as she might proclaim it to be, the untoward feelings and the incessant new infatuation had her firmly within its talons. Hugh's image swam in her mind as she slowly stripped away her undergarments to bare her breasts and more.

Emma could clearly see in her mind's eye, the heated mystery that had been in Hugh's gaze when he looked upon her. Her nipples were tight now with the memory of that gaze. He had enjoyed looking at her, and she had immediately felt the rise of his maleness. Emma bent to turn down her stocking and take off her shoes. The stirring of air across her nude buttocks, and the laden weight of her breasts hanging downward

with taut nipples, felt acutely sensitive. The cove of her cupid lips was moist, and as she rose, her hands stroked over her shins, knees, and thighs. They moved more slowly over the muff of curls atop her throbbing cunny, but then moved upward caressing over her belly, rising to beneath her breasts which she cupped and lifted upward. Her head fell back trailing curls of her hair over the crease of her buttocks, while a lilting moan curled from her throat.

She could not. She dare not! Nevertheless, her hands circled her breasts with kneading motions, while her fingertips inched forward to tweak the hardened tips. Her moans grew weighty with huskiness as she stepped into the warm bath water, lowering her tingling and sensitive flesh beneath the surface.

Hugh held the middle of his long and turgid dard in his hand. The circumference thumped like a live beast not attached by engorging blood and meat, but by nerve endings tweaking alive, skittering into his balls, through his inner thighs, and up into his gut. When he had seen Emma bending over, his cock had actually thudded between his griping fingers with the flesh stretch tight beneath the upwardly bowing rigidity, while the whole seemed to gain heat and bake his finger pads.

Why he had come to secretly watch Emma, he did not examine too closely in his aroused thoughts. Perhaps arrogance portrayed it well enough. She was his to do anything and all that he wished, and the fact that Emma was a golden goddess, secured his arrogance. He was jolted when his first sight of her was bent over removing her stocking and shoes. His hidden view had captured her naked ass with a stunning peek of her florid and pink-lipped twat.

It was then that he released the control of his will upon his cod. To cast it out into lecherous freedom. The effort not to groan in relief caught in his Adam's apple as he watched with dawning surprise while Emma played the seductress. The fact waylaid him that she would privately begin to stroke her own body in what was obviously aroused methods.

His first inclination was that he was a lucky bastard. His second was one of curiosity amid his simmering lust, and his third was a bit of perplexity. Did virgins do such? Did any woman do thus, privately? However, his concentrations were wiped away with more earthy and manly pursuits, when he saw Emma pluck the pink buds of her nipple tips. Then, when her head fell back in surrender, powerful emotion more wieldy than he had felt before slammed into his chest. That moment was like a vision from heaven, with the waves of Emma's gold-fire hair kissing the creamy pink-tinted curve of her buttocks, while her hands lifted the healthy alabaster hills of her tits upward as though giving alms.

His hand, which was gripped in a fist around his dard, began to pump with vigorous bites. Drawing the heated friction of his palm up the inwardly curving length, rasping the rim, and then tugging the bloated head, before sucking downward to his balls again. Then, his gaze became captivated, with Emma facing him, as she lowered herself into the small

wooden tub of bathing water. Her tits were ever glorious, so fertile and plump, but his gaze latched onto what he had not seen before. Her fecund quim. A thatch of daisy-colored curls, spread out between her thighs, yet not so thick, just skimming the crease of her rosy-pink skinned twat. The bare and soft fulsomeness of those lips, brought cum-seed in a trickling syrup out of the slit of his dard. His hand fisted the hard meat faster, building suction up and down the shaft.

His breathing grew coarse as he watched Emma's nude body sitting in the hip bath. Then, he nearly did groan, while his chest puffed outward seeing Emma raising her ankles to hook over the edge of the tub. One on either side. He could not see below her rib cage, because of the height of the wooden tub. He could just see her naked tits, and slender neck, as her head arched back with her wealth of hair trailing like a golden path on the floor outside the tub. Her delicate face was flush with her lips reddened and her eyes at half mast. The tender soles of her bare feet moved with small agitated movements, while the water sloshed in small curling waves.

Through his vigorous lust and the fire flaming in his cod, Hugh suddenly realized what Emma must be doing. *By god*, the little nymph was frigging her twat beneath the water. A devil's incantation sallied forth in Hugh's mind, at the injustice of this event being hidden from his view and some of the ardor in his cod lost its way.

Emma tried to keep all sounds muted, yet some leaked through. Part of her mind could not believe that she was acting this way, while the other part was carried away with arousal and a vision of Hugh that she could not escape. Her fingers rubbed at her cupid lips with the increasing vigor of not getting caught in this action. Her anguish was two-fold. One of embarrassment should she be discovered by the maid per say, and the other was the voracious need to climax before she was halted.

*And*, by the great gods, it was nearly upon her as her neck arched and her hips rolled, levered by her ankles braced widely apart on the edges of the wooden tub. Low moans burned from her throat becoming pants as she laid back her swollen cupid lips, and rushed two of her fingers over her clitty with vigorous pressure. Her eyes were closed, with both her hands between her thighs as the need for rough attention overcame her. So she plunged a finger into her channel, bowing upward beneath the exploding pleasure, while her other fingertips attacked her swollen and tautly straining clitty with rapid circling pressure.

Hugh stalked forward, beside himself. *He had to see*. His hand increased its powerful stroking on his lust-filled dard with each step. The slick sounds his hand made on his meat sounded sharply in his ear, and it came to him through the blinding brightness of his peaking arousal that Emma was oblivious to his approach.

She was a sumptuous vision of female carnality and Hugh bent quickly to release the plug on the side of the tub near the bottom to send the water sloshing over the rug beneath. Emma's eyes remained closed, with her lips panting, and her voluptuous breasts heaving, completely

unaware of the receding water. Hugh was bewitched by her oblivion to anything around her, but the mind consuming action of her need to masturbate. She was caught completely in the thrall and he knew it must feel as sharp to her and overwrought as his did.

Hugh's gaze lowered and latched onto the mystery of Emma's fingers working. His breath tightened and nearly seized in his chest at the exotic sight. He was overturned to see two of her fingers plunging into her wetly glided quim hole. His gaze found the proof of a woman's cherry. It was a swollen bulb of rosy female flesh that Emma rubbed exuberantly as her thighs splayed widely and her buttocks arched upward. By God, this was the most exciting sexual experience that he had ever encountered. Hugh felt his seed building up the shaft of his cod in spiking pleasure.

His hand shifted on his unbending dard. One finger on top and one on the bottom. Between this pinch of fingers he rushed, drew, pulled, then tugged friction on his meat as fast as Emma's ever speeding moans. He felt that they were wrapped together in the moment as he watched Emma's body tense, while her panting paused, suspended, and then her inner thighs and belly began shuddering in rhythmic convulsions. The seed burning up the shaft of his cod hit the head, wracking him with a tense inner explosion. Then, he felt the thunderous rapture of his seed ejaculating. He grunted hard beneath the pleasure and the sound of it combined with Emma's trembling moans.

Her eyes popped open at the revealing sound he had made and through his pleasure slitted eyes their gazes locked during the last dredges of their individual releases. She was supplicated like a needy slut before him in all her glory as his cod threw cum-seed upon his belly and her nude body contorted. Then, Hugh realized that he had seen a woman's climax for the first time in his elder life. The sight of Emma's puckering quim hole held his gaze, and he envisioned those constrictions gobbling at his cod from the tip to the base. Suddenly, aiding a woman to climax—Nay, demanding that it must happen, became less the issue of a woman's pleasure, then his own.

He could see how these heavenly orgasms could control a woman, they were abandoned and uninhibited before and during them. Such power for a man to control. Such method. Hugh could see that for long suspended moments Emma was so overpowered that she could not react with proper maidenly embarrassment and censor. She did not squeal in horror, leap upright, or even snap shut her gaping thighs in feminine appall.

However, the suspended moments finally reached their zenith and Emma's lush body loosened its trembling tension, falling lax into a moment of satiation and unfocused irises. He felt that with her too, that repletion. Yet, then did her irises spark in occurrence with a sound of dismay in her throat. Her creamy skinned limbs fell into the tub with her

thighs closing, knees bending to cover her quim, and one forearm across her nipples.

“My lord,” she peeped with her cheeks flaming redder the longer the moment passed.

Hugh held his flaccid dard slung over two fingers as he sneered down at her. “How does a maid think to do such an offense as this?”

One of Emma’s finely turned eyebrows raised upon the word offense and she appeared to clutch her buxom tits more tightly. Hugh wondered at his anger and unrest, yet he was too caught in the moment to think it through.

“I am a healthy young woman,” Emma stated.

“Healthy enough to long for a cod you’ve never known. I saw your fingers rigorously fucking your quim, maiden.”

Emma’s lips pressed into an offended circle, before she lowered her gaze with the color in her cheeks rising to her temple. “Tis not immoral,” Emma whispered.

“How often do you engage in this?” Hugh demanded as he reached for a linen and swiped it over the cum-seed drying on his belly, below where his tunic was hitched upwards.

Emma’s gaze lifted to his with the clear message of, how dare he ask her such a thing. His gaze returned superiority and the reminder of their agreement. Emma’s gaze quelled as she bit her bottom lip and he saw goose bumps rising on her flesh. She was cold and damp, and he was not allowing her comfort. Somehow, this pleased him.

“Once a day,” Emma whispered, refusing to gaze at him.

Hugh’s eyebrows shot upward. “Is that normal?” The words snatched from his mouth before he could hold them back. Emma looked up at him with a pointed unspoken answer, but clearly asking, did you not know?

Hugh glared at her, whilst stuffing his dard back beneath his cod covering. He yanked his tunic downward and tossed the solid linen onto the sopping wet rug beneath his feet.

“I can see you might not be of use to me, maiden.”

Emma’s gaze widened instantly with caution, then her head bowed. “I apologize, my lord. I am not certain if it is normal and hope that it is.”

Hugh knew that he had to collect himself and gain from this, when his peculiar urge was to stalk away. He needed to gain knowledge, he reminded himself, and he wanted superiority. Well, he had that, did he not? The maid was nude to his clothed and she was completely beneath his power. He realized abruptly that it was an issue of trust. He was going to have to show himself vulnerably in knowledge to this one soul, if he were to gain anything. He just needed to remind himself that he held Emma’s very life in his hands.

## Chapter Eight

Hugh lifted his hand forward, with his palm up. “Rise out of the tub, maiden.”

Hugh could see Emma’s reluctance, yet she lifted her hand to his and he helped her rise. Emma’s other hand fluttered near her mons as though a force were fighting against it to keep it from covering her mound. The force won and Emma jerked her hand to her side, with her head bowed before him. The significance of their poses did not escape him. Her surrender, to his dominance. Hugh felt some of his as yet, inexplicable anger seep away. “Maiden, you will not seek release henceforth, without my permission and presence.”

Emma’s small hand tightened in his hand, but she nodded with her head still bowed, as he pressured her hand forward to gain her stepping from the tub. “It comes upon you forcibly then?” Emma nodded with her bare toes sloshing in the wet rug. Hugh could see that goose bumps dotted Emma’s pale silken flesh. He realized that her vulnerability clearly exceeded his, and it soothed a bit of his unrest. “Look at me, maiden.”

Emma lifted her gaze to him with her soft tits and belly shivering before his gaze. Unbelievably, his cod stirred and it was his hand that tightened beneath Emma’s. There was not a single moment in his life that he could remember his cod rising again within moments of its release. Therein lay a wieldy power. But, was it his feeling of power to be able to do so, or Emma’s power at being the cause? He might dislike one as much as the other, for its insidiousness over him. “Has a man ever given you this release before?”

Emma’s dark gray and cerulean blue eyes widened. “No, my lord.”

Hugh nodded, releasing Emma’s hand. “You may dry yourself,” he said, turning partially away from Emma as she reached for a linen to dry her nimble body.

Hugh wandered to the fire to add some fuel to aid to the warmth of the chamber. These chambers in his stronghold would never be truly warm. As he rose from stirring the fire, Hugh caught a movement out of the corner of his vision. He turned to see Emma at the high bed reaching for the gown there. The shape and curve of her nude buttocks would ever

entrance him, he decided then and there. “Maiden, I did not allow that you should dress.”

Emma’s hands stilled, upon the gown. “Yes, my lord.”

Hugh stalked to the high-backed cushioned chair near the fire and sat. He wondered what keeping the maiden nude could gain . . . besides his own pleasure. Certainly not knowledge. But, perhaps he was wrong there. He could learn more of a woman’s body this way. Although, he must admit, he did not imagine keeping his future wife nude. Emma’s bareness also shifted the vulnerability between them. Which soothed his ego. “*Christs balls,*” Hugh muttered beneath his breath. Why did he hide the fact from himself that he liked it? Desired it even. If it did not affect his quest for knowledge, so be it. He did have to allow that things were already askew in that arena. The connection that he had with Emma now was not fledgling and innocent, but had leaped dramatically ahead into mature and more worldly relations. “Come to me, maiden, kneel here.”

