

The Warder Series
Book 2



The Warder's
Dragon
Viola Grace

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The Warder's Dragon - Book 2: The Warders
Series

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Viola Grace

*To my sister, who didn't freak out when she
learned what I was writing.*

Chapter One

The ancient house rocked with light, laughter, and the occasional burst of magical energies. The somber stones were decked out with brightly colored balloons and the fairies in the garden reeled in drunken circles around the windows and doors. They wanted to join the fun.

Anryn Warder looked around the room and smiled at the guests that had gathered to celebrate the engagement of her cousin Albina, and her fiancé Imaran. The mix was a bizarre blend of human and magical creatures. The wards that were set around the estate would wipe the memories of the humans as they left, transforming the faces of the djinn women and the elves into normal, if beautiful, humans.

Which was a handy thing, as some of the more inebriated guests were comparing species-specific physiques. A 'how many breasts do you have?' contest was underway in the foyer under the watchful eye of the Lakin portraits. The old gents

in the paintings had never had such a show.

"I can't thank you enough for this shower Anni! I was never expecting anything like this." Albina wandered over with a glass of wine in her hand. She was glowing. Literally.

"Alby, you're quite welcome. What have you been up to? You are lit up like a Christmas tree." The snicker was unmistakable.

"Oh, I was just having a conversation with Imaran's mother, Delileh. She wanted to look at my markings in front of other djinn witnesses." Not only was Alby's face flaming, her hair was glowing in the afternoon sun. The nearby paintings sparkled in the luminescence cast by her braided tresses.

When Anryn and Albina were first learning to cast wards, Albina made a mistake in her focus. Her spell blew up in her face and she had to spend the rest of her life with glowing, magic-sensitive hair. It was Anni's favorite point to tease her cousin with.

"So basically, a group of djinn women cornered you and said 'Show us your boobs'. What did you do?" The giggles were coming fast and furious; she fought desperately to keep her face straight.

"I flashed them." She took a hefty slug of the wine that one giggling dryad was serving to the crowd. She watched the dryad and asked her cousin, "So, how is your mom enjoying the

party?"

"She's having the time of her life. And since she is a couple of hundred years old, that really means something." Anryn was driving, so she stuck to soda.

Smiling, she watched her mother flit among the other women. Mylawith looked not a day over twenty-four. Her delicate green skin had been bequeathed to her daughter, as well as her bright green eyes. Hair that was a strange combination of green, gold and brown rippled down her back. She preferred the solitude of the forest, but the company of other magical creatures always warmed her.

Anryn's black hair had come from her father, a warder who worked to keep the old-growth forests from predation by logging companies. Her mother had taken one look at the handsome mage and jumped out of a tree and onto his startled form.

Dominick had been astonished to have the warm womanly body drop on him, and as she began to grind herself against him, he had decided to accede to the lady's wishes. He visited her every chance he got until she announced she was pregnant. For one month he had stayed away, frantically making phone calls. Laying claim to a portion of old-growth forest was not a task for the bureaucratically challenged.

Then, one day, a building crew arrived in a nearby meadow. They excavated with extreme care and using sprayed concrete and a frame of metal, they created an underground warren. They back-filled the site and the meadow grew again.

Dominick Warder made a place in his lady's world, and that is where his daughter was born one winter night. They couldn't get married right away, as Mylawith did not exist to the human world, but a binding ceremony with Dominick holding his daughter brought a wild Warder party to the deep forest in the dead of winter.

"So, how many have RSVP'd already?" She dragged her mind back from her father's favorite bedtime story and focused on Albina again.

"Around six hundred." This was about right for a Warder wedding. It was a favorite place for them to shop for men.

"All races are being represented?"

"Through our family alone." She rolled her eyes to the ceiling. The Warders were bound by law, to mate outside their own clan. This kept their most desirable talent from being used for evil, as it had at one time in the past.

The Warders had made a bid to take over Realm by starving out the population and only allowing access to those who supported them. The Dragon Council had collected an army and broke the wards, killing all males of the clan, and

imprisoning the women. The women were tried, put to the Question and those who were guilty of planning the attacks were put to death. Only seven women survived. Seven Warders.

They were given to the clans they had wronged, and their bloodlines were forbidden from intermarrying. Warders had successfully married and produced offspring with twenty races, humans being one of them. They moved from Realm to earth, and used mirrors to go back and report to the Dragon Council every five years.

Their family crossed over twenty races, but no one could stop the ties that bound the Warders together.

Anryn started to set her cousin's mind at ease about the wedding preparations. "Music wise, I have the Goblin Rulz playing at the reception."

Albina's blue eyes danced in delight. "I love them!" She was practically hopping in her chair. "How did you get them? I thought they were booked."

"Never underestimate sleeping around in your youth." Anryn winked slowly and watched the light dawn in her cousin's eyes.

"You mean that you...?"

"Six years ago. But he and I are still friends." All of Anryn's lovers became her friends after the relationship was over. No one could hold a grudge against her perpetual cheer.

"Wow, if I had friends like that...well, Imaran wouldn't be marrying me."

They both laughed. It was a well known fact that djinn preferred virgins. That she was no longer in that condition was strictly due to her fiancé's actions.

"Delileh seems happy enough with her son's choice." The djinn women were mingling a little, occasionally making forays to the snack table. The stern matron in question was holding court in her daughter-to-be's home.

"That's what she said once she saw the family's markings. It isn't like she could deny they are Imaran's. Each djinn has his own pattern and this is definitely his." She peered down into her shirt and shrugged. "I haven't learned to read them yet. I can't get beyond the ABC's of the djinn script yet. Goblin was much easier."

"You're drunk." The happy bride-to-be was listing gently to the right. Anryn held out a steadying hand and held her.

"Yes, I am." A blinding smile broke free. "I really do love him, you know. He makes me feel...happy."

"Yes, Alby. I know." She stood and scooped her cousin up in her arms. Albina was as light as a feather. Anryn quickly walked into the dining room and through the mirror, taking her cousin to Realm.

The Djinn village was over three hundred miles away. She stomped her foot on the ground and sent a wave of power through Albina. Moments later, a djinn appeared in front of her. "Albina, what is wrong? Anryn, is she alright?"

His face was concerned, the black eyes searching her burden for any sign of injury. Once in his lifetime was enough. He took her gently from her cousin.

"She's fine, but my mom got her drunk." He grinned in relief, chuckling as Alby burped and began to snore against his chest.

The twinkling in his black eyes let her know that he had figured out what happened. "She had to deal with my mother, did she?"

"Yep, and the rest of her attendants. She had to show them the djinn marks, and promptly got loaded after that. Can you keep her with you here for a while? I want to kick out the party goers and clean up a bit."

"I can do that when we get home."

She blinked and smiled ruefully. *Oh, right. Magic. He used to be Albina's housekeeper. Lords, if only she could find a guy who did housework.*

"Yeah, ok. Give me six hours to get rid of the stragglers." She turned to leave, "Oh, and Alby came out of the bridal shower with quite a haul. Thirty pounds of gold jewelry, and seventeen pieces of edible underwear. Hope you're hungry."

She winked at him in the mirror and passed through to the bright tune of his laughter.

Her cousin was a lucky woman.

Chapter Two

“So how was the shower on Saturday?”
Bethany was as chipper as always. The perfect secretary. She would dump hot coffee in your lap if you called her an executive assistant.

“It was a blast. Any messages for me?” She moved past the reception desk and nodded as she took the sheaf of pink papers with one hand and balanced her coffee with the other. “Yeesh, serves me right for taking a Friday off.”

She dipped and levered the door to her office open with her elbow. Sitting at her pressboard desk she flipped through the notes and sorted them by urgency. Several were queries about her schedule over the next few weeks. Anryn worked into the stack and found the note that she was looking for.

It was the call from the dressmaker for Albina’s wedding. The woman was a miracle worker. The lesser known fact that she was a spider goblin was the only thing that kept her from being a top

international designer. Well, that and the extra sets of arms that she had. She swiftly dialed the number.

"Morcalla? Hey. How's it going?"

"Great Anryn. Business is booming."

"So, you called? A status report perhaps?" Anryn dug out her day planner and started to write in her appointments for the next few weeks.

"You know it. The dresses are coming along well. They should be done in plenty of time."

"You know that I am going to check up on you."

"Yeah, yeah. But I tell you, those seven layers of Warder formal wear are hell to embroider."

"Yes, but you are being compensated handsomely."

"Indeed, I can't argue with that. When are you running the next wards?"

"Later this week. Do you have a date for the concrete?"

"Next Tuesday. The crew is roughing out the foundation this week."

"Fine, then I'll call you on Thursday and set them before Sunday."

"You don't know how much this means to me."

Tears pricked Anryn's eyes. "Yes I do. Just remember to recommend me to your friends and family. I don't work cheap." She forced a laugh and heard an echo on the other end of the call.

"I don't either, take care."

"Take care. Bye Morcalla."

As she hung up Anryn took a deep breath. All that Morcalla wanted was a set of wards that would let her have human guests in her house without freaking them out. She enjoyed the company of men and didn't enjoy it as they ran screaming from her bed when she left the glamour off. The wards would keep the glamour in place until they left her presence.

She also was afraid of paparazzi, afraid that her glamour wouldn't hold. The wards that Anryn had planned would keep any lens from focusing into any window. It would give her privacy and security.