Hugh hoped the spot by his feet was dry and given the distance from the tub it should be, if only damp. Nonetheless, his gaze was solely for Emma’s progress, with soft, yet faltering steps toward him. He did note that her hands stayed resolutely at her sides and the buds of her nipples were puckered again. Hugh had a suspicion that the hardening of a female’s nipples might just denote a coursing of some arousal inside them. It was a powerful experience to have Emma kneel nude at his feet. Her saffron colored hair cloaking her in some places, yet unable to hide the outward thrusting hillocks of her tits, nor the snatch of hair between her pale thighs. His cod inched further up his lower belly with the ache of stiffening more.

Emma quelled beneath Lord Hugh’s darkened evergreen gaze, and his order to kneel at his feet completely nude and exposed. Why this should affect her more than being caught in her wanton display moments ago, she did not understand. Her emotions were teeming with massive contrasts inside. Then, before she could rally any sense of peace to one, another leaped onto the tumultuous mass. Such as the one of no chance to gain any composure, but nude and embarrassed trembling, while kneeling at Lord Hugh’s feet. When she knew that having her sex split widely to his fervent gaze, while her hips humped like a wildly mating beast, should take precedent as the horror of her shame and embarrassment.

But, this canopy of her mental state seemed to leave her without normal or reasonable reactions. It was as though she moved by instinct and orders alone. She had no true say in the occurrences, she only had to follow, and experience. And the experience was shaking some primitive breeding that was rising out of the depths of her soul, overriding caution and any moral censor she would normally expect herself to make. In fact, she felt the tingling of adventure, excitement, and then something thrilling, barely touched, when she knew she should feel none of those things.



It was daring to be so immoral, so low bred, and somehow in the deepest secrets of her imagination it was titillating to her to be so naughty. Especially earlier, when Lord Hugh had his pikestaff out to view in all its redly engorged virility. She knew what a rigid pikestaff meant. It conveyed Lord Hugh's demand to mate. And, when she had seen his slick ruddy pike, with its dripping bulbous head, she had known instantly what elusive thing it was that she had craved beneath the bed covers at night.

Those nights of rubbing her clitty, and then as time past fulfilling the demand of thrusting her fingers deep into her channel. Still at this moment, kneeling back on her bare buttocks with her eyes level with Lord Hugh's crotch. She could just see the outline of his full male sacs beneath the material they bulged against, and she could imagine the root of his pike bending upward beneath his tunic. She had shifting images in her mind's eye of Lord Hugh's bared and unbending pike, and this ridge covered beneath his tunic. Both of them lured her without reason and tempted her cupid lips to flush once more with the awareness of her naked and subservient posture before that virile, male pikestaff.

"When do you do this, maiden?"

Emma started at Lord Hugh's voice. It had seemed a lengthy time, but actually only moments since he had last spoken. She kept her gaze upon the thickness of his thighs beneath his dark hose. "At night in bed, if I do it," she answered steadily, belaying the thumping of her heartbeat.

Emma saw out of the corner of her vision Lord Hugh's arm moving, and then she felt his hand in her hair on her left side near her elbow. "What starts it, maiden? How do you come by it?"

Emma did not know how to answer that as she glanced to the side, seeing Lord Hugh winding the ends of a large portion of her hair around his hand. She settled for answering quickly with, "My dreams."

"Yet, what started it today?" Lord Hugh asked, and Emma felt his hand winding into her hair turning and binding it around as his hand turned closer and more tightly toward her scalp. "It could not have been a dream in the bright light of day, maiden." Emma wondered how she could answer Lord Hugh. How could she tell him? She would never dare to have enough mettle. Then, her head tilted with Lord Hugh's hand winding to her scalp. The angle stretched the side of her neck and pained lightly along the roots of her hair. "What started this frigging of your twat today, maiden?" Hugh demanded, sounding agitated as he tugged on her hair, pulling her kneeling posture upright, until her bare breasts were just above his knees and she winced at the glancing pain.

"You!" Emma heard her voice come in a rush as she tried to look away from Lord Hugh, but he held her arching neck back to look directly into her eyes.

"*Me*," Hugh hissed

Emma could see that he was completely unbelieving. So unbelieving that she told herself that was why he arched her head further in his vise

grip, so she felt his complete power over her. A power that throbbed senselessly in her cunny. Lord Hugh looked down on her strained throat, on her breasts jutting forward by the angle of his direction, on her exposed mound, and her nude body quivering more than from being cold.

“You say thoughts of me propelled your arousal?”

Emma tried to nod against the strain of the position he held her head in. She managed an inch movement as she watched the intelligence in his gaze questioning her brief answer, combined with the waves of underlying heat. Emma wet her lips anxiously and his irises sharpened instantly. “Explain this! Why?” he demanded.

He wanted so much from her and answers to things even she did not understand. Her eyelids fluttered closed, and with regret, as she whimpered. “I do not know!”

Emma thought surely Lord Hugh would become angry, but then silence and moments held in paused suspension, until his deep voice sounded . . . a bit softer perhaps. “I will grant that you are not lying to me, maiden. So we will take it one knowledgeable step at a time. When can you first remember feeling aroused?”

Emma did not want to tell him. She thought to lie and jump ahead. Yet, she had made a bargain, and she would have to lie to him eventually about other things. She knew that lies built tremendously complicated webs. So, she found herself gasping the truth. “When you first circled me. Giving me your commands.”

“Not by looks then?”

“I barely saw you.”

“I was rough, unyielding. Mayhap, fearful. I thought nimble maids enjoyed sweet words and simpering?”

Emma opened her gaze to him and she knew that her irises held a depth of pleading. “I know. T-They do. I-I . . .”

“Then next?”

“When you ordered me to bare my breasts to you.”

“Had you yet looked at me, maiden?”

“No. Only glances. I did not look at you until you were so close to me upon the bed.”

“And then?”

Emma nodded, trying not to speak.

“Say it!”

“Yes, I felt it then, strongly!”

“Felt what?”

“A sweet throb in my cunny.”

“This is what you call it?”

“Yes, my lord.” Then suddenly, Emma felt rather than saw Lord Hugh flick a finger over the tightly spiked tip of one of her nipples. An involuntary mewling squeaked from her throat.

“That makes you ache now, also?”

Emma nodded with her cheeks flushing.

“Say it!”

“Y-Yes,” Emma offered quickly.

“So we both learn, that these nipples thrusting out like brazen spears, announce female arousal.”

Emma’s cheeks grew hotter with more embarrassment, and her discomfort made her want to quip to him, that the hard rigid beneath Lord Hugh’s tunic announced his lechery also. Nonetheless, she could not dare herself to do such a thing. She did seek solace and a question in her mind though as to what Lord Hugh’s words revealed that she might have missed before, because of her anxiousness. She just assumed that a man like Lord Hugh would know about women. That he would know many women and all their secrets. Yet, clearly this appeared not to be the case. And besides, the numerous other emotions teeming in her thoughts, this was a quandary, as she sought to appease the male lord holding her beneath his power, by skittishly answering, “Yes, my lord.”

“And what do you call that which you so shamelessly frisk in your rosy cunny?”

Emma gulped and she felt Lord Hugh’s fingertips close over the point of her nipple. He pulled outward and held it there as her hips squirmed involuntarily. “Cupid’s clitty!” she finally gasped.

“Not cherry?”

“N-No.”

Lord Hugh rolled her nipple between his finger pads. “Mm.” His voice sharpened. “Do you feel it now!?”

“Yes,” she answered, wincing with breathlessness.

“Raise and show me this clitty,” Lord Hugh demanded with his fingertips releasing her nipple to twang back to her breast.

Emma was aghast as she cried out in denial with a pleading tone. “Please, I cannot! I beg you!”

“We have made a bargain and I am the last man you should ever think to go against, maiden.”

Emma tried to shake her head against Lord Hugh’s strong hold. “Please,” she begged, with tears starting to shimmer in her eyes.

Lord Hugh snorted in disgust and suddenly he released her hair as he stood, and the force of it pushed her back onto her side with her palms bracing her complete fall.

Lord Hugh stalked about the chamber. “Yet, you have laid with your legs split wide like a begging slut before me. I could see to your very soul, maiden!” he accused.

“B-But, I did not know that you were there! I could not help myself. Please— I just need time. It is so difficult!”

Lord Hugh turned on his heels, halting then glared down at her. “Time!? Explain this and why it is difficult.”

Emma gulped against the dryness of her mouth. She had to save herself and their bargain. It was so hard to do. “I-I might be, aroused . .

. Attracted. But beyond that, you keep me naked, bare my breasts, and touch me . . . before any gentler courting, and-."

"You feel the need of both?"

Emma, thanked the gods for Lord Hugh's nimble mind. She justified herself that other woman that Lord Hugh might encounter would indeed crave— nay, properly demand a wooing courtship. Where, it seemed, that she was beneath such moral demands herself. She could only nod, with her throat tight against her emotions. But, it seemed Lord Hugh saw her bowed head moving.

"And, what would you consider wooing, maiden?" Lord Hugh, demanded curtly.

Emma's mind flayed around with inner fluster. She had never been courted. How could she know? But, her actions and her denial demanded an answer quickly. It was so hard to think through the turmoil in her mind. "A kiss!" she blurted, suddenly. Not even knowing where the answer sprang from—other than before, in innocent dreams, she had dreamed of kissing a man's lips. "Kissing. Men and women kiss f-first," she faltered.

"Then, a compromise shall avail us, maiden," Lord Hugh countered. "We shall kiss, *but-*." Emma heard Lord Hugh's movements and she peeked upward seeing him snatching the gown from off the high bed. "You will remain ever nude in my company!"

Emma gasped at Lord Hugh's retreating broad back as he left the room with the wooden door slamming behind him.

## Chapter Nine

“Lady Avranche’s, it is gracious of you to welcome a humble monk and the charity of Lord Avranche’s will reside in my prayers.”

Bernadette bowed her head to the plump monk, whose name he had told her was Owain. Brother Owain appeared amiable, but nervous to be in her presence. Bernadette was not certain if his nervousness stemmed from meeting the chatelaine of the demesne or for other reasons.

“My brother-in-law, Lord Avranche’s, has ever promoted the church as one endeavor, and then the monks endeavors as another.”

Bernadette paused. It was unusual for her to venture into the monk’s enclave, simply to greet some new arrival. Luck would have it that the Abbott John Hermes was not about and his younger assistant Brother Gabriel had brought Brother Owain to her upon her arrival and request. Ah well, let the elder Abbott Hermes wonder at her reasons to disturb his sanctuary. Now, if she could just conclude her information gathering before Abbott Hermes returned. Abbott Hermes was too shrewd for her to banter with and Lazarus would be unkind if she returned her information with Abbott Hermes scent attached to it. Not that Lazarus had a clue she was doing this, however he would realize her complete worth when she was finished. And then, Bernadette envisioned Lazarus’s gathering her into the inner circle.

Bernadette cleared her mind and continued speaking. “Then, Abbott Hermes has welcomed you properly and found you a comfortable place to rest?”

“Oh yes, my lady, they have been very generous and I look forward to being useful.”

Bernadette watched the Brother Owain bob as he spoke with his round belly bouncing lightly. Wherever Brother Owain hailed from, they had not neglected their meals, which told Bernadette that Brother Owain did not come from a more fanatical sect.

“That is good,” Bernadette replied. Then, she asked, “And, your last monastery or placing was?”

“I had the good fortune to be of service in Mercia for many years. I do regret leaving.”

Bernadette barely let Brother Owain’s last word fall, before she asked, a bit sharply, “You use the old Saxon country titles?”

“Oh, forgive me, my lady. I am a true Norman Englishman at heart, but the order I came from had a long history in the area. It was a slip of thought from a humble brother not used to the art of conversation.”

Bernadette noted immediately the fact that Lazarus had told her the truth earlier. It nearly bred the thought that Lazarus having gone so far for Emma, had prior knowledge of the area, or of Emma, or further still, that Hugh had specifically sent Lazarus to Emma. Mayhap, that better explained Lazarus’s strong reaction to hearing that Emma was not alone.

“I understand,” Bernadette replied in her most gracious chatelaine persona. “But, I offer you gentle advice to have a care and not use those old Saxon names around the higher nobles you might encounter here.”

“Of course, my lady, well-met advice that I will take to heart.”

Bernadette was acquiring the feeling that Brother Owain was harmless, but he did seem to have the pretty manners and speech of having done so before. It left her wondering where he had come by the skill, as she asked, “And, your reason for leaving your old sanctuary?”