She drummed her fingers on the desk. *Alright, back to work.* She took out her day planner and began to schedule appointments. Being a massage therapist was not a nine to five job. Each client had a set time that they preferred to be treated and would not deviate from it.

She called up her normal Monday client list and had several happy people that she would be seeing, starting in less than one hour. She had a new client on the list for today- a businessman. His appointment was in his offices.

Decklyn Ringler was a CEO of some company or other. His executive assistant had called on Friday for an appointment, and had been

disappointed to find that it was her day off. So she asked for her employer to be worked into Anryn's schedule late in the day. No one else would do.

She picked up her folding table, her bag with her essentials and left for her first appointment for the day. She worked on any number of people, some old, some young, and some who had medical conditions that made her wince in sympathy. But she did her job. All day, every day.

It was a relief to see her schedule and note that only one name was not crossed off. She hauled the table to the elevator and pressed the top floor button. It was thirty flights in the air when she came out and saw that the entire upper floor was glass. Not one exterior wall marred the beauty of the skyline. The interior walls were arranged like spokes on a wheel, with the receptionist holding court in the center.

She walked up to the reception desk and waited for the receptionist to notice her. "Anryn Warder to see Decklyn Ringler. We have a five o'clock appointment."

"Please, have a seat over there. He'll be with you in a few minutes." She dismissed the visitor and went back to typing a document with no particular urgency, to prove that she was far too busy to be answering questions.

"I didn't notice you announcing that I was here. Perhaps it slipped your mind." She waited and

kept her even gaze on the little secretary trying to throw her weight around.

She gave Anryn a hate filled glance and put one hand to her head set. "Mr. Ringler, there is a Miss Warder here to see you." Her eyes widened with surprise as she was given her instructions.

"Please come with me, Miss Warder." She led the way down the hall to a conference room. It had the same panoramic view as the reception area.

"Please get comfortable, can I get you anything?"

"Where is the nearest restroom?"

"There is one behind this panel." She walked to the wall, and a panel slid back at the touch of her hand. It was well hidden, and Anryn wondered how many other doors were attached to this room. The receptionist stood and waited for her dismissal.

"A soda would be great, and everything I need."

"I'll only be a moment."

"Fine."

She flipped the massage table upright and secured the legs into place. One client on the floor in her lifetime had been enough.

The receptionist returned with a can and a glass, and she left them on the conference room table and quit the room. Anryn looked around for

any chance item to give her a clue as to Mr. Ringler's occupation. There was nothing.

No magazines, no documents, and no workstations of any kind marred the glass and steel of the room. She shivered and looked around once more. She hated waiting.

She tried to occupy herself. She wandered over to the bathroom that had been pointed out and ran warm water in the sink. She sat the bottle of oil that she used on her clients into the sink. She opened the 'client' pack that she retrieved from her car, after dropping the sheets and towels that she used on her previous client in the laundry bag that she kept in her vehicle for such a purpose.

The laundry found her fastidiousness in packaging of the sheets, towels and pillows excessive, but since she was prepared to pay for the extra work, they had stopped commenting after her first payment.

Just as she was snapping the sheet over the table, her new client arrived. Decklyn Ringler. It was no wonder that he had called Relaxed Realms Massage Therapy. He was a dragon.

Relaxed Realms specialized in non-human clients. It took a certain amount of strength to work on supernatural creatures.

"You are the massage therapist?" His brow rose in astonishment. She was tall, slender and looked incapable of applying the necessary force to

engage in therapeutic massage. Her olive skin made her look Mediterranean at first glance, the dryad was only there if you knew to look for it.

"Yep. You would be Mr. Ringler?"

"Yes."

"Please remove your clothing and lie face down on the table. If you like, I can leave the room for a few minutes." She turned to prepare the second sheet, then saw him unbuttoning his shirt with a lack of concern.

"I am fine with it if you are." The challenge was obvious. He was quite an impressive specimen, and as he removed his clothing, she found that he was older than he looked.

With a dragon, you could tell the age by their bodies. He bore a series of scars that she acknowledged as territory dispute markings. The claws of another dragon had plowed through his golden skin. His hair was quite long, hanging below his shoulders within the confines of a strip of leather. It was a rich chestnut which contrasted starkly with his golden eyes. When he undid his pants, she watched with interest.

From what she had heard, dragon scales remained on the phallus, no matter the form he took. Huh. Nope. His cock was a slightly darker shade of gold than his skin, but was snug in a nest of silky chestnut curls, just like a normal male. The lack of hair on his chest had made her wonder, but

now her curiosity was satisfied.

“Are you enjoying the view?”

She jumped. She had been lost in her own thoughts, and most of them x-rated. “Oh, yes. Quite nice. Now if you would lie face down on the table please?”

He looked startled, but moved to do as she asked. His cock had begun to rise under the attention that it was getting. When she had him settled to her satisfaction, she flipped the second sheet over him and moved to get the warmed oil.

Apparently he was not used to being referred to as ‘quite nice’.

She placed it on the table and coated her hands, then applied herself to her work. “Wind and wards you are tense, Mr. Ringler.” She worked at the taut muscles and smiled when he grunted at the force she was required to apply.

“Oh, I should have warned you, therapeutic massage can lightly bruise tissues. You will be more relaxed, but the first day you’ll feel like you have been hit by a truck.” An evil grin spread across her face as he made a harsh sound as she bent to her work.

It was well over half an hour of hard work later that she asked him to flip over. As he turned, not without some difficulty, she flexed her hands and wiped the sweat off of her brow. “Just lie back Mr. Ringler. Do you have any other spots of tension

beside your back and neck?"

"You can call me Decklyn." He shifted around and draped the sheet across his hips. It tented in a most obvious way. "My neck and hands are the only residual bits of tension. Unless you would be willing to address my erection."

"That is not a muscular problem, that's a hydraulic one." She smiled and moved behind his head. Rubbing her slicked hands up his neck and pulling gently on his skull. Being this close to an attractive aroused man was having an effect on her. But she had to put her job first.

"Ah, but would you be willing to address it? You didn't answer that." His upside-down smile was engaging, and she smiled back when she saw his hunter's gaze on her breasts. It wasn't like he could miss them, but she did bind them down when she worked or they got in the way.

"Not while I'm working. But contact me another time, and we'll see what we can do. Now let your head relax." She continued the stroking her hands from his shoulders, up his neck, and to the back of his skull, flipping his hair out of the way each time.

The smile this time exposed his pointed white teeth. Dragons could not hide their eyes, or their teeth. It was a flaw of the magic that let them change shape. Or a warning to their prey.

In silence, she continued down his arms,

kneading the tight skin and digging into the muscle underneath. Each arm was treated thusly, and then she came to his hands. She loved a man's hands.

She sighed heavily and kneaded the tension out of his fingers. Tugging at each finger until they were totally relaxed and his eyes closed in bliss. Her fingers slid through his and she felt a tugging at her womb. It was not unexpected. She had been attracted to him from the start.

The liquid heat that she began generating caught her by surprise, though. His arousal had not diminished as she worked, and having that pillar beckoning her was shaking her self-control. She caught her own scent and flinched.

If she could smell her own heat, then he surely could. The satisfied smirk on his face stated as much. His eyes had flared open at the first rush of wetness that delivered her interest to him, and he was watching her massage his hands with a hunter's attention. A hunter being stroked by his prey.

The hour was up. With a relieved sigh and shaking hands, she stood and removed the oil from her skin with one of her towels. "There, all done." Over her shoulder she quipped, "Was it good for you?"

His voice was husky and far too close as he responded, "Not yet, but it will be."

"What?" She began to turn and felt a sudden rush of magic flow over her. She had no chance to defend herself and buckled under the wave of lust that followed in it's wake. Her eyes searched Decklyn's and she realized that she had been caught in his glamour. She fainted into his arms.

Chapter Three

Heat, everything was hot. Damn. He had given her a full dose of his glamour and left her sensitive to the slightest thing. Right now it was heat, and it was coming from her clit. Perhaps it had something to do with the dark head between her thighs working his tongue into the folds and petals of her sex, flicking her clit with his tongue on the upstroke, sipping at her nectar as she flowed freely.

She refused to moan, her throat was aching and air was whistling in and out of her lungs with a vengeance. She was normally vocal when she had sex, but she was damned if she would give the dragon the satisfaction.

Her fingers dug into the sheets she was lying on and her thighs flexed in reaction to his ministrations. She began to shiver and recognized that her orgasm was an instant away, so did he. He pulled away, and replaced his mouth with the erection that she had admired earlier.

Her lip was bloody where she had bit through it. And with her eyes closed, she never saw his face approaching hers, but she did feel the delicate flick of his tongue in harsh contrast to the heavy thrusts of his hips. He carefully licked the blood of her mouth.

She opened her eyes in statement and that is when it hit her. Her orgasm roared through her, and her eyes were on his when the pleasure storm hit. Her mouth opened, but she still refused to make a sound. Her body shook and spasmed around him, then slowly relaxed, one muscle at a time.

He frantically thrust into her quiescent body and shook in his own release, his head resting on her shoulder, his teeth digging lightly to her.

"You taste like the forest." It was the first sentence she had heard since she came too.

"You taste like a dragon." It was heat, musk and magic.

"But you are human as well, it is in your blood."

That irritated her. "Why are you tasting my blood?"

"Because, I have you in my power and I want to know more about you."

"You have me in your power? How?"

"Check your ankle."

The conversation had been held while his head

was on her shoulder, his cock softening within her. His weight kept her from moving.