If Brother Owain was trying to hide anything it did not convey in his speech or manner, as he replied readily, “It is purely my charity for man. Well in this case, woman. It is a vow of charity I made years ago.” Bernadette tilted her head with a silent offer for Brother Owain to expand further. “It was a vow that I made to aid a too-too young mother with a babe, but no father.”

*Mother?* Was this Emma a mother to a bastard babe? And, Bernadette would wager very high that neither Lazarus nor Hugh knew of this.

Brother Owain continued. “She had naught but poverty. A mere child herself and I took the boy child to heart when he was less then three years I’d say. I have had him, these five. A strong willing boy that would be happy with any work your kind heart could find him, my lady.”

“Of course,” Bernadette responded with her mind working over these facts as she made the moves to leave with her wealth of information. “I will speak to the steward. What is the boy’s name?”

“Edwin, my lady, and we are both most grateful,” Brother Owain said as he bowed, only as far as his round belly would allow.

Bernadette nodded and bade the brother farewell. She could easily see that the brother and boy offered no threats to Hugh or the demesne, however the fodder for personal intrigue abounded. So armed, she went to find Lazarus with her treasures.

Nonetheless, she realized sometime later that Lazarus was not easily found in public. But, it seemed that the zeal of her hunt had overcome her, and when she did hear about his whereabouts she hurried forward without thinking. The fact that Lazarus happened to be in his private chamber, did not convey to her pursuing thoughts, as she rapped upon his door, and she heard his sharp reply, “Enter!”

Mayhap, when she did open the door, and then stalked forward in a flurry of skirts, one small caution tried to find attention in the zealotry of her actions. Nevertheless, it was too little, too late, that she should

realize how inappropriate it was for her to appear outside Lazarus's door, and then actually enter his private chambers.

Further, the squeak that elicited from her throat a moment later was nothing short of disgustingly girlish. Bernadette was appalled to hear it, appalled at the richness of her wrong doing, and what effort and defense she would have to make to somehow manage to appear that she was not in the wrong at all. But, her most momentous feelings of appall, stunned her as thoroughly as the sight before her. That appall immediately and furtively was a delicious sumptuous breathtaking appall. It was an appall frothed with awe that grasped her very insides and shook them with sudden and alarming female-notices-male awareness.

Because! Before her awestruck gaze, were Lazarus's naked buttocks. He was nude and partially turned away from a frontal view. No—wait, perhaps not completely nude, there appeared to be a strip of cloth wedged between the two sinewy and brown-skinned shanks of his buttocks. He stood before the bow window with the shutters opened and sunlight pouring over his darker skin, making all of it appear like richly glowing umber. His hair was not tied back and it flowed over his back in thick black waves, while he propped one of his bare feet on a short stool. His head was bowed forward as he seemed to be intently looking downward in the area of his crotch.

*"Where is my servant, Galen?"* Lazarus charged without raising his head. *"That derelict sloth? Passing his duties again with a lazy silver tongue! Well, chamber wench, just leave the hot towels. There is nothing you have not seen before. Yet!"*

Bernadette realized several things simultaneously. The first was, had she not been, irrationally leaning forward to try to see what it was that Lazarus was doing, with her gaze devouring Lazarus's nearly naked splendor, she would have had plenty of time to turn and make an escape-. What was it that he wore? It was the skimpiest thong of material she had ever viewed. But alas, she was stupefied surely, rooted desirously in place, with her had-not-seen-a-naked-man-starving-gaze, hoping—Nay praying for a peek at-.

*"Bunny?"*

Bernadette's head jerked upward from her lecherous ogling, which had been fixed on the side of Lazarus's hip and what it was hiding beyond. To have her emotional gaze caught by Lazarus's dark eyes. Oh dear, she was truly caught and . . . what was that in his raised hand? A knife? For one silly moment Bernadette thought Lazarus was raising his hand upward in an attack against her. Until, she realized that he had been using the knife somehow between his thighs. The alarms and questions about that raised in her mind as her mouth actually began a journey of gaping open.

Mere seconds had past and she realized Lazarus was still turning his body toward her as he said her name again in disbelief, causing his voice to deepen gruffly. Then, completely unable to halt the feminine fertility

dance on the rampage inside her, she blurted, “You shave your cock!” She stunned herself as her hand flew to her mouth. While it was true that the fist sized width of Lazarus’s male organ was covered by some type of glove tight material, Bernadette could see one side of Lazarus’s black pubic hair was shaved away, while the hair on the other side remained.

“And this would be of great interest to you, Babette?” Lazarus asked with infuriating male nonchalance. “I do. Once a week, and my balls too,” Lazarus continued.

“But why?” Bernadette blurted, while her mind screamed, *how could she be having this conversation? Then, you dislike Lazarus completely. Remember!?* But, her suddenly active cunt did not care. Nor her gaze, nor her thumping heart. My god! What was wrong with her? This was Lazarus of all men!

“Sweet plum, you honor me with your interest. To come to my chambers this way. My humble self had no clue.”

*Oh hh!* Bernadette’s indignation screeched inside her head, as her body physically twitched with outrage, while her superfluous cunt throbbed. And, she inwardly cursed it to damnation. Bernadette’s hand fell down from her mouth, arm straight, palm up in a halting gesture, as she tried. Failed. Then, tried again, to gather her rampant thoughts into words of indignation and righteousness. To spew anything through her gaping mouth. Gaping?

Bernadette’s lower mouth lifted with effort and her mouth snapped shut. She was, for the first time in her life, speechless and the shudder of it ran through her body. *Say something! Say anything!*

“She has a son!” Bernadette’s words scraped through her throat like shards of glass, and she knew she must look as though she was crazed. As if this revelation were likened to the stronghold being under attack. But, she could not seem to quell the import into proper proportions. “Emma has a son here!” *And*, Lazarus’s cock was so thick! My god in heaven, help her!

Lazarus had thought that he knew Berny well. Yet, her arrival into his private chambers completely took him aback. He hid it well though, beneath a facade of male impertinence, yet what caught him off guard, like a solid thump on his chest, was looking in Berny’s green apple eyes. He knew lust when he saw it, even Berny’s. Although, Berny’s jerky stiff movements and some of her attractive facial features spoke of other things more like Berny. But, those eyes dipping time and again to glance at his barely covered cock. But, *kahrestin*, which meant the English version of exclaiming hell. This was Berny! Berny hated him. Hate was quite strong, but he knew at times that she did.

Of course, his cock told him in stiffening reprove that he had never looked at Berny as a woman before. Not until, she looked at him and is cock this way! But, he was not fooled. Her body gestures and most of her facial features said she still hated him. *And*, there was no way he was going to let that peppery mouth near his cock.



So, he moved to deflect, trick, and elude, while stridently ignoring his cock's avid interest. It was difficult, because, just the act of shaving normally aroused him. So he had been, and *kahrestin*, he was still now further aroused. Mistaken steps further aroused as he recited in his mind. This is Berny. Berny!

Lazarus's eyes narrowed. He had to gain the upper hand and wrench himself out of this quickly. So, he pounced upon Berny's claims much more than they affected him. "*You* questioned her?" he demanded, lowering his hand with the knife in it, to set the knife on the table at his side.

He also lowered his foot to the floor and thought seriously about grabbing a robe for discreet cover. The feeling of that impetus infuriated him. He was a man and proud to be one. His ego demanded it even, in front of a female. His muscles tensed, as he realized-. Except, in front of Berny! Why was that? She was a woman, wasn't she. The instant and explosive answer in his mind was, *because she thinks you killed her husband*.

Lazarus nearly missed Berny's answer. "Nay, not Emma, but I spoke to Brother Owain. He does not suspect my reasons."

Lazarus turned away from Berny. He turned toward the table. "You will forgive me, Lady Bernadette," He said tightly, with a lie he formed on his tongue. "It is a delicate situation. But, I am expecting a woman at any moment. It would be best if you leave. But, I most assuredly will advise Lord Hugh of the child." Lazarus did not realize that he had used Berny's correct name. He only knew that his cock had shriveled to its normal resting size, and he should be happy about that.

Bernadette felt as if Lazarus had slapped her when she heard him use her proper name. She had tried for two years to get him to do just that, yet now that he had, she should be rejoicing, not feeling crushed. He had said it, and when he had said to her it was as if they had stood for brief seconds on the brink of something promising, but then he had dismissed it. Nay, he had turned away from it, and to another woman waiting.

Truly, had not her cunt been so involved, she might have reacted more like herself, than a complete stranger driven by lust. "Then she will have to wait," Bernadette snapped. Her hand fell to her side and she felt like grasping it to her mouth again as her gaze, despite her inner self recriminations, continued to marvel, devour, and damnation, lust over the shape and sinewy tightness of Lazarus's bare buttocks.

"What more could keep you here after you have been refused?" Lazarus said, but his gaze was directed out of the window.

"I did *not* come here-!" Bernadette sputtered. "You have refused me nothing, for which I asked!"

"Then, we both agree, coming to my private rooms was a mistake, *Bayan* Bernadette," Lazarus replied, still standing stiffly proud, gloriously structured, while refusing to look at her.

Bernadette felt Lazarus's reply like a fist swung into her belly, so sharply did it sting her that the bewitchment he had caught her under finally snapped. Then, with a small etched sound of pain, she turned and fled Lazarus's chamber.

Hugh sidestepped Bernadette, with amazement startling him as he realized that she was leaving through the open doorway of Lazarus's chambers. Hugh could see that Bernadette was so distraught that she never saw him, much less realized he was there. Hugh might have continued past the open doors to Lazarus's chambers, which had been his intention. However, simply the stunning feat of Bernadette coming from Lazarus's chambers propelled him through the open doorway.

"Bernadette?" Hugh asked, incredulously. Hugh could see that his light exclamation had proceeded Lazarus's knowledge that Hugh had arrived, unbidden.

Lazarus's solid shoulders jerked, as he turned his head sharply toward Hugh, with his body following. "It is *not* as it might seem."

Hugh's immediate intention was to investigate the differences in what it might seem to be. However, his gaze became ambushed by the abnormal imbalance on either side of Lazarus's crotch. Hugh just barely managed, not to blurt out, "*you shave your crotch?*" As his left eyebrow shot upwards.

Nevertheless, Lazarus was intuitive where their banter and expressions were involved. So, he said, puffing out instantly with typical Mongolian arrogance, "*More* women suck cock and longer with a shaved crotch. They will *even* lick your balls."

Hugh's balls nearly thumped—individually, with this arrogant, but wholly lustful comment. Instantly, Hugh saw a yawning opportunity before him that he was loathed not to explore. So, he set aside, for the moment, the momentous distraction of Bernadette and Lazarus being anything but nipping at each others heels.

Hugh's mouth etched into a smirk. He had to be delicate in maneuvering around Lazarus's agile mind. "You will *not* bring a bastard heir to me through my widowed sister-in-law." Hugh saw that he had hit his mark squarely in Lazarus's daring black eyes. Now to just get the Mongolian's agitation spouting on a course of how to avoid female conception. A direction and knowledge that Hugh sorely needed.

"I would not produce a bastard in any woman," Lazarus asserted tightly.

One thing about having an abundance of male arrogance, Hugh thought, was that he had as much as Lazarus and could therefore bait the man to affect. A less arrogant man would claim that he would not fuck Bernadette, were she the last woman alive. But, neither he nor Lazarus would allow any man that inch.

"How can you be so certain? Your life could depend on it."

"Just as I have said. I would only fuck her mouth, but in all my years the ewe intestines have never failed through Allah's infinite wisdom and

I would stake my life on them. You English can find more bastard's when you just pull your cock's out to spill your seed on their bellies."

*Now he had three ways.* Hugh silently congratulated himself. Fuck their mouths, which seemed so obvious that he was despised to admit even to himself an ignorance of it. Pull his dard out and spill his seed on a soft belly, but the one that intrigued him the most was the last. Leave it to an impertinent eastern man to have a wealth of mysterious knowledge.

Hugh wondered if these were the same tubular intestines that some cultures used for making sausage? "The tubes," Hugh nodded. "I will admit they sway your argument, although they are a scarce find. I have been left to mouth lately." Ah, his devious side, Hugh patted himself mentally on the back.

Lazarus eyed him, "Emma, the golden goddess?" Hugh eyed Lazarus back saying nothing. "Well, my liege," Lazarus said, as he reached to open an ornately carved box on top of the short table at his side. "Let it be said that I can ass-kiss with the best of them for your favor." With this snippet of impertinence claimed, Lazarus tossed Hugh a packet, aimed at his head, which Hugh caught in midair. "And, my lord, the mention of the fair Emma's name brings me to another tale that I would have shortly sought you out to divulge."

"I will use these well," Hugh nodded, secreting the packet beneath his belt, as he asked, "What news of Emma, could you possibly have?"

Lazarus reached to pick up a silken robe of black coloring, which he began to put on as he spoke. "It comes to my attention, Emma did not arrive here alone. Others followed her."

Hugh's mind churned instantly. "And?"

"Lady Bernadette has discovered that there are a Brother Owain and a boy, newly arrived, not long behind Emma, here at the stronghold."

"A boy?"

Hugh noted Lazarus's deploy to make Bernadette's presence in Lazarus's private chambers appear plausible. Hugh was not convinced in the least that this swayed the risque implications of that situation at all. Nonetheless, momentous new considerations were afoot. And, those swept aside others.

"Yes, my liege, a boy," Lazarus responded stiffly, and therefore instantly alerting Hugh, he was not going to like the rest of what the Mongolian had to say.

"Further the rumor is that the boy is likely Emma's son."

Hugh was stunned, and then blatantly furious. "Bullocks! I told you! A virgin!"

Lazarus, did look pained, which was wholly not like him. "And, I would take punishment for the error, if it is true."

Hugh did not really hear Lazarus's full statement as he turned and stalked from the room. The parts about rumor and if it were true, completely escaped his anger.

## Chapter Ten

Emma tried to settle her trembling. She knew some of it was from being cold, because she only wore a light robe of ice blue color, that fell to her bare feet. But, she knew more of her trembling was in anticipation of Lord Hugh's arrival and the moment when she would drop the robe to reside nude before him as was his command. The meal heralding Lord Hugh's arrival had arrived a short time ago, and was placed on an intimate table before the blazing fire. There was one covered wooden trencher steaming on the small table, veiled by a white linen cloth. Beautiful crystal glasses accompanied a bottle of wine and an appropriate carving knife was attending.

"You are fooling yourself," Emma suddenly exclaimed to the empty chamber as she clenched her eyes, and then her hand clutched the silken robe and the mound of her sex beneath. Her temple pressed to the large knotted bedpost that she stood beside as her palm pressed against her heated mound with her fingers clutching the dampness deeper in the crevice. Her sex ached against the cove of her hand and fingers. She was so aroused. Again!

She did not understand herself at all, but she was becoming frightened at the power of her unruly emotions and Lord Hugh's command of her. Yet, even that prick of fear heightened the syrup of her desire, dampening her fingers more, while she fought not to massage her clitty to the aching thrumming inside. What power held her fingers from motion when the need was so strong? The same power of subjugation that built her desires to such an overpowering throng.

"I commanded you to remain nude!"

Emma gasped at the abrupt and angry sound of Lord Hugh's voice so suddenly behind her. Where had he come from? How had he approached without her knowledge, and why did he sound so frighteningly furious? There was much more biting fury in his voice than the disobedience of being robed in his presence would allow. Yet, Emma found no time to think, speak, or react more than another gasp of apprehension as she felt Lord Hugh's insistent hands at the collar of her robe, yanking it

open and downward. She tried to turn in defense toward Lord Hugh so close behind her, but he had her stripped, and then caught by his wide hand clamped forcefully over her throat as he pulled her body roughly against his.

Emma could feel that Lord Hugh had dispelled any inkling of kindness in his manner as she clawed at his hand latched over her throat, while thrashing her body against his large immovable frame. She could feel the weight of his male pikestaff crowding with rigid attention against her lurching buttocks.

"You would dare fight me or think to deny me?" Lord Hugh's bass voice was sharp with imperiousness. Emma could not answer through the clutch of his hand and fingers over her tender throat as he roughly shook her struggling naked body to stillness. "You lying slut," he hissed into her ear. "Pretending you wanted virginal kisses!"

Emma's mouth panted dryly with her head pressured back tight against his collarbone. Her fingers which had been trying the impossible, to gouge beneath his immobile hand clutched over her throat, fell to his muscle-tight forearm, to curl helplessly there in the crinkling dark hair.

"When your quim laid splayed like a mare in heat beneath me, I should have known!"

Emma wondered wildly what had gone wrong and what his words meant. But, then Lord Hugh's free hand dropped and clamped over the mound of her sex. The heat of his bare hand, then his fingers curling inward to seize her denuded cunny, gasped through her body and exploded in her senses. She should have been terror-stricken, incensed, or morally aghast. Any of these things but the moan inspired from her throat. She could hear the sound of it as though from a distance with its quality of lustful invitation as her cupid lips pulsated with greedy fervor. More! *Touch more*, her mind echoed. She squirmed against his fingers with her mouth raised open to the sky and her bare breasts surging.

"Woman!" Lord Hugh hissed.

Hugh intended to throttle Emma. To shake the lies of jaundice naivete from her lushly curving body. The body of a siren, and the evidence, his furious mind conjured, of Emma's world of sexual knowledge. His total fury at feeling duped should have been enough. Yet, when he heard the womanly sounds Emma pealed, and then he felt the heated juice in her loins, his furies surged to raw lust.

Hugh stretched Emma's delicate neck higher and he split the lips of her swelling quim, and the male that he was, knew by instinct a woman's fertility and needs. Emma *was* fertile and sopping with greed. The essence that readied her for her man and showed her mating heat dripped from his fingertips, while her ripe body undulated against him. The impetus of his fury-lust, throbbed at the male animal in his cod.

He nearly took her down onto her haunches to fuck her. To bend her onto her knees, with her bare ass high and split, and her quim sucking and ready for his cod. But, his fingers would not leave her lust swollen twat

with her moans of encouragement and what that inspired. Aye, he had a woman in his arms, captured beneath his power, a fuck tool—yes, but more. The more that he could find and have, ate at his flesh, clawed at his mind, and engulfed his male spirit. And, he groped his woman's sex with fervor, to her pulses of eagerness. He rocked her buttocks in a fucking humping motion over the impression of his turgid dard as he bent her forward slightly and fingered the slick multiple layers in her sex.

"Tell me where." Hugh bit the edge of Emma's ear, feeling the throb of her body against his palm still grasping her throat. "Tell me!" His teeth regained, and then tightened to Emma's whimpers.

"Higher," she mewled and two of his drenched fingertips rasping higher, bowling over a lump of flesh, then returning to the bulge as Emma squealed, rising on her toes. Her buttocks crowded his rigid cod as he felt the heartbeat of her desire. It beat like a heart, strong and gutsy, as he explored its shape to Emma's shuddering body. She begged with her moans. She pleaded with him for more, and his fingers answered, frisking the lump with ambition. He remembered Emma's fingers and how they had rubbed so fast on her cherry and he picked up that motion.

"O!"

*Yes!* That exclamation told Hugh all that he needed to know, and he rubbed Emma's hot turgid cherry, which transferred, Emma's avid and sensual answer, into her hips and ass, undulating against his cod. His hand fell from her throat to her tit, grasping it like a fat udder and a shrill and abandoned sound leapt from Emma's throat. Christ's balls! It was stunning and completely overpowering. It filled him perfectly. He would never be mastered, but he would always be the master!

Emma panted, straining for the peak with her thighs shuddering open wider, when suddenly the impelling abrasion on her clitty stopped. Her moan was nearly a cry as she dropped her hands with the acute intent to pick up the motion. She was senseless and beyond common thought, but Lord Hugh grasped her wrists halting her.

"Please!" she begged, struggling against him, feeling the bite of her imminent climax crying out for release.

"You will *not* touch yourself. Do you understand me?" Lord Hugh's hands tightened around her wrists. Emma whimpered, and Lord Hugh snapped, "Answer me!"

"Yes!" Emma gasped, and suddenly she was released with Lord Hugh moving away from her. Emma's hands grabbed the bedpost, desperately attempting with the effort not to rub her cunny.

"And, you said that you wanted humor. Do you find this humorous, maiden?" Emma shook her head with her long hair swaying around her. She could not find her voice through the aroused ache tightening her throat. "Tell me of your experience!"

"I-I have none!" Emma cried, caught within the grips of her avenging arousal.

"Deceiver!"

Emma wailed, when after his utterance of a harsh tenor note, Lord Hugh abruptly grabbed her from behind forcibly spinning her around in a storm of her flying hair. Then, he lifted and tossed her up onto the bed, where she landed on her back with another screech of dismay. It was then in a glance of her clenching and unclenching eyes that she saw Lord Hugh's large and muscular body was bare, as he came up onto the bed after her.

He was nude! It seemed in the moments that he had left her that he had stripped his clothing. Now he grabbed her wrists, tugging them above her head. She could feel the shrouding heat of his body wash over her as she wrestled her wrists in the unyielding circle of his hand. Then, parts of their naked flesh touched. She gasped, more at this, than being denied freedom of movement. The sinewy barrel of his hairy chest compressed her right breast, igniting heat and other nerve endings on her soft flesh, while his muscle-bound thigh clamped over her thigh and the scorching length of his male pike branded the soft belly of space between her hipbone and her pubis. So much baking male flesh against her, threw her into a heightened and desirous tension. She had never felt anything like it, and her body, her senses, and her mind instantly craved more. It felt so wondrous, so ardent and pleasurable, that her cunny throbbed in pleasure.

Her eyes popped open to see this brute of male attraction, to try and make it real. To try and excise her insanity, by the reality of sight. But, the sharp male features swimming before her barely focusing gaze, did not expel the demon desire. Lord Hugh's rough male handsomeness and his evergreen eyes, burning more blue with undeniable lust in their depths, only ensnared her further.

"I never break a vow," he sneered through his lips bred for masculine temptation. Then, in a blinding move that wholly stunned Emma, Lord Hugh snatched his mouth over her panting lips. The sound she made was a shrill, and then a muffled moan of complete desire.

The kiss was rough and thoroughly devastating. Lord Hugh mated his mouth with hers, and when he had turned her moans to tumbling whimpers, he stalked for more. He prodded her lips with his tongue, then plunging his thick tongue through the separation of her lips. Her moans deepened to desperation as she fought his hold on her wrists, while her cunny still throbbed with biting arousal that she so wildly needed to assuage. Lord Hugh's tongue was thick and bold in the intimate cavern of her mouth. The demanding carnal plunge and undulation of it, spawned lustful response writhing through her body. She could not answer the desperation, held a prisoner as she was, with anything but her mouth, and she found her ardor translating into the raw sucking of Lord Hugh's tongue. The heated milking of his tongue assuaged her senses trivially, but the stunning thrill of it became a low moan wretched from Lord Hugh. Her answer came instantly after, in heated whimpers.

Hugh wrestled his tongue from Emma's wild seduction. Damnation! He had meant only to force, take, and conquer. He had not meant to become embroiled. Yet, the woman beneath him was pure feminine bewitchment. He could feel the aura of her need. She was wild with it and it took his strong will not to yield and leap into the thrall of it with her. But, his lust burned with edges of anger still and he grabbed Emma's quim in his hand again.

"Spread your thighs!" He shook her by her sopping twat. "Now!"

"*Charity*, please," Emma begged.

"Now!" Hugh uttered, in a forceful growl. Then, Emma's shuddering thighs began to lie open for him. But, she also humped his hand, trying to grind her quim against his fingers. She was a sight of lust-filled splendor and his cod leaked seed onto her hipbone. "Dig your heels in, false maiden, and spread your knees wide!"

Hugh heard Emma's fulsome whimpers as she bent her knees, using her heels to seesaw her twat in undulations against his fingers. Her quim lips split open to his gaze. He realized the power of it. She would do anything for him in her abandon and that knowledge flashed like fire along his flesh. He could see her quim opening, wet, rosy, and dark. He could see the sultry pink under the pillows of her ass. She was a woman full bodied, fertile, and lush and a begging slut, drenched and ready for him.

"What do you beg for?" Hugh demanded as his chest heaved against her breasts and his finger prodded to the opening of her quim hole.

"Release!" she hissed between her clenched teeth. Her hips bowed upward as though his touch jolted her. "I beg you, my lord!" she cried in desperation.

"*I am* your lord and master, and now I prove your lying treachery," Hugh said, as his finger sucked up inside her quim hole with a spasm.

The heat and wetness that engulfed his finger were wicked with temptations as Emma's quim and hips writhed on that finger. He meant to thrust inward and find the treachery of a barrier. But, he found himself instead retreating that finger, and then plunging it forward again with a solid fucking motion. His cod-head bulged, and then thumped with each rash finger fuck he took into the deepening redness of Emma's quim. Her body followed the mating as she cried incredible sounds of desire. The lips of her twat puffed outward, pulling back from her jutting cherry, as she rode his finger with sticky abandon.

It took all of his willpower to return his mind to the question he had to have answered. And, through gritted teeth he found the strength to halt his rutting finger. Emma wailed in loss with her flushed, ripe body quaking. But, he straightened his finger and wormed it deep inside of her, certain in arrogance of the answer . . . and the punishment! He was straining on the edge, ready to spew angry accusations at her and reap his revenge for her lying sluttish ways.

When his finger stopped!



Emma mewed desperately beneath him as her fragile wrists struggled against the unyielding clamp of his hand. The thoughts in his brain missed several beats, leaving complete blankness. Then, it was as though he had been clubbed over the head with a weapon in battle. His finger had stopped, because it could go no further against the barrier it touched.