She slowly lifted her left ankle and saw a manacle there. She tugged at it and it was attached to a chain, probably bolted to the floor.

She took a deep breath, absorbing the scents of sex, dragons, musk and the room, then sent a bolt of power through her leg to blast off the manacle. It didn't budge, but the power did fly around the room, as if seeking a home. Eventually zapping her in the right buttock.

"Ow! What the hell was that?" Her hand belatedly went to the damaged spot.

"You tried to open the lock?" His head was still in the joint between her neck and shoulder, she felt his tongue snake out to lick at the little wound he had left behind. She shivered and felt her nipples rise in response against his chest. Her skin healed as his tongue lapped at her wound, closing under the effect of his saliva. He began to swell inside her as he tasted her blood.

"Of course I did!" What did he think? That she jumped and slapped herself in the ass all the time?

"Why don't you just enjoy yourself for now?"

"Because you have me shackled to the bed?!"

A wave of lust went through her- that damned magic again. He had no qualms about throwing her into a frenzy of lust. "Is it really so bad?"

"It isn't that. I just like to be on top." She

pouted prettily and he raised his head to look her in the eye. After a long moment staring into his golden eyes, she found herself flipped through the air and she landed astride him. His hard shaft still buried to the hilt within her.

All of the air huffed out of her lungs and she shivered and gasped as another wave of magic ran through her. "That's cheating!" Her hands braced against his abdomen to keep her torso from collapsing against him.

An innocent smile was her answer. "What is?" Considering that his hands had reached up to fondle her breasts, and were devilishly working her nipples, the innocent act was taking it a little far.

"Running magic through me like that!"

His hips raised against her and she felt the deep stroke to her soul. "Oh? What ever could be wrong with it?"

"It's giving you an unfair advantage." She began to raise and lower her hips, riding him with slow, luxurious strokes.

"Ah, well, against women, I'll take any advantage that I can." As she lowered her hips with a twist and a rocking motion, he thrust upward. Hard.

She shrieked and went over the edge again, forgetting her vow not to let him hear her scream.

Her body arched against his and he held her

hips to him, letting her have the full measure of her release as he rocked her against him. As she subsided, and her dazed eyes met his, he grinned again and flipped her so that she was now beneath him, on her knees.

She mewled as he pulled out of her to reposition them, and gasped as he thrust deep once more. This time, driving for his own pleasure. She heard the harsh breathing and the sharp slapping sounds as they came together. Her body pushed back to meet his oncoming thrusts as her gasping took on a more urgent tone.

She had always had a 'hair trigger' and it didn't take her long to dance on the edge of her orgasm once again. This time he was with her, and as he began to pulse and shudder inside her, she felt his teeth digging into her shoulder once again.

The combination of pleasure and pain was too much and she screamed, trying to buck him off as her own body shivered and convulsed in a welter of confused sensations.

His weight bore her to the bed and she floated through her own mind absently. Thinking about how warm he was, and how heavy. She dozed off, only vaguely noting that he slipped out of her body and curled her against him before he nodded off as well. One hand held her hips against him, and the other cupped a breast. Wow, he was warm.

A phone was ringing. It was a cell phone. No other ring could be that annoying. The warmth went away and she looked up, frowning.

"Hello?" Decklyn was standing beside the bed, his back to her. Man, he had a great ass.

"Yes, Dominick. She's fine."

"The Az demon never showed up." He nodded to the voice on the other end of the line. "She's going to stay with me until we get this settled."

He turned and found her watching his backside. "Sure, she's right here."

He extended his hand to her, and she took the phone, winking at his smirking face.

"Hi Dad." She rolled her eyes and glared at the dragon as he started to flex for her benefit. A series of muscleman poses almost had her laughing at him, she threw a pillow at him instead.

"Hey, Walnut. How are you?"

"I'm fine. What's going on?"

"Well, you know that trouble that Alby and Imaran had with the Az demon that his ex sent after her?" He had ducked out of the way and was now weighing the pillow in his palm. He shrugged, dropped it and went into an adjoining room.

"Yeah." She was wary now. That had almost cost her cousin her life.

"It's after you."

"WHAT?!"

She heard a deep sigh, and knew that her father was trying not to hide anything from her. "Apparently the demon decided that since Alby wasn't killed, and you helped with the lamp misdirection, you had to be to blame."

"Oh, crap."

"Cathal is coming after you. It has put a hit out on you."

"Oh, crap."

"That is why I contacted Decklyn. He's willing to protect you, for a price."

"What price?"

Now her father got quiet, which was not like him. He was normally very forthright with her.

"What price, Dad?"

"He wants a child. That means a woman who isn't sensitive to dragon venom. In this case, that means you."

"So this was an elaborate charade? My going to his office and his appointment with RR? Is Bethany in on this?" Ok, she was a bit shrill, a demon was after her- she felt entitled.

"No. No, Walnut. Decklyn had his choice of ways to get to you. We just left it up to him. He thought that it might be the best way to get you alone."

She put her forehead in one hand and began to rub at the tension that was rising. "Fine, so did

you take care of my equipment and my car?"

"Yes, they are both at your house. Safe and sound."

"How is Mom taking this?"

"Not well. She has every plant in a six hundred mile radius from your location, watching for any disturbances. The second Cathal moves, the Warders will be there."

"If I'm not dead by then."

"Walnut! Don't say things like that. Decklyn is going to keep you safe. No matter what."

"Sorry, I love you Dad. Take care of yourself."

"You too, Walnut. Be safe." The line went dead and she disconnected the phone.

Stunned, she sat still against the pillows. She shifted her left leg and heard the clink of the manacle against the chain. This was not how she had planned her week to go.

Chapter Four

Decklyn had left the room during her phone conversation. She looked around and found an open door. The flushing noise gave her a good idea as to the nature of his departure.

He wandered back into the room, completely unconcerned with his nudity. Fine with her, she was never one for clothes if she could help it. She sat back against the headboard with one leg bent, the other straight in front of her.

"So, you have gallantly offered your services to assist me in avoiding the hit on me?" Her thighs were sticky with cum, the scent was thick in the room. He sat facing her on the edge of the bed.

"Well, it isn't like I wasn't offered something in return." His hand caressed the bite that he had left on her neck, a blue trace appearing under her skin. It was the venom that he had injected her with, beginning its journey through her system.

It used to be thought that a dragon's lust would kill a woman, but later it was found that it was the

venom they exuded when they tried to reproduce that did the job. To breed a dragon, the egg needed to be fortified to support the offspring. The venom acted in this manner. It ran through the mother's bloodstream and toughened the DNA in the egg, infusing it with the magic needed to support a dragon.

For a normal woman, this process had the effect of draining her, leaving her womb unable to support life after the dragonet had been born. She would only have the one child.

Magical creatures were better able to tolerate the venom and the effect on their eggs. Decklyn had probably jumped at the chance to have a magical female handed to him.

"You know that he had no right to offer me to you?" She had all the power of the modern woman's fury at her disposal. No one had the right to hand her off.

"Not by dragon standards. The father has the right to arrange the mating of any of his female offspring."

"I am not a dragon."

He was stroking her hair now, untangling it absently. "No, but your great-great-grandfather was. Livonath was the one who gave me the rights to you. Your father only gave me the information that I needed to keep you safe."

"Livonath gave his blessing? When?"

"Thirty years ago, when you were born."

That impressed her, a little. "And you waited this long? Wow, I hate to wait for microwave popcorn."

"Arranged matings are the dragon way. You are worth every second that I waited." His golden eyes were glowing violently again. She knew what that meant.

"Oh, no, mister. Not until I clean up." She put one hand out and slapped it over his mouth as he started to bring his head to hers. She felt his lips twitch against her palm and smiled. "I am sticking to myself, and everything else here."

"Did you know that your cum tastes like maple syrup?" His eyes were dancing as he mumbled that observation against her hand.

"Yes, I did." She stood on wobbly legs. "Now you can change the sheets, so that I am no longer the victim of the wet spot, and I am taking a shower."

She walked and noted the long coil of chain under the bed. "Will it reach?"

"It should, but I've never actually tested it." That made her feel better for some reason. Jealousy? Nah.

She couldn't close the door with the chain there, but it did reach into the shower. First, she used the rest of the facilities, and in the time-honored tradition, he had left the seat up. *Men. Lots of fun,*

but hard to housebreak.

The shower felt fantastic, the hot water pounding on her stiff muscles. She stretched as best she could in the shower stall, soaping everything and wincing at the soreness between her thighs. It had been a while since her muscles had had a workout like that. She had to leave the shower door open a crack as well, damn that chain.

So, Livonath had offered his granddaughter to Decklyn. She wondered absently what he must have paid for the privilege of getting her pregnant. Dragon compatible females didn't come cheap. Especially ones who had the bloodlines to start with.

She used his shampoo, noting that he had conditioner as well, a rarity in a guy. Her hair hung to well below her shoulders, and she normally kept it bound in a braid. The damned stuff was so thin that the slightest wind would wrap it around and throw it into the air. She hoped that he had a brush.

As she rinsed off her hair, she moved to the edge of the shower, blinking water out of her eyes and groping for a towel. A strong warm hand brought it to her, and she laughed in surprise at the greedy look that Decklyn was giving her wet, slick form.

She wrapped the towel around her, tucking it in

over her breasts and reached for another to dry her hair with. "Hands off mister. Unless you're planning on doing my hair."

She clanked past him with her head held high. The rustle of the chain on the floor setting a weird beat as she moved.

Anryn smiled at the freshly made bed, and the tray of crackers and cheese that he prepared. Or that she thought he prepared. A second tray of fruits floated in on ghostly hands and she realized that he had a spirit servant.

"So, did you make the bed? Or did your flying buddy here do it?" She took a seat in one of the comfy chairs in the corner near the window, and began to dry her hair with brisk movements.

"Jeeves is a great butler, but he got the food. I made the bed." And he was lounging on it with an invitation in his eyes. She ignored him. His golden skin and mouthwatering erection was difficult to ignore, but she wanted some answers.

"What did you give to Livonath for his descendant?"

"Mining rights to a small mine in Arizona." His knee was waving as he watched her struggle with her hair. "The brush is in that drawer." Decklyn jerked his head over to the dressing table near the window.

"Thanks. Did you approach him? Or did he approach you?" After opening two other drawers,

she found the brush.

"I approached him. I had known your father for some time, and figured that any daughter of his would be exceptional. Livonath was not known to treat his women folk well, so I thought it best that I step in as soon as possible."

"Here is the other question, why did you wait thirty years to come get me? And why the elaborate charade?" She struggled with the brush, it was a little too large for her hand.

"This modern world is a little more complicated. I wanted to make sure that I was ready to support a family in the appropriate, modern manner."

She was wrestling the brush through the tangled tresses and at his sentence, she froze. Laughter bubbled out of her in waves. She put the brush down, and hooted with mirth. That was too funny.

In an era where a growing percentage of children did not even know their fathers, he was worried about spending time and money on children who did not even exist yet. Dragons were obsessive parents for the most part, Livonath being the exception. He had spread his seed in as many women as he could, leaving his bastards to starve or survive on their own. Like her great-grandmother, Eisha.

As the tears of laughter faded, she looked over

at the serious and protective dragon that was laying claim to all of her offspring. He would probably make a great father, but a tyrant of a husband.

Whoa. Where the hell did that come from? She peered over at him through squinted eyes. He was wearing that same innocent look as he had when he had pumped enough magic through her to light up a small city. He was using his damned talents on her again. Either that, or they had started bonding. She shuddered slightly, that would be bad.

"Stop that." Anryn was scowling now. Her earlier laughter forgotten. "Stop using glamour on me. It's tacky."

"Glamour? What glamour?" The innocence was in full bloom now. He could have posed for the Renaissance painting of an angel.

She scowled harder. "The one that is telling me what a wonderful father you would make."

"But it's true. And you missed part of it."

"I don't doubt it, and what part exactly?" Now it was her turn to be all innocence. She glanced into the dressing table mirror and winced. She looked like a wind-blown whore. Her eyes were wide, lips bruised and her hair was still half-tangled. The towel only covered the lower half of her breasts, the upper cleavage was a little inviting.

"The part about me being a good husband. I will be, you know." He stood and began to approach her. Lifting her from her chair, he held her and sat back down with her in his lap. "Give me the brush."

Mutely, she did so. He continued his explanation. "I have been working these thirty years to establish myself in the human community as a venture capitalist. It has been my every effort to create a human persona with a steady income and a sterling reputation in the business community."

"First, I had to get birth records, then set up an imaginary family that would be able to inherit my fortune as I aged. The transfer from my original persona to Decklyn Ringler occurred five years ago. Then all I had to do was wait for you."

She was astonished. There was more to being a magical creature leaving Realm than she had thought. "Me? Why did you wait?"

"You seemed to be having so much fun with your friends and family that I didn't want to intrude." His hands kept brushing in long slow strokes, he had made short work of the tangles and was now only dragging the brush through to sooth her. Like an upset cat.

"You do know that whatever we do end up as, I am not leaving my family, or friends."

At this he scowled, "Dragons are solitary by

nature."

She crossed her arms over her chest, "Tough. I'm not." Something moved out of the corner of her eye. She turned her head just in time to catch a glimpse of something in the mirror.

"Uh, Decklyn? Are you sure that you are up to taking on Cathal?"

"Who?" He was a little distracted by the silk of her hair. Even with his shampoo, it smelled distinctly like her.

"The Az demon."

"Yes, why?"

"Because, it's watching us from the mirror right now!" She darted out of his grasp and jumped for the door, only to be brought up short by the shackle on her leg. She had made it into the hall outside the master suite and fallen flat on her face. Twenty feet was her maximum distance it seemed.

"Calm down Anryn. It can't get through the wards." He had moved to put himself between her and the mirror.

"It did at the Lakin Estate. Blasted right through them!" She began to fire magic at the shackle in her panic, waves of prickling pain spread through her as she found herself unable to stop. The hysteric fear of being chained like bait filled her and she screamed as the pain flowed over her, taking her into darkness.

Chapter Five

“**W**alnut. Walnut, wake up.” Her mother’s voice was calling her. It’s gentle cadence pouring over her in a soothing wave.

She was in her own bed, in her own home. “I don’t want to go to school!” She rolled over and buried her face in the pillows. Laughter erupted in the room around her. Two men and her mother.

“Walnut, you don’t have to go to school, but you do have to get up. Decklyn is worried about you.”

“Decklyn who?” She pouted and pulled herself upright, noting the white nightgown that her father must have insisted on. She looked into the dragon’s stricken face and sighed. “Come here Deck.”

He sat next to her, apologies in his eyes, and she quickly drew his head down to kiss him. “It’s okay. I am assuming that the demon didn’t get me?”

“No, but you were right. Cathal did break

through the wards. It will take him a while to rebuild his energy, so your parents thought that you would be more comfortable in your own home."

She looked closely at him, he was wearing a buttoned shirt and trousers again, and she thought she could smell... "Did he hurt you?" It was blood. Decklyn's blood. Tiny pin pricks had seeped through the shirt.

"Nothing that I haven't had done to me before. I'm far more worried about you. You almost drained yourself while fighting the shackle." He caressed her hair, sifting the black silk through his fingers.

"I panicked." She blushed.

He smiled, "I noticed."

"I wasn't expecting the attack, and then I couldn't defend myself, or get away. I freaked."

"It's alright, under the circumstances I should never have confined you. Even if it is dragon tradition. At least until this matter was finished."

They locked eyes and reached an understanding. She read a question in his eyes. "What? What do you want to know?"

He leaned in and whispered in her ear, "Why do your parents call you Walnut?"

"Because she fell out of trees and never broke." Dominick's voice was right beside them and their heads turned as one to look at him. "If you two are

finished, we need to make a plan for the next attack by the Az."

"I always thought it was because my head was shaped funny, huh. Who knew?" Anryn shrugged and looked back to Decklyn. "Shall we?"

"Indeed." He scooped her up and took her out of the bedroom and through her hallways to the living room.

"Why did you decide on my house?" He set himself down on the couch with her in his lap, the white nightgown flowing virginally around her.

She couldn't be sure if he was blushing or not, but he looked embarrassed. "Yours is the best warded house in the state. Nothing is getting in here."

Oh, right. She had put all of her weekends alone into wards on her property. "Ah, well. Everybody needs a hobby."

"Walnut, how many layers do you have on this house?" Her mother settled in next to them, her scent like flowers in the rain. Anryn breathed deeply and was instantly calm. It was amazing what the familiar scent of your mother could do for you.

"Around forty-seven. Maybe a few more. Why?" She looked absently around her home. All was in order. The flowers in the window were blooming, the plants were lush. Her backyard was wild and untamed, the tree house visible from

where they sat.

"Do you see what I mean?" Dominick looked from his daughter to her lover. A lifetime of living with a driven female in his eyes.

Decklyn started to move underneath her, and she felt his laughter, "Yes, I am beginning to see."

"Okay, enough. Lets talk strategy." She crossed her arms across her chest and glared at both of the men, quite sure that she knew what they were talking about. So she was a tad obsessive, so what?

"Fine. Let me get the tea." Mylawith rose gracefully and ran around the kitchen for a few moments. She returned with a full tea service, cups and saucers on a tray.

Mylawith loved tea, and as she served them, it showed in her graceful and economical movements. The heady scent of the wild berry blend filled the room, and Anryn smiled at the memories of childhood that it evoked. As the tart sweetness rolled across her tongue, she was suddenly five again and talking about her first day of school.

When everyone had a cup of tea in their hands, she sat back. "Alright. I think that after this one attempt at a frontal assault, Cathal is going to try a new strategy."

"Or an old one." Anryn sipped delicately at the tea, then took the rest of the cup in one heated gulp. She had never achieved her mother's grace

and style. She had dropped more cups than she could count.

"What do you mean?" Decklyn was just as serious as her parents. Everyone was now looking at her.

"When he attacked Albina's he made a deal with a human. I think he might try it again." She gave her mother the empty tea cup, and she suffered Mylawith's reproachful glance. A lady was supposed to sip her tea. That is what the books had said.

When Mylawith married Dominick, she studied human etiquette and society so that she would fit in. The glamour that she used in public made her appear to be Mediterranean; she was expected to behave like a lady.

She had tried to raise her daughter the same way, but her little Walnut would never do anything with delicacy and grace. It was always full steam ahead.

"Deck, do you have any humans that he may use?"

"Do I have any humans? No." He did look puzzled.

Anryn decided to let him in on something. "Your house is warded right?"

"Yes."