The thought that his woman was a virgin slammed into Hugh's brain. Yet, the reality of it, and what his reverse inactions should be, was bratty. Instead, his control snapped, and when he should be understanding in compassion, only one thought lashed through his body. It was a credit to his eternal breeding that he did not plow his cod into Emma at that moment. But, the beast thrashing inside him would not be denied. He had never felt a need for release that was more powerful and tawdry.

"If you want release, woman, you will *suck* mine first!" Hugh's voice sounded harsh, guttural, and unnatural to him, as he released Emma, unpinning her, and then he came up on his knees in a swift motion.

Emma reacted the way any ensnared animal would upon being released. Hugh watched her roll onto her side, curl inward to come up onto her knees, scrambling backward away from him. But, his hand leashing her hair stopped her, as she crouched on her hands and knees before his engorged, purple-headed cum-dripping cod. The seed leaking from his dard was so profuse, it trailed white streaks down the upwardly bowing shaft.

Emma's titties swayed like firm milky white udders as she darted her gaze from his cod to his fallow face and back again. She was, as he was, beyond normal concerns and driven into primal realms of reactions. He saw one of her hands trying to sneak to her quim to rub it. He understood her raw needs well. It pounded in his cod too, as he tugged her hair. "You will not touch yourself!" Emma's whimper throbbed in his balls and he would later wonder why he denied her, and why she so crazed him.

Emma lurched forward on her hands and knees as Lord Hugh shoved the curved and stiff pike of his male organ downward. She was mindlessly aroused and the way to release ached shrilly in her mouth as her lips touched the purple-stained and bloated head of Lord Hugh's male organ. It was drizzled with a thick white sap that she had no comprehension or knowledge of. The secretions were sticky on her lips as her mouth opened frantically over the head. It branded the stretch of her lips as she tried to gobble it into her mouth. Just the balled heat of it stuffing inside her mouth stroked her hungry arousal. It was the motion and feeling that her senselessly aroused body craved. She had no notions of how to do the base intimacy that Lord Hugh commanded of her. She only chased after her urges.

"*Watch* your teeth, maiden." Lord Hugh growled as he tugged her hair. "You will worship it, not scrape it."

Emma whimpered around the bulk of Lord Hugh's male organ as it throbbed against her palate and her sex flowered open and leaked from behind. She knew the motion her sex craved. She knew the feeling her

body was starved for and she transferred it to her mouth with abandoned zest.

“Christ!” Hugh grasped both sides of Emma’s hair tugging on the reins. “Suck it!” he rasped, as he watched Emma’s plump ass cheeks gyrate and he felt her mouth sucking hotly on his cod. His belly tightened to sharp ridges as his balls ached with raw pleasure.

The maiden could not take his entire length and his ardor drove him to clamp his hand over the root of his cod and pump it as Emma suctioned what length she could manage. The sights of Emma eagerly taking his cod between her lips, drove his pooling cum-seed toward the shaft, with a harpies groaning, leaping from his gut. His pumping hand met Emma’s lips and she was so zealous on his thrusting cod that he did not have to compel her. The erupting drive of his pleasure bowed him over Emma’s back with his free hand seeking her quim. Hugh snaked his hand and wrist through the crack of Emma’s ass, until he found the backside of it. As his cum-seed fired up the shaft of his dard, he plunged two fingers into Emma’s soaking quim.

Her moans of ecstasy bucked her ass upward and vibrated in her mouth, exploding bliss on the head of his cod as he felt her quim’s convulsions suck on his fingers. His cry of release was a suppressed roar beneath Emma’s high-pitched, but muffled cries, with his cod furrowing in her mouth.

Emma lost reality in one blinding moment as a climax pummeled her cunny, like something fiery was swatting it, over and over, while at the same instant her mouth filled with a hot thick substance. Instinct made her swallow as the heavy scorching cream filled her mouth again, then dribbled out her lips, while her sex pitched with repeated bursts of rapture. She lost all sense of time as pleasure more profoundly than any in her experience took her prisoner. The next thing she realized was Lord Hugh’s male organ popping out of the suction of her mouth, and then her body being lifted and shifted as though she were inert.

Hugh heaved another steadying breath as he lifted and shifted Emma to lay beside him. Emma’s head settled on the bound-up muscle of his upper arm as he propped on his side to look down at her. His cum-seed covered her bruised red lips and her chin, as her eyelashes fluttered between being partially opened and closed. The urges within him were sated on one front, but not the teeming mass of them. Later, he would be stunned at this upheaval in his life, but now he was still consumed in it. His palm settled on Emma’s warm belly with his fingers stretching outward over the trembling softness. His head dipped, and he began to slowly lick his cum-seed from Emma’s swollen lips.

She murmured huskily, warmly, stirring beneath him as his hand stroked to her still heated quim. Her mouth parted with that touch and he dallied with his tongue for a moment before he returned to licking his seed from her chin. What more rare intimacy could he entertain?

But, his gluttonous craving urged him to ten thousand more as his fingers began to stroke the sticky lips of Emma's twat. His cod might be sated for the nonce, but the carnal beast awakened inside him would be forever, from this moment, on the prowl. And, the prey at this moment was another release from his wanton maiden. One he could view this time. From conception to repletion.

## Chapter Eleven

“His lordship ain’t a goin to like this at all to my way of thinkin!”

Lazarus looked up at Hugh’s squire, Corbin, as he rushed forward into his presence with his harried exclamation. Lazarus had been solitarily brooding with a flagon of wine in a private alcove attached to the main hall. *He* was not hiding from any female, anyone, Lazarus lied to himself sardonically.

Lazarus eyed the skinny tow-headed squire. Something was afoot by clear evidence in Corbin’s agitated red face, but it could not be a call to arms or Corbin would have shouted this immediately. “Sir Lazarus!” Corbin expelled, bowing jerkily because he had barely stopped his forward rush. “The Lady Adeliza Tosny is arriving here. Now!”

Lazarus sat upright from his slouch. Corbin bobbed his head rapidly with Lazarus’s own instantly alerted reaction. “*Now?*” Lazarus repeated tersely.

“Aye, she’s in the company of her cousin, lord some and such, his forward rider arrived just now. They ask for comfort and lodging as it seems the mare of the Lady Adeliza’s cart has gone lame, whilst they were traveling near here.”

“You have told Lord Hugh?” Lazarus asked, as he stood.

“That’s the whole thing, sir. His lordship’s not to be disturbed for anything, but a war, he said, and I-.”

“I will warn him. I mean . . . tell him.” Lazarus interrupted. “How long?”

“I’d say, not half the time between now and midday meal,” Corbin announced with his blond head still bobbing.

Lazarus cursed fate beneath his breath. That two so unlikely occurrences should happen at once. Lady Adeliza’s uncommon and unannounced arrival, while Hugh entertained a woman in private. Allah must be in a perverse mood, Lazarus thought as he ordered, “Find Lady Bernadette and warn her.”

“Aye! Aye!” Corbin exclaimed, rushing away.

Lazarus followed, not rushing, but stalking, as he wondered how to enter a lion’s den without being mauled. A few minutes later, Lazarus arrived at the solid oak door to Hugh’s bedchamber. He paced once

across the width, and then turned and laid several good pounds upon the old oak surface. Lazarus knew that even a man with the loudest voice could not be heard within or without, because of the thickness of the strongholds walls and solid doors.

Lazarus heard what he expected, barely, the bark of denial. The actual word or words were obscure. Were time not of the essence, he could pound at the door until Hugh was forced to rise and open it. Lazarus understood that Hugh would expect entrance if the stronghold was under attack. He also knew that both he and Hugh had fucked women side by side on several occasions, and while Hugh would be irritated, this should not cause him lasting anger. Nonetheless, Lazarus's intuitions were flinging warnings that this was—different. That Emma and Hugh, . . . that Hugh actually having a woman in his bedchamber was completely different.

*But, I am a fearless Mongolian,* Lazarus thought, right before he grasped the latch, pulling down on it to enter. Lazarus had filled his lungs with air, ready to make a quick and loud pronouncement at his entrance. Yet, in the time it took him to take three strides into the chamber, several things occurred at once. The first being, what he saw in action on Hugh's high bed was word snatching and stunningly erotic. A gloriously nude, Emma was on the clear edges of climaxing by Hugh's persuasion. The sounds alone, that she made, stirred Lazarus's dick, besides the carnal sight of her. Her back was bowed, her neck arched, and her pale shapely legs were thrown wide, held tensely straight with her toes pointed. Her pussy was clear to see, flushed red and glistening wet, as Hugh's stout fingers massaged her cunt.

At the same instant this view snapped into focus in Lazarus's senses, he caught a movement followed by a gasp to his left. He turned seeing Bernadette nearly beside him. Then, Bernadette clutched his upper arm as though to steady herself. Lazarus realized that he had mistakenly left the door ajar behind his hasty entrance.

Emma's sounds of near fulfillment leaped shrilly into the chamber. Lazarus's gaze jerked back despite his will not to do so and he saw Hugh plunging his fingers into Emma's vagina with a force that rocked Emma's lush body.

Bernadette moaned with more than just dismay beside him and he felt her hands leaving his upper arm. Lazarus caught the notion of her beginning to flee and he half-turned, catching her slender wrist halting her. She tugged. He held. Her turbulent green eyes locked with his eyes. Emma's rich cries told of her climax. Lazarus released his pent-up breath in a rush, while he and Bernadette experienced Emma's climax through all their senses. Their souls spoke. Their eyes charged. Time stood still. He and Berny, in that moment were more intimate than most men and women could ever achieve in one life time.

"What the fuck are you two doing here!?"

Hugh's bellow snapped time. Berny gasped sharply, trying to wrench her wrist free of Lazarus's hold. Emma shrieked. Lazarus held Berny next to him as he turned his gaze to Hugh, catching Emma turning to her side to clutch Hugh, while Hugh tossed a quilt over their nakedness.

"Adeliza, *arrives*," Lazarus said simply, much more simply than the storm coursing through him.

Hugh bolted upright in the bed, glaring. Lazarus watched Hugh try to gauge the words Lazarus spoke. It showed their respect that Hugh took the impossible to heart. "How long?" Hugh snapped.

"*Minutes*," Lazarus replied.

"Stall her, Bernadette," Hugh ordered, as he began to make motions to leave the high bed.

Lazarus felt Berny turning into his shoulder and her gaze away from Hugh leaving the bed. Lazarus said, "Emma should be brought as a lady companion for *Banyan* Bernadette."

Hugh stopped his movement, nude, beside the bed and nodded. "Then you, Lazarus, will greet Lady Adeliza."

"Of course, my liege," Lazarus bowed, then he pulled Berny from the room by her wrist.

"Let me go!" Berny demanded as he halted their progress in the hall. Lazarus stared at her, until she stopped trying to wrestle her wrist free. "What is it you want?" she gasped.

Lazarus looked at her. He started at her hair, moving slowly over her face, thoroughly over her breasts, and then he devoured her hips and between with his gaze. *Fuck this*, his mind snapped at him. She might think that he killed her husband, but he would make clear what he wanted. Then, she could choose!

Lazarus's gaze lifted, traveling thoroughly back up the curving length of Berny's body. His message was clear. Berny blinked at him with her light green eyes turbulent as though she were halfway engaged into the thrall of a sexual encounter. Lazarus released her wrist and she stood there, with her breasts lifting up to him.

"Checkmate," he whispered, and then he turned and stalked away.

Bernadette nearly crumbled. She did wobble slightly, as her hand jerked to the top of her breasts, instead of groping the fire in her cunt. It was as though she had been released from some powerful force, yet the effects still vibrated through her. Her heart pounded against her breast bone. "Nay," she whispered. It was as though a master had just seduced her, and she realized that before in her life she had never come close to true passion.

Hugh came stalking past her, with his words flung over his shoulder as he passed her. "Emma is ready to go with you."

Bernadette nodded, but Hugh's back was already to her as she turned and saw Emma hovering in the open doorway. Emma wore a dusty blue over tunic and her hair, the color of sunlight, was tousled, hanging about

her waist. She was flushed with a completely bewildered look upon her comely face. "Did he explain?" Bernadette asked.

Emma shook her head with her gaze timid. Bernadette thought she also would be timid had another woman seen her as Bernadette had seen Emma. Bernadette lifted her hand to Emma. "I am, Bernadette, Emma, welcome." Emma reached for her hand. "You will come stay with me and we will be friends, yes?" Emma nodded, looking slightly relieved as their hands clasped.

Emma followed Lady Bernadette and as she did, she found her mind becoming more lucid. Emma found out that Lady Bernadette was Lord Hugh's widowed sister-in-law. Lady Bernadette advised Emma that she was to reside as her lady's companion for a while. Emma was grateful to Lady Bernadette for her openness, honesty, and forthright manner, when Lady Bernadette revealed the reason for this. Emma liked Lady Bernadette instantly, but she was shocked to hear that, Lord Hugh's future wife had arrived at the demesne. Nonetheless, she was further shocked into frightening alarm, that she strove to conceal, when Lady Bernadette asked after Emma's son, and would Emma like him to come reside with them also.