"Then how did he find me? No one knew where I was except you and Dad." A dawning

sense of horror was crossing Decklyn's face.

"Your receptionist, right? You told her that you would be at home for a few days. And she connected my appearance with your disappearance." She patted his shoulder to comfort him. "I thought I smelled demon on her, but I thought I was imagining things."

"Ariane couldn't be the one. She is totally professional." He was sputtering now. Anryn got stiffly to her feet and faced him.

"If it wasn't her, then come up with someone else who knows where you were. My father was behind his own set of wards and couldn't have been the one. And my mother is a dryad, she is immune to demonic influence." She began to stretch, her body rolling from one pose to another.

"I'm going to go climb. I need to think." She walked to the back door and went out into the afternoon sun.

Decklyn was stunned. He had never thought that *he* could have brought the danger to her. As she crossed the backyard, she stripped off the nightgown and he noted that her parents were sitting quietly, their eyes fixed and looking within. Telepathy. Damn. He wondered if he and Anryn would develop the same ability. There were some signs already, he felt her panic back at his home, and her gentle acceptance of him when she woke. That had to be something.

He followed Anryn to the yard and watched her climb the tree. She wasn't a creature of the woods, but she was at home there. Her muscles stretched and grew taut as she pulled her body up the tree. She was fifty feet in the air when she reached her tree house. She dangled her legs off the porch and stared into the sunset. He wanted to leave her to her reverie, but more than that, he wanted to join her.

There was no way that he was climbing that tree. So that left one option. Shedding his shirt, exposing the burn marks to the fading light, he shifted into his winged human form. The warrior shape. In this form, he could speak, fight, fly, and mate.

Bending his knees, he pushed off and shoved down with his wings and a burst of magic. He circled the tree slowly, climbing ever higher, until he was engaged in a shaky hover near Anryn.

She had watched his ascent with bemusement. This was new. Although she had seen several dragons in her lifetime, this was the first time she had seen one in flight. He was gorgeous. His skin was now a rich, navy blue. His eyes a startling contrast, yellow against the blue. His wings were enormous, the heavy strokes needed to keep him in flight blasting her with gusts of wind.

"For winds sake, sit down!" She moved aside and he landed next to her. She could see the marks

that the demon had left, and winced at the healing scabs on his dark skin.

"This is quite the tree house."

"It has three bedrooms, I used to invite Ruana and Albina to camp out. When I moved from my parents' place, they said I could take it with me."

That puzzled him. "But the tree is grown through it. How did you move just the house?"

"We didn't. This is my tree. It has seven hundred wards on it. My father started on them the day I was born. It walked here." She leaned back and the leaves rustled in contentment.

"What will it do when you come to live with me?"

"If you have a safe place for it, it will walk to us."

"Us?"

"Yeah, us." She stroked her hand up his thigh, kneading at the muscles as she went.

White pointed teeth gleamed in the dark face and his eyes danced with glee. "That reminds me. I owe you a massage."

Faster than she could move, he had her up in his arms and was walking into the tree house. He looked around the comfortable living room, and walked into the first open doorway. The bedroom. Score!

"Do you have any oil around here?"

"None that you are getting your hands on

mister." He had dropped her onto her belly on the small double bed. It was only a mattress on a frame on the floor, but it would do. She craned her head around and tried to keep him in her sights. No use. He found her stash.

"Well, well. What have we here?" He lifted a box out of the chest at the end of the bed.

She buried her face in the covers and tried not to hear Decklyn rummaging through her collection of sex toys.

Chapter Six

Judging by the sound of bees behind her, he had found her vibrator. He was humming softly to himself as he planned his attack. He switched the toy off and continued to sort through her dildos, clips, gels and lubes.

"Before I start with your massage, are you sure that this place is completely warded against attack? Not that it will stop me, but it might keep me from getting lost in the moment."

"I would love to lie, but I will know if anything even comes on the property."

Delight was heavy in his tone, "Oh, someone will definitely cum on this property, but not until I say so."

"Oh, hells." Her head was under a pillow now. She was trying to pretend that he wasn't blocking her exit from the room in her tree house. Despite her trepidation, she had a throbbing in her clit. Her body would love whatever he chose to do, and the moisture that she was producing was

ample proof. He hadn't even touched her yet and she was almost ready to cum.

She heard the click of a bottle, and the snorting noise that always accompanied the lube leaving the container. She didn't feel anything.

With two strong hands moving as one, he started a kneading motion on her shoulders without any warning. She almost jumped out of the bed in surprise. His thumbs ran a strong line down her spine and she arched and purred in reaction. Based on the smell, it was one of her 'heat on contact' oils.

"You are a vocal thing aren't you? Funny. I hadn't realized. You were so quiet the first time, I hardly knew you were breathing." He was enjoying this. Her body throbbed where he touched her and the oil kept the sensation repeating.

"Mff..." Anryn squirmed under his hands, the feel of the oil on his hands building her arousal until she couldn't stand it anymore. Then he was gone.

"Hey! What the hell? Yikes!" She had begun to rise from the bed in protest to his absence and suddenly she felt something cold and thick on her ass. She only had one toy designed for that and she had bought it on a self-dare. She had used it once and then promptly tried to forget that she bought it.

Sure enough, with delicate and deliberate insistence, the butt plug was slowly creeping into her ass. "Shh, just relax and push against it. It won't hurt a bit."

She took a deep breath and forced herself to relax. The plug slid home and she whimpered in discomfort. Her ass clenched and relaxed against the toy, trying to both pull it deeper and expel it.

Decklyn flipped her onto her back and looked at her discomfited face. "Aw, doesn't it feel good?"

"Not particularly. No."

"Then why do you have it?"

"It was an experiment. It failed."

"Maybe you just didn't do it right." He spread her thighs wide and carefully inspected the arrangement between them. Her pubic hair was trimmed neatly in a triangle that left her inner and outer labia bare. He could clearly see the anal plug base where it was resting and noted the sign of juice that was leaking from within her channel and following gravity's trail.

A light touch from his finger and her inner lips fell open, exposing deep green petals around a pink bud. Her clit was standing at attention and as he watched another tiny trickle of her juices leaked out and trickled down to her ass. So, she didn't like the plug. But it seemed her body did. Hmm.

He continued her massage by oiling his hands and massaging her breasts. The steady motion of his hands had her arching and purring again. He moved his hands across her belly and to her thighs, then changed his focus.

He picked up one of the smaller vibrators and played it gently along the open slit. His composure buckled and he reached out with two fingers to taste her. Sweetness. Just like maple syrup."

"Taste yourself."

"What?"

He took her hand and used his to glide it down her body. To her flowering sex. She took over, dipping one, then two fingers into her channel and bringing them out to circle around her clit. Her fingers stayed hard and flat as they circled it, then she drew her fingers to her mouth and licked delicately at the slick juice that they were coated with.

His cock nearly exploded. His skin flushed from blue to black with lust. He took a calming breath and started again.

Two of his fingers slid into her, gently moving in and out of her, curling them upward, searching for the g-spot. When her hips arched and her eyes fluttered, he knew he was on the right track. He stroked against the spot with a rapid motion, his fingers using her lubrication to ease the strokes.

She started to shake and make that mewling noise that he loved to hear, and then she squeaked and came. It was a shivering orgasm, not a bucking one. Her whole body shivered for a few long seconds, then relaxed.

He started again. Leaving the plug in place in her pert little ass, he began to suck on her nipples. First the left, then the right, and as soon as both mounds of olive flesh were tight with arousal, he brought out the clamps.

She winced as the first one clipped onto her nipple, then again as the second one arrived in place. She had them set for a comfortable pain. Light compression without loss of blood flow. Her favorite setting. However, since he had kneaded, chewed and sucked on them, they were a little more swollen than normal, which increased the sensations.

He could immediately tell that she liked the clips. Her clit shivered again to attention and her pussy began to weep with excitement. "Mmm. Progress."

His head dipped and his tongue found its way into her navel, then trailed lower licking his way down her right thigh, to the knee, then making his way up to her vagina. She was moaning and sighing in a relaxed arousal that he had generated. She bit at her lip in her distraction and tangled her hands in hair.

She simply drew her fingers through the thick strands of his hair as he teased her flesh with his tongue lapping up the juices as they flowed from her. Sweet, so sweet. She could feed a humming bird out of her pussy if she wanted to.

He withdrew his ministrations for a moment, and just watched. Her hips were shifting in their own rhythm. Her breasts heaving and shoulders shaking at the pressure of the nipple clamps. She may not prefer the anal plug, but it did work for her.

He slowly crawled up her body, kissing his way as he went, finding a spot below her navel that made her moan, and almost made her cum. Sweat was coating her body and she was sighing and moaning almost constantly now. He continued up to her neck, and the head of his desperate cock was nudging for entrance between her slick petals. He slid in to the hilt in one long motion as he reached her neck and jaw.

She began to shake the instant he started to thrust, his cock pressing against the anal plug through her delicate skin, her body completely sensitized to his touch. He picked up the thrusts and lifted her hips to drive deeply into her to get his own release in her sweet womb. Her orgasmic shocks burst through her with every pulse of his cock past her g-spot. She screamed and then stopped, her eyes fluttering shut.

He was amazed at her sudden silence, only to realize that his sex companion was asleep.

Unable to stop, he pushed his hips into hers and felt his cock spurt it's payload inside her. Even asleep, she grunted as he came inside her.

She awoke to silence. Then she heard him breathing. The chirping of birds alerted her to the dawn that had started without them. *Damn, I slept all night!*

She sat up and checked. Oh, thank gods, he had removed the plug and the clips. She was so going to trash that plug. Although, she did go off like a rocket with it inside her. Maybe she wouldn't destroy it quite yet.

She stretched and looked at her companion. He was in full human now. She shook him awake, and said, "We have to finish meeting with my parents. I have an idea."

He shrugged "Ok, how do we get down."

"Oh that's easy. There is a lift on the other side of the tree. You must have missed it last night." Her smile was angelic. She thought about the way that the light came in through the window and danced across his skin.

He smiled, *"Thank you. You look amazing this morning as well."*

She looked at him with her mouth hanging open, *"You heard that? Oh, crap."* She looked at him in dawning horror, she could distinctly hear him

in her mind.

"Yep. I think we are bonding." He looked terribly smug, as if this had been part of his plan all along.

"Oh, crap." She buried her head in her hands and shook herself. This was so not the way she had thought her week would go. Developing a mental bond with Decklyn was not on her list.

She showed him the lift, and let him do the muscle work to haul the basket up the tree. They wandered across the yard and she stopped and put the nightgown back on, for her father's comfort. Decklyn took her hand and led her into the house, then started the coffee.

Her parents were asleep in her bed, so she bounded in and jumped on the end of it. "Wake up. I've figured it out."

They sat up blinking sleep from their eyes. Even after over thirty years together, her mother and father still held each other as they slept. She only hoped that she and Deck would be as happy.

Whoa. Where did that thought come from? With a final bounce on the bed, she left them to their waking.

She got breakfast ready. Fruit for her mom, and eggs, sausage and bacon for the guys and herself. Mom had always despaired of her vegetarianism. She had given birth to an omnivore, and there were no two ways about it.

As they all gathered for the meal, Anryn

dropped her little bombshell. "We'll need to use me as bait. I'll go into Deck's office after work and make sure that she calls the demon to come and kill me. It's the only way to get it over with quickly." She gnawed on a sausage and kept her eyes on the dragon. He seemed as upset with the solution as her parents were, but he gave in.

"It's stupid, risky and idiotic. But it will work. Az demons don't have the longest attention span. They don't have any patience. He'll jump at the first chance to kill her."

"Will you promise me, that you will not let anything happen to my little girl?" Dominick was somber.

Mylawith's green eyes were flashing. "Yes, if anything happens to her, only the wastes will be hospitable to you. Nowhere that has anything green and growing will accept you."

"I hereby swear, that I will allow no harm to come to Anryn Warder. Your daughter and my mate." He bit his finger and bled on the table. A burst of magic and the blood exploded. "That will be my fate should I fail to protect her."

"Wow, folks. That is kind of serious isn't it? I mean, he didn't need to make a blood oath for it."

"This is a serious matter." Her father merely looked at Decklyn in satisfaction.

She shuddered and hoped for Decklyn's sake that she came out of this in one piece. "Fine, now

for phase one: Calling Ariane and telling her you will come to work late, then when you get in, you will be expecting a guest to pick you up at seven."

"What's phase two?"

"I find a slutty outfit that will tick her off, and make her summon the demon while I am there."

"Oh, I'll help with that." Dominick rolled his eyes at his wife's outburst, but she was good at fashion, even the slutty kind.

Six hours later Decklyn had gone to work, scowling the whole way. Five hours after that, she was ready to enact phase three. Set off the secretary. Easy. She took a deep breath as the door to the elevator opened and she saw her nemesis at her post.

Chapter Seven

“What’s the matter Ariane? Didn’t expect to see me again?” She sauntered forward, hips swinging, breasts barely bound by a delicate wisp of a bra that only supported her by a stretching of the term support. She had left her hair loose, the better to confound her enemy. The black silk hung heavily down her back and almost reached her butt. She knew she looked good.

Ariane looked appalled.

She plastered her best sex-kitten grin on her face and parked her breasts on the top of Ariane’s computer. “Please let Decks know that I’m here, okay?”

“Decks?”

“Oh, sorry.” She let out a cutesy giggle. “I mean Decklyn Ringler. Could you let him know that Anryn Warder is here?”

Ariane looked like she wanted to punch someone. Namely Anryn. “Just have a seat. Please.”

She smiled brightly at the receptionist and took a seat, crossing her legs and exposing her thighs to all and sundry. Her skirt rode up and she opened her purse to touch up her makeup.

"Mr. Ringler, there is a *person* here to see you." Her voice could have frozen steel. The scent of demon was rising hard. The faster that she got irritated, the faster she would summon Cathal.

"He'll be with you in a moment. Please excuse me."

"She's left me alone, you had better get out here."

"On my way. Try and keep a low profile."

She looked aimlessly around the room, and only then noticed that the damned doors to the elevator were mirrored. "Oh, crap."

She backed against the solid wall in the center of the hub and watched the flame and smoke eyes of the demon come through the mirror, attached to a very large and scary body. Twelve feet of fang and scale of a blood red hue were approaching her with a deadly leer in his eyes.

"Cathal, I presume?"

His claws were flexing in a preliminary practice of rending her flesh. "You cost me my reputation, bitch."

"Nope. You screwed up Cathal. Everybody knows that you can't hold a djinn in a glass vessel." She rolled her eyes in exacerbatation. "How dumb can you be?"

“Die bitch!” Saliva flew from his mouth and he charged.

She cowered against the wall and pulled her magic into a column of protection. It wouldn’t last long, but it might buy her some time. She had no time to pull up a full ward.

She ducked under his claws and rolled out from under his reach. She flipped off her shoes and ducked his second charge as well. His third scored her skin and she shrieked as he cut through the upper portion of her thigh. It continued to burn after he had been pulled from her cringing body by a roaring dragon.

“Holy winds!” It was a breath of amazement. In the room before her was a fully formed dragon. Navy blue scales were glowing in the lights thrown by the office fixtures. He was crouched tightly with his wings folded against his back and was munching the demon in his jaws.

Cathal was screaming. But soon his screams died as his limbs and body parted company. Anryn watched in horrified amazement. It took a while for him to consume the demon, apparently they were really chewy.

The dragon finished eating the traces of Cathal and looked over at his mate.

“Decklyn? Wow. You look great.” The enormous head nuzzled her, leaving demon blood on her blouse and skirt. “Eww.” His tongue

flicked out and trailed over the claw marks that the demon had left behind. They began to close immediately.

"Thanks. How are you going to get out of here? I don't think you'll fit in the elevator."

"Don't worry, I have a special exit for just such an occasion." He shook his head in amusement. It almost bowled her over.

"Care for a ride?" He dropped his head and licked his muzzle in anticipation. He knew something that she didn't. *"Hop on."*

Shrugging in resignation, she hopped up onto his foreleg, then had to hike her skirt up to her hips to put one thigh on either side of his neck. The ridge of his neck rubbed her between her thighs and she felt her panties growing damp as he began to walk to one of the transparent walls.

"Oh, you are so evil. You knew about this." He refused to comment and let out a snort as he tripped a switch with one claw, and the wall swung open, letting in the evening air. His steady motion through the hallways was beginning to have the effect that he had anticipated.

"Hang on Anryn, don't let go!" With that he launched himself out of the window and opened his wings to glide across the cityscape. She was too busy hanging on for dear life as the ground dipped and swayed as he began to pump his wings in powerful strokes. The heavy beats lifted

them away from the earth and into the stars as she tried to keep her balance.

Having achieved his preferred altitude, Decklyn began to glide forward, only beating his wings to keep them high above the city below. *"Open your eyes Anryn. See what I see."*

She opened them and peeked. It was amazing.

The city below was spotted with lights, fireflies on a black sea. The landscape tumbled below them in a cloak of darkness and the stars glittered and gleamed, lighting their way home. She was seeing the night through his eyes, and it was beautiful.

The air smelled of forests and honey, a fresh scent. Under it all, she could smell herself as he breathed her in. She let him see himself as she did for a moment, and he almost fell out of flight.

She shrieked and clutched at the neck ridge as he dropped while trying to look at her. *"Watch where you're flying!"*

"How can I, when I know that you find me beautiful."

"I'll find you more beautiful if we land! I promise." In her mind, she heard him laugh and he wheeled into a turn, then began the trip home in earnest.

She eventually relaxed enough to unclench her thighs and the pleasurable sensations began all over again. The constant rubbing against her clit with every stroke of his wings was driving her nuts, and her breath came harder with every wing

beat. Sparks began to fly behind her eyes and she came, shuddering and moaning with the burst of sensation.

As she fought to regain her breath, she could have sworn that she heard him chuckle. *"There is nothing more unattractive than a smug dragon you know."*

"Me? Smug? That was a cough."

"Liar."

His eyes narrowed in laughter and she clutched him again as he began to descend. A slow spiral started and she could make out his house and yard in the dimness of the night. *"Your house, huh?"*

"The danger is over, and I have Jeeves to wait on your hand and foot."

"Hmm, you have a point. Let's go home."

"Your wish is my command." His wings beat hard as he lowered his legs to land, keeping his neck up as he touched down.

Now that the wind wasn't rushing past her ears she could speak out loud again. "Hey, that is Imaran's line."

"If he ever offers to grant your wishes, I'll eat him." He was serious. His head swiveled around to look at her in a solemn manner.

"Do you eat all your enemies? Or do you save that for special occasions."