Emma stuttered at this, unable to answer, but thankfully Lady Bernadette's attention was turned as they arrived at her solar and a young squire was waiting there in some agitation. It seemed the squire named Corbin had an urgent message from the cook requesting Lady Bernadette's presence immediately. The cook was beside himself at what to serve the newly visiting and distinguished guests. Lady Bernadette had to come right away, Corbin implored.

So it was, Lady Bernadette left Emma with an apology and a promise to return as quickly as she was able to see Emma properly settled. Emma was never more grateful to be left alone with her churning thoughts.

After Lady Bernadette and Corbin left, Emma sank into a chair, nearly missed, barely noticed that she had, as she exclaimed, "What will I do now?"

Emma tussled with her circumstances, realizing that what she had feared most had come so quickly. Another woman in Lord Hugh's life. Worse, a wife. A wife held so much more power and avarice. Yet, more horrible than this was Lady Bernadette's knowledge of Edwin. It was misconstrued knowledge, but knowledge nonetheless, and if Lady Bernadette knew, then Lord Hugh would know, or he already did know. He would demand answers. Emma already knew that she could not withhold against him.

Emma clasped her arms across her stomach, rocking with a wail inside her. "We came so close to a home," she whined, with hot tears in her eyes, "So close!"

## Chapter Twelve

“It is not proper that I speak to you, seneschal, or that *you* address me.”

Hugh halted his forward stride at a distance to observe, but not be seen. Seneschal? Not many would dare call Lazarus so lowly.

“If I must, I will sit and remain mute, until my betrothed greets me. Aggrieved at this treatment that he does not rush to me, but silent. You could, however, retrieve no less than five female servants for my needs and my boots are damp, muddy, and chilling my feet, until I am certain I will catch the ague. These, I will allow you to see to *in* silence.”

Lady Adeliza plopped down on a long bench near the entrance to the main hall, and summarily lifted her mud-crust ed boot upward, straight out to Lazarus. Hugh bristled. To tell the truth he had never seen Adeliza before. He could not say she displeased him with her looks, as he was with this fleeting portent of her manner. He had been told she was comely and by fact that did not do her justice. She was taller than some, perhaps to his nose, and she was slender. She barely had hips, and a thought crossed his mind at what this foretold of her childbearing. Her tits were like small peaches and Hugh imagined her nipples pointing to the sky. Her body structure was quite adequate for a woman, but what made her more than merely pretty, was her face, dark hair, and dark eyes.

Adeliza knew her attractiveness well. Hugh could see it in her manner. The only way that he knew this stellar bit of insight into a woman’s manner was having the comparison of Emma to Adeliza. Emma was exquisite without realizing it, and Hugh quickly shoved that complex thought from his mind.

Lazarus moved and Hugh watched with interest, but Lazarus merely bracketed his hands behind his back with his partially bared chest billowing forward. It was Lazarus’s most austere and menacing Mongolian stance. Adeliza gasped with her boot falling, but she was apparently not one given to her word, or of silence, because she blurted in outrage.

“How dare you thrust your bare chest at me!” Adeliza shrieked, pointing her finger at the offending object. “My father will have you quartered for such an insult!” Adeliza’s gaze darted from side to side as though she sought an ally or champion. “Where is my cousin? This *is* intolerable?” Adeliza leaped to her feet, stomping one foot for emphasis.



“I demand to see my betrothed, this instant, or I will leave, and this disgrace of my reception will reek retribution!”

Hugh grimaced, then sneered in irritation as Adeliza shrilly accused Lazarus as the offender. Hugh considered for a moment letting her leave. This female twit had thus far not portrayed herself as a demure and alluring woman, but rather a termagant. Still, Hugh had been the one to sally forth the preliminary inquiries to her father about a possible contract of marriage. The word betrothed that Adeliza used though was a far stretch at this point. Nevertheless, Hugh was astute in bargaining and letting Adeliza flee with ruffled feathers would not lend toward sweetening his coffers in any contract eventually made. He could also say that after his first annoyance of Adeliza’s unexpected and bold visit passed, he was curious to meet her.

Then somehow, Hugh expected that his entrance into Adeliza’s company would alter her enfant terrible shrillness. He was deluded though. He had to raise his voice to be heard above her tirade. “Lord Hugh Avranché’s, well met my Lady Adeliza!”

The sound of Adeliza’s voice stopped as she turned to him with her dark eyes still slitted in vexation. “I think I *might* faint,” Adeliza said, looking nothing like weakness, just before she swayed and started to slump. Hugh had no choice but to steady her as it seemed she might take her act to the ground to stamp believability to it. “This is simply too roughshod for my tender sensibilities,” she continued. Albeit in a weaker voice.

Over the top of Adeliza’s head, Hugh saw Lazarus arching a dark brow, as Hugh returned a frown.

“My liege,” Lazarus nodded once curtly, then he turned and stalked away.

Adeliza continued on, obvious being near fainting did not affect her voice or thoughts. “You have rescued me, my succor Lord Hugh, from a terrible fate. That towering barbarian has accosted me, your delicate betrothed, with overbearing strength and manner!”

Adeliza peeked up at him, and Hugh felt as though his jaw might snap, as he uttered, “You will stand or sit!” It was a command, not a question.

Adeliza’s dark eyes widened in slight shock. Hugh was wholly annoyed at her vexatious court ways. She brought to him, a clear remembrance of his dislike of the simpering playacting of the members and followers of the court. His dislike stirred, as his anger over her lies toward Lazarus sulked. Then, Adeliza’s narrow nose crinkled upward with over loud sniffing.

Hugh released her to stand, or fall, as he retreated a pace to regard her, wondering what affliction might be assaulting her now. Adeliza stood true without a wobble. So much for her faint. Then, Hugh realized that he was at a loss as to what to do with her as she continued her odd intermittent sniffing.

Hugh cast about and finally settled on, “Lady Adeliza, may I offer you some wine for fortification, whilst you tell me *how* you come to be here unannounced.” Adeliza opened her mouth in clear evidence to speak, and Hugh found himself immediately dreading the sound of her words. To forestall it, he turned and started to walk away. His intent was that she could follow or not.

She followed and just the act of walking brought her tongue back into play. “I know we have not properly met, but with our betrothal known, I truly do not aggrieve the intimacy. We are both grown and can overlook certain things I believe.”

Hugh stopped at his solar door and opened it as Adeliza sailed through, ever speaking. “And, I must say that I see clearly, I come to save you. Your demesne is in frightful need of a woman’s capable hand, and I will be charmed to lend it.”

Hugh barely held back his snort. The fawning and odd word’s Adeliza used such as succor and charmed grated his reserve. The woman besmirched him, yet he held his counsel, determined to give her a fair chance.

Hugh strode to the flagon of wine and poured two chalices, then turned to hand one to Adeliza. He observed clearly that it never entered her prattling head that he barely spoke. Then, when he neared to her and she took the chalice, he noted her sniffing again, seemingly unaware that she had done so. Hugh left the wine with her and retreated to sit. As Adeliza settled in, he finally realized what might be the cause of Adeliza’s snuffling. It came to him when he raised his chalice to drink, bringing his fingers into proximity with his nose. Sex musk assailed his nostrils. *By god*, he smelled of sex, of course. Hugh supposed he should feel sheepish, instead of egotistical and charmed as he inhaled deeper with the memories of a short time ago filling him.

“Your servants need more proper training and I do not fault you in the least, for it is not a man’s place for such endeavors.”

Hugh roused himself from his torrid inward musing to catch Adeliza’s aside, tossed insults. Did she really think this was a proper way to intrigue him? Or did she care? It appeared she was quite arrogant about her position, as though she felt it unnecessary to attract him, but rather she felt it was necessary to boss him.

“Lady Adeliza, how do you come to be here uninvited?” Hugh asked breaking into her never-ending discourse. At least Adeliza had some intelligence, Hugh thought, because she caught his barb of using the word uninvited.

Adeliza’s lips pursed and her foot tapped. “You have not greeted me properly.”

“Do you always avoid direct answers with a demand of your own?” Hugh countered.

Adeliza's shoulders squared. "*You* are rough I see, living out here." Adeliza's hand, with the wine, swept in a gesture before her. "Living in these wild lands, so far away from civility. A woman could-."

Hugh stopped her. "Do you always insult the lords you might marry one day?" Hugh's voice was deceptively even, but low.

"Why I never!" Adeliza exclaimed with a swish of her skirts. "Lords kneel at my feet and kiss my hand. They read poetry to my beauty and too win *my* favor-."

Hugh snorted, gazing at her with cold eyes, above the rim of his chalice. Eyes that said she had gone too far, if she even chanced to look. Hugh took a sip, then lowered the wine. "I think your father will be very angry to know that you are here."

"My father forbade me to come," Adeliza admitted rashly. "For over a year I have pleaded and languished alone at court, unescorted by my intended." Adeliza's dark gaze showed censure with the outline of her small tits thrust forward beneath her snug gown. "So I was not in the least bit displeased, when the mare to my cart suddenly took lame so near your demesne. And, I can only be certain that you must be glad that we have finally met."

*Oh yes*, Hugh thought, very sardonically. He was very glad.

## Chapter Thirteen

When Bernadette returned to her solar, Emma was gone. Bernadette was surprised that Emma would travel about anywhere in the demesne with the arrival of Lady Adeliza. Of course, if Lady Adeliza happened upon Emma there was no blazing sign stating this woman is your future husband's leman. Nonetheless, Bernadette worried more that Emma could come across Hugh. But, Bernadette felt Emma was smart enough to realize this also. So, Bernadette was slightly alarmed about what could cause Emma to leave without directions. That was until Bernadette remembered Emma's son.

"Of course, she must have gone to see him. Even to fetch him back here."

But, somehow the disquiet did not leave Bernadette. What if they did chance upon Hugh or Lady Adeliza? Just to be certain that her conclusions were correct and to ensure Emma's uneventful return here to the safety of Bernadette's chamber, Bernadette decided to find Emma. Besides, Hugh had given an order and he would be angry if it were not carried out as he had set forth.

Lazarus saw Bernadette enter the smaller family chapel. This chapel was not used for everyone. There was a larger building on the south side of the demesne built in tribute to the English god. This smaller place of worship was overseen and was the private occupation of Abbott John.

It crossed Lazarus's mind at the odd timing Bernadette chose to visit her abode of worship. He knew quite well that she attended all the proper times, once in the evening, twice on Sunday, but this was just past midday. Lazarus decided to pretend that he had not glimpsed Bernadette, the reason behind his brooding mind. He would continue to the half full flagon of wine that he had been attending earlier.

Lazarus continued this thinking all the way to the doors of the chapel. Perhaps, Berny was seeking answers from her god over the circumstances between them. Lazarus stopped and stared at the closed door. He knew what he wanted. He had made the decision. If he were truthful, he had been hiding from his craving for over two long years.

Long before Berny's husband had committed the worst sin, by hanging himself.

Berny had been the flame to her husband Robert's chill. Robert had nearly doused that flame. Perhaps, Berny prayed for forgiveness for being attracted to whom she believed caused her husband's death. It would always be that way, Lazarus thought, because he would never speak the truth to Berny and hurt her that way. Still, it made him angry, this obstacle, and how it must trouble Berny's feelings for him. She did have feelings. It was ripe in her body and her gaze. She was as drawn to him as he was to her.

Lazarus sneered. He may be honorable in that he would never reveal Robert's suicide to Bernadette, to spare her feelings. However, he would not admit he was fair at all when it came to lust. In fact he could be quite devious when it concerned things that he craved. So, he knew the more he put himself in Bernadette's presence, the better to keep her reminded, of the fire between them. And, if he happened to disrupt her pious prayers and turn her thoughts in what he considered a better direction, so be it. The succulent lamb must always be reminded that the ram desired it. Or, perhaps it would be more honest to describe his Berny as the fierce lioness to his stalking lion. She was both of those, fierce and succulent. Then, Lazarus pushed open the door to the chapel and stepped inside.

Bernadette had been told Abbott John would be found at the family chapel or if not that, he would be there shortly. So, she waited for Abbott John, pacing just inside the small chapel door to ask him to point out Emma's young son to her. Bernadette tried not to worry over the fact that Brother Owain had not been where any of his brothers could find him.

"Abbott John will show me the boy, and then I will find Emma," Bernadette muttered to herself. It was highly unlikely a woman alone would be foolish enough to venture anywhere outside of the stronghold walls, Bernadette assured herself. Then a second later, as she paced to the right side of the closed chapel door, Bernadette stopped wondering why she would conjure up such a drastic notion? But then, the sound of the chapel door being pushed open turned her gaze and thoughts.