"I used to hunt werewolves. They were good. Taste like chicken."

She looked at him in horror. One of her cousins was a werewolf. Sure she couldn't change shape, but where would Decklyn draw the line.

"Relax Anryn. I don't eat family or friends. I have standards."

She skipped talking out loud; it was too tiring trying to meet his eyes as she spoke to him. Her neck wasn't up to it. She leaned her head against his scales. *"Well, that's comforting. You had me worried."*

She thought of something that had slipped her mind. *"What happened to Ariane? She didn't appear after she summoned Cathal."*

"She's keeping him company."

Anryn felt ill, *"You mean you ate her?"*

"When she came in to distract me, she spilled her little plot. She hated you and was making plans for the next demon. She was going to conjure a Druj next. I couldn't let her live."

"Will you get in to trouble?"

"No, of course not. The dragon council will do a memory wipe as soon as I contact them. Ariane will become a traffic accident, with no body."

"Have they had to do this type of thing for you before?"

"Only since the 'information age'. What a pain in the ass."

"So when are you going to change back to bipedal form so I can jump you?"

"In the morning. It takes a while to digest a demon."

They are kind of chewy."

"Ew."

"Go in to bed. I'll be out here all night." His muzzle nudged at her gently, shoving her toward the house.

"No. I am staying out here with you. Curl up, and I'll snuggle in. You are warm enough to keep me snug for days."

"Alright." He shifted and wrapped his tail around and tucked his head on his rear leg. *"C'mon in, Sweetness."*

She climbed in over his limbs and snuggled down as he draped one wing across her to keep her warm. His heartbeat was so soothing that she was sleeping only a few minutes later. His muzzle touched her gently, and his tongue flicked out to taste her skin.

It would be worth a thousand battles to have her curled against him in this trusting manner again. Even knowing that he had eaten his receptionist, she still stayed the night with him. Whether or not she knew it, she was his forever, and he had just the way to keep tabs on her.

Chapter Eight

The next day dawned bright and clear. Decklyn woke before Anryn and slowly changed his shape to human. She blinked the sleep away as she found herself lying in the back yard and on top of his naked, human form. Her clothing was gone. Weird. She looked over and saw them in a pile of fabric and demon blood, next to her high heeled shoes. She sighed as she came to grips with the fact that the clothes were ruined. The next time that Decklyn ate someone, she wasn't getting near him until he cleaned up.

She moved slowly, sliding her knees to either side of his hips, cradling his erection against her pussy. She rocked her hips against him, a lazy shifting that soon had his body surging for penetration. Because of her angle, he couldn't make the thrust into her channel and was being tortured by the slow writhing of her body against him.

His mouth tightened and he flipped their

positions, her thighs spread wide, and the head of his cock pushing against her. He reached to trace her moist slit with one finger as his mouth moved to suckle her breast with savage ferocity.

He slid one finger into her, then two. She shuddered and shivered against him, all traces of sleep erased.

"Oh, winds! Just fuck me already Deck!"

He froze. That was not something that he had had on his list of possible happenings. "What exactly do you want?" His tone was sly.

She grabbed his chestnut hair and hauled him up to meet her eyes and told him graphically and concisely. "I want you to take your hard, throbbing cock and put it in my empty, aching cunt and fuck me senseless."

"I want you to pound into me as hard as you can and give me all that I can take. And when you cum inside me, I want you to start all over again." She smiled and took his mouth in a voracious kiss that almost made him cream right there. When she relaxed her grip and let him go she smiled with her lips swollen and moist. "Tag, you're it."

Shaking with lust, he pushed into her. Her head fell back as his lips found her neck and he bit down as his hips began to thrust his cock deeper and deeper into her with every stroke. She moaned as he pumped into her, sighing with every deep stroke and groaning as he pulled out.

The pain from his teeth was rapidly turning into pleasure as the venom triggered a euphoric rush that raised her pleasure threshold until she thought she would fly apart before she came.

His thumb grazed across her clit with relentless pressure and she mewled and caught her breath as the coil tightened even more. "Deck, please."

His cock seemed to swell inside her, filling her as never before. He was huge, and the pressure made her feel fuller than ever before. With one more savage thrust, she came. The sparks flew behind her eyes and she squealed in her release.

The next thing she felt was a warm washcloth being stroked over her well-used flesh. She was in Decklyn's bed, but this time there was no shackle on her leg. Smart dragon.

Her thighs were being held apart by his knees as he cleaned the last traces of his seed from her skin. "Did I faint?"

His smile said it all. "Yep. Shrieked like a banshee too."

"Didn't I say that no one likes a smug dragon?"

"Yeah, but you still love one."

She froze. Her eyes searched his face, looking for any traces of mockery. "Yes, I do."

"You admit it. Good. I have something for you." He reached over her to the drawer beside the bed.

"If it's a condom, you're a little late."

He drew back a jewelry box and gave it to her, while on his knees between her thighs.

"This is for the mate that I choose for life. I had it made over a century ago, and never found a woman that I wanted to give it to." He watched her hold the box carefully. "Until now. Open it."

She slowly opened the box, and inside was a necklace made of navy blue opal. Or, that is what it looked like at first glance. It was a choker made of dragon scales set in platinum.

"Is this?"

"Yes."

"But these scales are tiny. Your scales are much larger." Her hands shook as she drew the choker out of the satin nest. She flicked her hair aside and fought to join the clasp.

"Let me." He moved to kneel behind her and fixed the choker into place. "Those are my scales. They are from my member. They don't grow back."

"Your member...?" She looked down at his penis, and there, where she had never thought to look were tiny scars. "You would have had to have done it while in full form."

"Yes."

"It must have hurt like hell."

"Well, it is a necklace to mark my life mate. From the moment that I put it on her, my lifespan will be linked to hers. And hers to mine." Their

was a tiny snick and magic flowered around her.

A blossoming feeling of rightness ran through her. He was the one. The only one from now until she stopped drawing breath.

"Did I? Did you? Did we just...?" She was giddy with the magic, just like the first time.

He held her hands in his and caressed her palms with his thumbs. "Yes. We just did."

Her head fell forward, and their foreheads met. For long moments they simply sat still, letting the magic flow between them. "This has been one helluva week."

Chapter Nine

The day of Albina's wedding

“Decklyn, you’re going to have to come with me, or let me out. Albina’s wedding is in two hours and I am going to be there. With or without you.” Anryn stood and tapped her bare foot against the carpet. Decklyn was lounging in bed, glaring at her.

“You’re pregnant, and not going anywhere without me.”

“Then you’d better get dressed and get your ass moving, buddy. I am going to that wedding.” She marched into the shower, scowling at the reflection of the blue tracery around her neck, just below the choker. The venom in his bite had found an eager recipient in her body, and she had begun to ‘show’ a week earlier. “I’m the freakin’ maid of honor!”

He tried to enter the bathroom after her, and she glared at him in irritation, locking the door

behind her. Dragons were notoriously possessive of their females when they were breeding. Decklyn was no exception. He wouldn't let her go to work, had begun corresponding his investments with his new executive assistant (a happily married harpy), and generally was taking over everything she did.

Her only comfort had been her mother, who was able to slip past the wards surrounding his estate. Mylawith had brought her junk food, trashy magazines and some of her clothes. Decklyn had found the clothes, the magazines and smelled the cheeseburger.

He then launched into a lengthy lecture on the evils of fat and constrictive clothing. As a result, Anryn had been running around naked for the last week. Now, enough was enough.

She made some calls. Delayed the wards at Morcalla's, talked to an extremely amused Albina, and made the final arrangements for the wedding in Realm. She faced the mirror and rapidly charged it for the transfer.

She heard the door to the bathroom splinter just as she crossed the threshold and as she looked back through the gateway, she saw him coming after her in fury.

She popped out of the mirror station in Realm and began to walk to the wedding tent. Astonished passersby froze in their tracks as the

naked dryad with obvious signs of a dragon's child wandered across the green fields.

Wedding guests that had arrived early and were from the groom's side, leered at her as she wandered in search of her family. The Warders and guests waved her to the Bride's tent.

"Anryn, for the love of the summer winds, get over here!" Mylawith was as surprised as her husband to see their daughter approaching them wearing nothing. She tucked her wrap around her daughter and herded her to the bride's tent, questioning her in hushed tones the whole way.

"Where the hell is Decklyn?"

"He was giving me a hard time about appearing in public, so I came without him."

"You broke his wards?"

"No. I just bent them out of shape to get my way."

"Ah, child. Where is he?" She shook her head at her daughter, then laughed. This was Anryn to a tea. Every time she didn't get her way, she just plowed on through. You had to give in eventually.

"I think he got stuck in the transition. He'll probably arrive after the ceremony."

"Or he could be right behind you, Sweetness." Anryn's back stiffened at Decklyn's voice. She carefully kept from meeting his furious gaze and stayed with her mother.

"How do you do that? How is it that where

ever I go, you are one step behind me?" She walked forward and kept her eyes on Albina's tent.

The other bridesmaids were inside and desperately trying to get all of the layers on the bride, without wrinkling the fabric. The fussy goblin supervising the process wasn't helping.

"Morcalla! Give it a rest, would you? Albina is nuts enough as it is." All eyes turned to Anryn, and kept going to Decklyn who had entered the tent behind her.

"Good gods, Anryn. You're not dressed yet." Morcalla was mortified and ran to the wardrobe on one side, gathering up armloads of fabric and approaching Anryn with the dresses. The nudity that she was currently sporting didn't faze her at all.

"Decklyn, I promise that you can punish me as much as you want, as soon as the reception is over. But, now, this is Albina's day, and I won't do anything to ruin it." She pressed herself to him, drawing his head down and mingling her breath with his. Slowly, and thoroughly he kissed her in response, letting her feel his teeth and pulling her hips into his with both hands.

There was no doubt that she would be 'punished' as soon as she let him get her alone. She could hardly wait.

"Uh, Anryn? I don't mean to wreck the moment

for you, but your guy is naked, and I am getting married in an hour." Albina was serene, but a tiny frown puckered her brow. She was a blindingly beautiful bride. The layers of fabric were each gossamer, embroidered with delicate silk stitches. There would be twenty in all, to commemorate the number of species that the Warder women had mated with. It was a traditional djinn design, but with a Warder twist.

Her hair was wound with precious stones, and gold jewelry hung on every available piece of her. The necklaces alone must have weighed over ten pounds.

"Oh, I am sorry. Albina Ophelia Warder Lakin, this is Decklyn Ringler. Dragon and pain in the ass."

"Pleased to meet you." She reached out to shake his hand. Decklyn took one hand off his mate and took the ringed fingers in his own. The heavy scent of djinn magic was all over her, and he could make out the djinn marks behind the gossamer fabric on her breast.

"Congratulations on your wedding."

"Thank you. Now can you please get out of here before my fiancé gets wind of the fact that there is a naked dragon in the bride's tent?"

For the first time since she had met him, Decklyn blushed. "You're correct, I am sorry. Is there somewhere that I could get clothing? I seem

to have forgotten to dress before charging after Anryn."

"You might want to try the other dragons."

"They won't help me. I am not exactly popular with the council." They had not been impressed with the Ariane situation. Not to mention the large bloodstain in the foyer.

"I'll handle it." Anryn walked to the flap of the tent, "Dad!"

"Yes?" Dominick appeared. His normally unflappable demeanor was a little ragged around the edges. It used to be his wife that he had to keep chasing and putting clothing on. Now his daughter was in on the action.

"Could you go to the groom's tent and get Imaran to whip up some clothes for Decklyn? We can't have him intimidating the djinn, now can we?" She carefully kept the flap over her body, not needing to traumatize her father any more than was necessary.

"Sure. C'mon Decklyn." He grabbed the other male's arm and began to lead him away. "While we're out here, I think I'll explain the details of living with a Warder woman."

"What do you know, you married a dryad?" He was sullen. It was humiliating to be led about by a warlock when his chosen mate openly defied him.

"Ah, but my sisters are Warders. It takes a certain amount of stamina to deal with them."

They were almost out of earshot now. "You see, they think that they're always right..."

Shaking her head, she turned to the group of giggling women, goblins and elves. First, she was bound to him, now he was following her nude around Realm. This was really more excitement than she had planned on when she agreed to be Albina's maid of honor.

She spread her arms in surrender. "Ok, Morcalla. Attack."

Chapter Ten

The bride was radiant, the groom was smug, and the rest of the wedding went off without a hitch. Their powers and lives were bound in front of witnesses. The groom's family was elated, and the bride's family was looking forward to the party.

The instant that the photo's were finished, developed, and distributed, the reception began.

The band was a lively group of goblins and over half of the guests flooded the floor the moment that the bride and groom had finished the first dance. Anryn winked and waved at the drummer as they band started to play. He had really known how to use those extra appendages of his.

Goblin Rulz was doing an amazing job at getting the multiple races to dance. Even the djinn women were dancing in groups on the floor. The heady beats caused even the most subdued of creatures to start moving.

Anryn was hiding from her mate and answering questions from her cousin Ruana about her sex life, and the eating habits of her dragon.

After the first rounds of giggles between the girls, it settled into something old and familiar. Anryn's parents and Ruana's had always enjoyed the family events together.

The parents were currently over at the buffet table trying to get an elf to try a deviled egg. They weren't having much luck.

Ruana suddenly turned serious. "Anryn, are you aware that the Dragon Council used to send Decklyn to purge the dragon territories of werewolves."

"He mentioned it in passing."

"He used to eat them. The wolfs that he killed." Ruana was a little concerned. She was a half werewolf, and going into heat soon. Anryn could tell, there was a flush to her cheeks and a heat to her gaze that was not normally there.

"Ah. Well he is a dragon."

"He won't eat me or dad will he? Or any of the wolves in my area?"

"Not if he wants to live to see the next millennium." She pondered for a moment. "Or ever get laid again."

"Thanks, you put my mind at ease." She sipped from the soda she had gotten from the bar. "I am just a little more emotional than usual right now."

"I know Fuzzy. You are going into heat again."

"Yeah, but this time I have to break cover and find a mate. Even for a night. I just can't keep pretending everything is normal when it isn't." There were tears in her eyes. This was by far the scariest thing she had ever had to do. Even eating Anryn's cooking wasn't this scary.

"Yeah, I know. And sometimes, you just want to get laid." They giggled and then the wolf's expression sobered.

Ruana's face let her know who was behind her. "That would be my clue. But Ruana, call me if things get ugly, okay?"

Before she could hear her cousin's response, Decklyn cut in.

"May I have this dance, my dear?" He looked good, better than good. The djinn fashions were very complementary on him. The loose trousers tucked into boots, held in place by a jeweled belt, and the open vest in a matching color opened in the front and hung to his knees.

"Wow, you look great." She took his hand and let him lead her to the dance floor. The dancers parted for them and as he took her into his arms, she sighed with satisfaction. He was a great dancer.

"As do you. Imaran assisted me. He is quite the gentleman, but I do object to the way his relatives were looking at you. The lust in the eyes of the

djinn almost drove me mad.”

“Well, then maybe you shouldn’t have hidden my clothing.” Now, it was her turn to be smug.

“Well, maybe you shouldn’t leave the house naked.”

Her mouth opened to retort and his mouth swooped down to silence her. They continued to kiss and dance until the music changed. Then they slowly pulled their heads apart and left the dance floor in silence. She had never been good at silence.

“There will be family responsibilities that I have to take on. There is no way that I am going to stop doing it. It’s part of what I am. And I want to work. I’ll be all yours on the weekends and sleep with you every night, but I like my work. And not just the warding, the massage therapy is good practice for me. Are you willing to take this on?”

“The Dragon Council representatives cornered me. Since I have repented my wild ways by mating a Warder, my status had just been elevated. I may now attend the council meetings and have a right to be a representative if I should choose to put my name in the running.”

He continued his offer. “I still don’t want you out of my sight, but I have a compromise. Open Relaxed Realms in my building. I have an extra set of offices that are not used, and you could move in there, rent free. Provided that you work on-site

only.”

“Let me think about that.” They walked in silence away from the wild dancers. A large portion was the male population of the attendees, trying to impress the Warders with their moves. A few alliances would happen tonight, some of them lasting for lifetimes.

“I have thought about it.” They were now near the woods that surrounded the meadow. She grabbed the front of his vest and dragged him off into the woods. She asked the greenery for a meadow, and one appeared before them.

“Anryn, where the hell are we going?”

“I don’t know about you my friend, but I am going down.” She dropped to her knees in front of him and tugged his trousers loose from the jeweled belt. His phallus drew free of the fabric easily. She began to caress him with her fingertips. Smiling as he responded, and his head fell back to expose his throat to the sky when her lips embraced the tip of his cock.

She sucked and flicked at the head of his cock, rubbing her tongue on the delicate underside, listening to the hiss of pleasure that her actions gave him. She cupped his balls in both hands and worked them with gentle and steady persistence.

Her mouth took him deeper, sucking and swirling her tongue around him as she dragged him to the back of her mouth, over and over again.

Finally she felt the tightening that she had worked to bring forth, and she pulled her mouth away.

He looked down at her startled. Then understanding dawned as her skirts were raised above her waist and she climbed him. His hands came down to hold her buttocks in place as her hand reached between her thighs to open her to him completely. She slid down onto his cock and, with him supporting all of her weight, began to ride him.

She loved the feel of him deep inside her and rode him faster and harder until she screamed his name and came apart in his arms. Her body was damp with perspiration, and so was his. Her delicate skirts clung to his damp body as he let her slide to the ground and waited for her to get her balance.

She smiled brightly at him. "I think it's a perfect idea. I'll tell Bethany on Monday."

He was dazed, "So this is what happens when you get your way?"

"Yep."

"You may be right more often than I thought." They returned to the big party, his arms around his mate, and his mind at peace for the first time in centuries. Warders weren't as hard to deal with as everyone said. If he had known as much, he would have been on her as soon as the Dragon Council had given him her name as his perfect

match. He could have had her under him for ten years already if he hadn't been so stubborn.

But since fate had insisted, he would accept his mate with grace, patience and enthusiasm. And be ready the next time she ran. He would follow her to the ends of the earth if necessary and through Realm every time duty called. That is what the scaled choker did. It tied them together so that he could track her anywhere.

He just hoped next time she would grab a shirt before she jumped through the portal.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Viola is a proud Winnipegger living in Manitoba, Canada. A compulsive crafter and sucker for a 'happily ever after', she spends her time avoiding anything related to housework. Her hobbies have included needlework, metalwork, henna tattoos and costume design. Oh yeah, and writing. She loves to write. A rabid sci-fi buff and nerd to the core. www.violagrace.com