Bernadette had Abbott John's name on her tongue, when a rather large object moved swiftly passed her, then halted at the sound of her voice. Bernadette tried to refocus her gaze as she had been expecting someone short and thin. It took her several seconds to realize that this was not Abbott John, but Lazarus's bared chest.

No really, Bernadette thought flustered, she meant it was Lazarus turned toward her, not his masculinely sculptured chest. Well really, his chest was right there, bronzed-skinned, brown nipples making her fingers ache for-. But, she had meant him—Lazarus stood before her and she stood with her mouth agape, one hand pressed too low on her belly, for it to properly be her belly. And, how that hand had arrived pressed to the top of her mons, she had no clue as she jerked that hand behind her back, with Lazarus's gaze following where it had been and where it had gone.

“Do you pray for your soul, Babette?” Lazarus asked in a slow tenor burr.

Bernadette’s gaze raised to Lazarus and the hunger in his black eyes actually made her inner thighs quiver as she shook her head to his question. Then, an extraordinary thing happened. That same hand behind Bernadette’s back reached forward toward Lazarus. She wondered why it would do that. How she could do that, but then Lazarus stepped forward clasping it, causing instant warmth to rush through her. Surprising her, yet not surprising her at all as he lifted her hand upward with black fire in his eyes. He brought her hand to his lips and she did not stop him, but more trembled with hope and desire as he brought her hand to his lips.

Then, Lazarus turned her hand, kissing the palm, as his other arm reached around her to tug their bodies flush against each other. She gasped at the contact, feeling it flow like a tumbling river through her. It was as though something pent up had released inside Bernadette and now with freedom gained, it was wild. Swiftly, Lazarus’s lips came to hers as her lips rushed upward to his. The releasing moan that came from her sounded like another woman. One she had never met before, while their lips tussled together in amazement, with instant and unbridled seduction.

One of her hands clasped the thickness of Lazarus’s bound hair and she used the pressure of this to crush their twisting mouths together more deeply, while she arched upward against his chest, basting her breasts over the solid surface. Her other hand bereft of being able to fondle his chest, where her breasts already took up residence, found one hard shank of his ass. Ohmygod, it really *was* tight and sinewy.

Suddenly, Lazarus broke his mouth away from her mouth and it was as though a small explosion had separated their lips, while she panted with the knowledge that her hand was still groping Lazarus’s ass.

“I will *not* stop,” Lazarus stated bluntly. “This is not a teasing game, my fiery Babette.” Lazarus’s hand was at her skirts dragging them upward. “If you tease, *halt* it now.” Then, Lazarus suddenly dropped his mouth to her throat as her head fell back, in common.

“Nay,” Bernadette pleaded, with a voice still alien in its quality to her. “Never stop!”

The heat of Lazarus’s hand found her bare thigh, sliding up to her hip, and around to her buttock. Bernadette gushed urgent whimpers and uncontrollably began to grind her pubis against the hard ridge of Lazarus’s cock as he kissed, nibbled, and licked the hollow in her throat to her collar bone and back again. His fingers fondled the crease in her buttocks, making her body shudder with violent desire. Then, he skimmed his hand over the curve, down, then under her thigh and he lifted her leg until she eagerly hooked her inner knee over his hip. It acted like a brace so she could rise up and down on her toes, rubbing her cunt like a needy wanton over the impression of Lazarus’s stiff cock.

Suddenly, Bernadette's back was against something solid and she had not realized that they had moved, that Lazarus had moved them.

"Pull your gown down," Lazarus demanded against her throat where her wildly aroused whimpers continued to vibrate.

Bernadette could feel Lazarus's other hand tugging her skirts up on the other side, until he had both hands groped over the cheeks of her bare buttocks, lifting her upward. Bernadette frantically tugged at the collar of her gown. She might have ripped it as it fell downward. The bun of her hair scrapped against the door and began to unwind. She grasped at her chemise beneath, to pull it down, just as Lazarus's mouth began kissing flames over the upper mounds of her breasts, around her fingers, while she battled to pull the chemise down.

Lazarus wetted the gauzy material, then lurched lower to nip at the straining bud of her nipple. Bernadette cried out . . . "Oh hh!" That hot spike of arousal impelling her to arch her back against the door, with her hands leaping from her chemise to Lazarus's shoulders. "Oh god, oh god," she whimpered. Her mind splintering in pleasure.

Lazarus hiked her upward higher, until she rode his hips with her legs latched over his buttocks. It freed one of his hands and he brought it upward to tug her chemise away from her breasts, baring them to his nipping teeth.

A steady thudding sound pounded in Bernadette's ears and she was certain it was the rapacious beating in her cunt. But, some part of her mind not feverishly enthralled in passion said it was the door to the chapel against which Lazarus had braced her.

Oh my god! They could be caught at any second. "We will be caught!" Bernadette mewled. But then the next second her mewling turned to passionate rolls of sound as Lazarus nibbled on the tip of her nipple. The biting rapture shot straight to her cunt as she grabbed his hair pressing his head closer for more.

He complied, sucking, biting, and wetting her breasts like a ferocious diner. Then, suddenly he was moving lower, lifting her higher. Her back slid up the wall and her hands tried to find purchase on top of his head, but that was not enough. By pure instinct alone her hands lifted upward trying to find balance, a brace, and they found the low ceiling as Lazarus hooked her thighs over his shoulders, while sweeping the bulk of her skirts off to one side.

"Oh my god!" Bernadette cried.

"Allah is great!" Lazarus growled, then his head lurched forward and his mouth closed over her cunt.

Bernadette stuffed one of her fists into her mouth to keep the torrent of her pleasure from screaming out as she rocked over Lazarus's shoulders using one hand to help brace herself. Just the stunning and erotic feel of Lazarus's hot mouth and tongue on her bare cunt brought her to an instantaneous and staggering climax, crashing through her.

“Many *more*.” Lazarus’s voice sounded guttural against her cunt as his tongue thrust into her climaxing vagina. Bernadette squealed shrilly in her throat behind her fist as more rapture rushed through her and her climax regrouped, bursting again, continuing on as Lazarus fucked her with his tongue, bouncing her up and down against the top of the chapel doors. The voracious pleasure was mind altering as it continued and another climax snapped through her, jerking her thighs over Lazarus’s shoulders uncontrollably.

*Oh god!* She could not stand any more. It was too exquisite. But, Lazarus seemed to know this. Maybe by her desperate whimpers, because he slowed mating her with his tongue. Then, beneath her moans, slowing to purrs, he began to gently lick, kiss, and nibble her splayed cunt. His mouth soothed, yet kept the edge of titillation as her breathing retreated from a panting swoon, to merely breathless.

Lazarus’s tongue made slick, sliding, and slurping sounds as one of his hands reached to her bare breast, covering it as he kneaded the mound deeply. His other fingers trailed down the separated crease of her buttocks. His fingers circled her anus, making her whine in pleasure, while thrusting her cunt at his mouth. Her squeals returned, sharper than ever, but she fooled herself because a second later Lazarus’s finger gently entered her anus to the first knuckle as he began sucking hard on her clitoris.

The combination instantly burst through Bernadette’s sex in another spiritually levitating orgasm as Lazarus’s hot wicked mouth continued to suck lustily on her clitoris lengthening the spasms of pleasure longer and longer.

“Great Allah, *yes*.”

Lazarus’s chest heaved as Berny’s succulent pussy writhed against his face. Her love juices coated his face, soaking into his skin and becoming a part of his soul. He had mastered carnal passions at a young age, but nothing transcended this . . . or this woman!

Lazarus knew when he pulled the tie loose and freed his cock. He knew when he lowered Berny’s luscious ripe and flush body, still squirming on the edges of many orgasms. He knew when he fitted her convulsing hot pussy over the bareness of his hard cock that he did so without protection against producing a child. Allah could mark him deplorable that he had to feel this woman searing and wet over his cock. He could be held damned for the fact that he rejoiced in any method he could use to bind Berny to him after this.

The feeling of her tight sheath stretching over the head of his dick pitched through his body, jerking his muscular frame as he braced a hand to the door, and he and Berny met nose to nose.

Every inch of his cock fitting into her and her tightness barely yielding to fit, showed in the torridness of their gazes locked on one another. Berny’s lips opened to gush in pleasure as his teeth gritted to hold his back. But, suddenly there was a voice on the other side of the



door and with a split second reaction, Lazarus covered Berny's mouth with his, muting most of her ardent sounds.

"Abbott John, may I speak to ya?"

The door behind Berny's back started to move an inch, then it stopped. Then, Abbott John gave a reply, which was muffled on the other side of the door and beneath their heavy breathing, but sounded affirmative. They were in imminent danger of being caught fornicating in an English church.

Lazarus knew that Berny was aware of it on some level through her abandoned passion, by the stiffening of her body. A tightening that fisted around his cock nearly lurching a groan from his throat as he managed to move them down the wall, several paces from the door.

They had to stop. They both knew they should. However, neither of them could, as Berny's body began humping urgently on his cock, while using his shoulders to shepherd the motion. Lazarus continued the compulsion, grasping her thighs, lifting and lowering her as he used his knees to further drive the upward plunging. Their mouths remained locked in the pants of their urgent sex as their gazes returned repeatedly to the door and discovery.

## Chapter Fourteen

Hugh walked beside Adeliza, touring part of the demesne at her request. In fairness, he was trying to find something about her that he might like besides her beautiful face. A face that was not quite that beautiful in animation because it showed clearly the different expressions of overbearing demands, pushiness, and censor. She was completely spoiled and without a thing to brace it upon, other than her father enabling it.

“Is the chapel in good stead?” Adeliza asked. “I must have a well-attended private chapel for my personal priest, who of course will marry us, and then when we reside here a few times over the years, he will have to have a well-attended chapel.”

With a sneer, Hugh swept his hand toward the back door to the family chapel. Adeliza seemed not to need words or vocal answers from him of any kind.

“Oh, is that it? I should take a peek and see what disrepair I will have to contend with.”

Hugh nearly turned heel to stalk away and not follow her. It seemed somewhere in Adeliza’s infantile mind that she thought debasing all that was his would raise her up in his eyes. He supposed she could be working at it from the twisted angle of-. This would show him how much he must need her. She was valuable. This was her worth.

Bah! Hugh cursed silently. The woman was simply dissatisfied. A bitch and spoiled!

“*Oh* sainted Mary, help me! How disgusting!”

At the same moment Hugh heard Adeliza’s exclamation, he looked past her shoulder into the darkened family chapel, and then he grasped Adeliza’s arm holding her from going any further. Hugh was relieved to realize that he and Adeliza were too far away for Bernadette and Lazarus to hear Adeliza’s exclamation. However, the sight was stupendous and charged with eroticism as Lazarus energetically fucked an equally eager Bernadette up against a wall of the chapel. It was more than fucking

though. It was carnal abandon and the charged sight of it heated Hugh instantly.

It had a different affect on Adeliza though. “Animals!” she spat. “Disgusting how women can let men make them sluts!”

*He’d, had enough!* Hugh tugged Adeliza’s arm, and then he literally drug her out of the chapel. With his fury unleashed, he drug Adeliza sputtering the entire way to the other outside end of the chapel.

“Just what do you think you are doing? Unhand me!” Adeliza hissed.

Hugh could have said many things. A legion of information spouted on what he thought of Adeliza. However, he realized that it would largely settle on a deaf mind. So, he uttered only one. The one that broke the contract, as it were. “*Any* man would be twice blessed having a woman as abandoned as a slut in his bed. Men *look* for wives that are such. And, those two animals that you revile . . . are the two people that I respect the most, and I *rejoice* at their good fortune.” Adeliza sputtered at him with her mouth agape, as he added, “I will gift you twenty mares if it means you will be gone from here by the morning sun!”

Hugh had just finished uttering this declaration, when his gaze caught sight of Abbott John barreling toward the doors in the front of the chapel. Adeliza had burst into tears with a wail and turned to flee from him. *Good riddance*, Hugh thought, not the least nonplused over it, other than the fact that he had ever envisioned marrying and chaining himself to that frigid shrill.

“Abbott John!” Hugh called out. He had to stop the Abbott from going inside the chapel, where his own well wishes and blessings were on the two people carrying on a heated tryst. They would make a good pair, Lazarus and Bernadette. A fine pair!

“Oh, my lord Hugh,” Abbott John puffed. “I was looking for Lady Bernadette, but got waylaid by a needy soul. I need to tell her, the boy and the woman have gone, but I managed to keep Brother Owain.”

“Boy and a woman?” Hugh asked curtly, interrupting Abbott John.

“Oh yes, Lady Bernadette had wanted to know where the boy, Edwin was, but his stepsister Emma came to fetch him from Brother Owain several hours ago. Of course, Brother Owain told me Emma was Edwin’s stepsister in confidence, I have no understanding of why. But, I could hardly keep anything from you, although we ought to keep this confidence.”

Hugh had been amazed for years at Abbott John’s long-windedness. Hugh supposed that it had its better use in sermons, but he oftentimes wondered how the man went on for so long without a breath. The only way to get anywhere with the Abbott was to interrupt his discourse. And it seemed, Abbott John never took offense at this.

“So, Emma and the boy are about the demesne somewhere,” Hugh concluded, interrupting again. Hugh was a bit perturbed that his Emma was not safely ensconced in Bernadette’s chambers. However, after dealing with Adeliza, this small perturbation he deemed quite mild indeed.

“No! No! I did not make myself clear, my lord. Emma and her stepbrother, which I will call her little friend from now on, least we forget our confidences.” Abbott John bobbed his head, then continued. “They have left the stronghold. Taken Brother Owain’s mule and gone North to some family, she said-.”

“Bullocks!” Hugh exclaimed. “Abbott, you will come with me right away,” Hugh charged, turning to stride swiftly away from the church doors.

“Yes, yes,” Brother John said, hurrying to follow.

Lazarus lifted Berny’s body up the wall with the power of his cock thrusting fleet and hard inside her. Her breasts bounced slick against his chest as she sucked voraciously on his tongue. Her torrid cunt clamped harder around each rapid thrust that he drove into her, while her mewls came shriller and faster, telling him that she was toppling into another climax. He held back with his body shuddering in the effort to meet her at the same moment.

Then her scream exploded hot in his mouth as his cock expanded twice-fold and just as her climax pounded over, around, and through his dick, he released his control. He grunted like a wounded beast as he fucked Berny heavily up against the wall and her inner cunt fluctuated with frenzied contortions over his cock, which was plunging and heaving his seed deep inside her. The rapture nearly buckled his knees. It carried on for longer than he thought believable, until he was left billowing in great gulps of air as he collapsed against Berny’s sweat slick breasts. Lazarus locked his knees to stay upright as his perspiring forehead slid against Berny’s equally damp temple.

“What have we done?” Berny panted, clutching him with his cock limp, but still embedded inside her heat.

Lazarus wanted to roar the words, *we made the best love ever on Allah’s great earth*. But instead he slid his cheek against Berny’s and stroked her tangled hair fallen out of its bun. He could fuck her now, anew, for hours until she never thought to question their fate again. But, he wanted more, so much more now that he found it.

“I will release you,” he heaved, with a sour sound.

“No!” Berny exclaimed, clutching him tightly when he would break away from her.

“I do not ever want to release you,” Lazarus spoke into Berny’s ear.

Berny’s hands came up slicking the loosened waves of his dark hair back. “Checkmate,” Berny said.

Lazarus’s heart thumped as he leaned away to look down at her. “You mean this?”

“Yes. Yes I do if you do?”

Lazarus smiled then at his contrary and feisty woman, then he began the tournament that he hoped would be the beginning of a life time. “Babette, I do, only if you do. Should we negotiate this?” Lazarus swiveled his hips lifting upward. Berny’s eyes lightened, as she exclaimed, “Oh hh.” Then, she squeezed inwardly with a sexy twinkle in her eyes. “Yes, let’s negotiate.”

Lazarus’s eyes crinkled at her inner squeezing around his cock, as he turned partially looking into the chapel. “The altar?” he questioned devilishly.

“Oh we could not!” Berny gasped, but then she laughed with delight saying, “Mayhap the antechamber?”

“Your wish is my command, succulent Bernadette.”

“Oh you said my name,” Berny exclaimed softly, hugging him with kisses on the corner of his mouth.

Lazarus smiled as he moved them down the wall toward the antechamber room, “For a thousand nights you will hear your name from my lips.”

## Chapter Fifteen

Emma looked at Edwin. He was a solemn boy for the young age of eight. He was rail-thin, denoting his youth, with wary gray eyes and sun-brown skin that highlighted his very blonde hair.

Emma resolutely continued to lead the mule, Betsy by her lead as she walked in front of the mule and Edwin rode the animal's sturdy brown back. Emma was thankful that Betsy was a congenial mule and not a stubborn one. She was more grateful than words could ever hope to express that Brother Owain had pressured her to take Betsy, his longtime companion. Brother Owain had to know that Emma would be forced to sell Betsy at some point. It was not that Emma wanted to, but she had no money and selling Betsy would give her and Edwin a chance somewhere to survive.

At least she had been able to dissuade Brother Owain from coming with them, Emma thought. It had not been easy, after all these years that he had helped look after Edwin and kept a protective eye on her. In the end, she'd had to lie to him, for the better good, and Emma wondered what payment the gods extracted for lying to a monk? Brother Owain had barely believed her false tale about Edwin's long lost father finally seeing the right and summoning them to his side. Brother Owain still believed after all these years that Edwin was her son, and not truly her stepbrother. Emma never intended to change that belief, just as she never intended to change what Edwin believed either.

So many lies she was caught in, yet for the sake of one boy's cherished life it had become a way of life. Edwin believed that there was no blood connection between them. She had told him that they were both orphans and their separate mothers had been close friends. Edwin believed that at his mother's death, she had begged a promise that Emma's mother coddle Edwin to her as her own. But, then Emma's mother died too young and Emma had taken up the pledge. It was also amazing to Emma that Edwin spoke of this to Brother Owain, but, Brother Owain treated the matter delicately assuming Emma had lied to Edwin. And so, the lies and misdirection circled one another.

Nonetheless, while she would miss Brother Owain, and his relentless and quiet support, she was also grateful to have him relieved of any possible danger this could come to. Even though, she admitted to being terrified to strike out on her own. Yet, she was left with no choice and she would not put Brother Owain in a situation to besmirch his good intentions.

Because Emma knew Lord Hugh would try to find her, and if he possibly did, anyone with her or that was helping her would feel his fury. That was why she could not beg Brother Owain to come with her one more time. Emma assured herself that this was vast countryside, and she had thought to give Brother Owain a false direction, so when Lord Hugh questioned him he could answer truthfully. Emma also thought the added tale that Lord Hugh would hear about Emma's returning to her son's father could hopefully cause Lord Hugh to pause. But, she did not delude herself too much on this score. Lord Hugh would try to find her, if only for his anger of losing one of his possessions without his permission.

But she felt that she and Edwin had a good lead and Emma envisioned they could have as much as a full day start with Lady Bernadette and Lord Hugh's distraction by the arrival of Lady Adeliza. In a day, she and Edwin could be very hard to find and she had no intentions of following any main roads or less used ones for that matter. Nay, she thought, she would travel cross country.

"Do you think Betsy is thirsty, Emma?" Edwin asked from atop his slowly swaying perch.

Emma looked up at his sun brown face, his slender youthfulness, and sighed. He was so solemn for one so young. Then, Emma wondered if he ever played really, but then, staying most of the time with Brother Owain probably not. She was going to change that, she resolved as she answered. "A good thought, Edwin, we should stop at the next stream, Yes?"

Emma was pleased to see the beginning of a return smile from Edwin, but then it began to falter midway with a sudden sound in the distance. It was the howling of hounds on the chase. A pack of them!

Hugh had disliked doing it, however it was the only way to assure that he would find her. So with reluctant and strict orders that the huntsman insure, by threat of his life, that no harm would come to the maiden, mule, or boy, Hugh had set the hounds on Emma's scent.

What a way for a man to woo a woman to his side, Hugh thought with edged sarcasm. At first he had been furious, however a few moments of pause and cloying remembrance, worked to soften him immeasurably, until he was more worried than angry. Hugh knew something frightened Emma. Secrets that she had. He felt secure that she did not run from him, but from other influences.

So, as he rode his stallion, following the hounds, he pondered his intentions and worried over Emma's safety. It came down to simply that. The need in his heart to keep Emma safe. That defined him and his intentions toward her for a lifetime. Then, the hounds picked up the scent

and Hugh charged his stallion forward to find, collect, and bring back his future.

It was in the black of night, when Hugh first saw Emma by numerous torch lights. She was backed against a huge old oak tree, clutching a skinny boy behind her as she faced the hounds being held back, and the circle of men, a distance around her, but still effectively hemming her in from any escape. She wore a chaste wimple and the form and fall of it illuminated the depth and beauty of her eyes first, then the rest of her delicate face.

Hugh pulled his stallion to a high-stepping halt within the circle of torch lights, and Emma's anxious gaze rose to his arrival. The boy peeked from behind Emma's hip, with his eyes as big, round, and as blue as Emma's.

"Fall back!" Hugh ordered, then he dismounted as his men drew further away, and he took a moment beside his stallion to collect himself. Hugh reached inside his cloak and pulled out a folded piece of parchment, then he stepped around his horse toward Emma.

He began speaking right away, because he could see that she was very frightened. "I apologize for the hounds, Emma, I did not send them to hurt you. But, to find you." Emma looked down at the top of the boy's head as Hugh drew nearer, but she said nothing. "You forgot something, Emma, and I am here to deliver it to you." Hugh stopped in front of Emma and the boy, then lifted his hand forward with the parchment, as Emma lifted her gaze to him. "The deed to your home, Emma."

Emma's eyes widened as she nervously clutched the boy behind her, with her gaze darting from the parchment up to his face. "My lord," she said, but then she seemed unable to answer further.

"And, my protection," Hugh added. "And, my word now of your release from-," Hugh paused, looking down at the boy peering up at him, as Emma gasped softly. "From the contract I held you under," Hugh finally decided, was delicate enough for the boy's ears.

"But, I do not understand," Emma exclaimed.

"I speak plainly, Emma. You know this," Hugh replied.

"Yet, I cannot speak as plainly," Emma said with tears in her eyes, before she bowed her head.

Hugh resisted the urge, mightily, to snatch her into his embrace. Instead, he used his other hand to slowly reach forward and lift her chin gently. "Emma," he breathed. "Emma, I ask you no questions. Come home with me. I-," Hugh faltered looking down into Emma's liquid eyes. "I-, Lady Adeliza is gone and will not return. Perhaps, after you settle into your home, I will visit you."

"Lord Hugh," Emma said with wonderment, hope, and, Hugh could hear, the clear longing in her voice.

"I will ever be Hugh to you from henceforth, Emma, and that is my strict order."



Emma's lips began turning upward in a trembling smile. "Hugh," she tried softly. Then, Emma reached for the parchment clasping it, as he held onto his side. "Mayhap, at the time you come to visit, we could begin a new negotiation, yes?"

Emma smiled with tears dotting her cheeks as Hugh's heart lifted. "I would enjoy negotiating for you to be under my contract again, Emma, when you feel secure."

Emma exclaimed, leaving the parchment in his hand as she rushed upward to embrace him. Hugh caught her to him as the boy followed Emma's movements clutching her skirts from behind. Hugh caught Emma to him holding her closely as he looked down on the lad and winked. The boy's eyes widened, then he tried to wink back. Hugh chuckled.

*A fortnight later . . .*

Hugh dismounted his stallion in the sun-drenched meadow by a rushing stream. Just around the bend, Emma, would be waiting for him. He had sent word and asked her to meet him here. He had given her a fortnight to settle into the cottage he had deeded her, and he had given her that time to feel comfortable and secure with his intentions. He was a man that felt actions spoke louder than any words could convey.

Never once had he asked Emma about Edwin, which he had gleaned were Emma's major concern and secret. Logically, Hugh had come to the assumption that it was quite possible Edwin and Emma hailed directly from old Saxon royalty. It made sense, and he was all but certain that was what she was hiding, yet he would not ask. She would tell him one day, and then he could assuage her fears over it, with him at least. She picked the best course of never telling, and Hugh was quite certain not even the boy realized it.

One day, when Emma was his wife these things would become trivial to her, beneath his complete protection. Just as money, land, and more power had become amazingly trivial to him, with the sight of one woman in his mind. The woman he intended to have.

It irritated him, but he was nervous. Nearly better were the days of ownership, where he ruled completely without questions. Yet, he did have a sense that his Emma wanted those days back also. He counted on it. Now he just needed to be sure.

Hugh started forward, and rounded a cove of trees into a small clearing. There he saw Emma sitting on a blanket covering in the grass. She was looking in the opposite direction from him, clearly uncertain from which way he would be arriving. Hugh saw first that her glorious yellow hair was hanging free in waves about her. The next thing that he

noticed quite clearly was the little that she was wearing. His eyebrow raised as he stepped forward rustling the grass, and with the sound, turning Emma's gaze to him.

Emma instantly came up on her knees, pulling the light gauzy robe that she wore off her shoulders to pool around her legs. Completely nude, she knelt before him, then she raised her hands upward to him. Beckoning him. My god! Hugh's heart soared. Then, just before he reached Emma, Hugh tugged a small packet from his belt, and with a fling of his wrist, he tossed the packet aside into the meadow grasses.

Then, he grinned, fully and unreserved.

The End

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