



*A Fairy
Special Gift*
GIA DAWN

SANDHAIN publishing, Ltd.

eBooks are *not* transferable. They cannot be sold, shared or given away as it is an infringement on the copyright of this work.

This book is a work of fiction. The names, characters, places, and incidents are products of the writer's imagination or have been used fictitiously and are not to be construed as real. Any resemblance to persons, living or dead, actual events, locale or organizations is entirely coincidental.

Samhain Publishing, Ltd.
512 Forest Lake Drive
Warner Robins, Georgia 31093

A Fairy Special Gift
Copyright © 2007 by Gia Dawn

Cover by Anne Cain

ISBN: 1-59998-676-0

www.samhainpublishing.com

All Rights Are Reserved. No part of this book may be used or reproduced in any manner whatsoever without written permission, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical articles and reviews.

First Samhain Publishing, Ltd. electronic publication: October 2007

A Fairy Special Gift

Gia Dawn

Dedication

For Poppy. I miss him.

Chapter One

Meara hated fairies. She tried her best to ignore them as they pressed against her window—talons tapping and snouted noses squashed tight against the glass. The slightest encouragement from her would have them swarming into her house in a rush of feathers and fur, destroying anything and everything that happened to stand in their path.

The creatures had plagued her since she was a child, tormenting her with their childish pranks, their pleasure made all the greater because no one else could see them. She had suffered untold embarrassments at their hands and now detested them with a fierce and unmatched enmity.

She reached beneath her chair for her fairy-swatter. Well, it was actually an ordinary flyswatter, but she bought the biggest ones she could find, and kept several hidden away in her house. They found them and stole them whenever they could, so Meara always made damned certain she had plenty of extras on hand.

Their fairy-agitation grew worse the more she continued to ignore them, but she wasn't the least bit fooled. She kept her gaze glued solidly to the television, hoping against hope she could finish her favorite show.

Fat chance. Suddenly the window burst open and a swarm of bodies rushed inside, twirling and swirling through the air. Shimmering wings knocked over pictures, and frantic claws tore up the curtains. Her cat, Duchess, hissed and arched her back, fluffing her fur until she was nearly twice her normal size as she jumped to the back of the couch, her shrieks of outrage adding to the din.

One lovely sprite dove at the cat, biting her tail as Duchess twisted in fury. Meara swung her swatter in futile rage, swearing she would kill them all if she ever found a way. Although they were too blasted fast for her to squash, she occasionally managed to damage one or two.

"Get the hell out," she ordered, pointing to the window. "Now."

They rushed to the ceiling like a flock of birds and smirked down at her from above.

"Gift," one trilled, raking a claw down Meara's wallpaper. She swatted at it, barely missing one iridescent wing.

"I have no gifts for any of you miserable little horrors," Meara shouted, pointing to the window again. "Out."

"Nooooo," purred a second "Giffft for you."

Meara had to laugh. The last time they'd brought her anything, they left a stolen horse at her doorstep, the poor beast so winded from the wild night ride she thought it might drop dead by morning. It took her several days to find the horse's owners and have it settled safely back home. Anything they gave her was certain to be tainted.

"I don't want it. Whatever it is, take it back." Meara managed to grab Duchess by the scruff of the neck and tossed her into the bedroom, pulling the door shut tight. The cat yowled in protest, sharpening her claws on the wood. Meara shook her head; that was another repair she'd have to add to her list. Too bad they didn't make fairy catastrophe insurance.

One of the more misshapen monsters dove down to pull her hair. Meara managed to land a good swat and it tumbled to the floor. She smiled in satisfaction.

It gave her a toothy grin. "Man," it muttered.

Man? Meara felt her hackles rise. Had they actually gone out and stolen a man? Or had they found one walking alone in the dark and driven him loony with their wicked games?

"You found a man and brought him here?"

A hundred heads nodded in unison.

"Is he injured?" Or worse, she added to herself.

"Yesss." The beautiful butterfly wings surrounded the ugliest fae Meara had ever seen. It looked like a tiny pig, with a broad snout and beady eyes.

"Did you do it?"

They all shook their heads at once.

"Nots hurts mans. Finds mans," came the answer. Several flew to point out her window.

"Come, come, come," one urged.

Meara didn't have a choice. If there really was an injured man out there in the night, she had an obligation to find him. "I'll put on my sweater, but out you go, the lot of you." She breathed a heavy sigh of relief as they finally obeyed. When the last one had gone, she pulled down the window and locked it tight, wishing she knew some banishing spell to keep them away forever.

After grabbing a flashlight and turning off the television, Meara stepped out into the night. It was magical. A crescent moon hung low on the horizon, the rest of it barely visible behind the earth's shadow. A breeze blew the smell of salt from the sea and she could hear the crash of waves on the rocky coast below the cliffs. She really didn't need her flashlight. The glow of the fairies lit the twisting path, sparks of color that shone like jewels. She wished they were either as beautifully magical up close or that they would always stay this far away and let her admire them from a distance.

They were in rare form tonight. Several darted back to hover at her side, whirling up and down and round about until Meara grew dizzy watching their dance—like she was having some bad flashback or epileptic seizure.

“Fasterrrrr,” ordered a bright pink light drifting close to her ear. She batted it away before it could fasten its teeth on her skin.

She didn't bother to fight them as they urged her toward the coast. “What did you do, push him down the cliffs?” How she wished she had thought to bring the swatter.

“Bad, Mearee girl,” scolded a ghoulish golden blob buzzing across her nose.

Dogs howled in the distance, the lonely sound haunting in the dark. The path grew precarious as she climbed down to the sea, and Meara had to turn on the light to pick her way along the rock strewn trail. She loved this part of her world, the stark beauty of the New England coast. Her family had lived here for generations. Legend had it that an ancestor brought a band of fairies with her from Ireland, and they so loved this wild and open land they decided to stay forever.

Too bad, she thought with a grimace, trying not to curse her long dead relative.

“Are we there yet?” Meara was beginning to think they were playing some huge and elaborate joke, planning to leave her alone in the dark while they giggled and moved on to newer sport.

“Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes,” they answered.

As Meara watched, they gathered in a circle on the beach, their light combining to illuminate the dark form of a man. “Is he dead?” A shiver crawled along her spine. She jogged the last few paces and knelt on the sand, reaching out a hand to feel for a pulse. Her breath blew out in a sigh when he groaned and tried to roll over.

“Can you hear me?” Meara aimed her flashlight's beam just over his shoulder, trying not to shine the powerful light directly in his eyes. “Are you conscious?”

When he groaned again, Meara set down her light to help him turn over. A clot of blood smeared his forehead, trailing thickly down his cheek. He probably had a concussion, but hopefully no bones were broken.

She looked up at the crowd of fairies. "How did he get down here?"

They moved several yards away, circling a motorcycle halfway buried in a dune. So he was on some wild night ride and crashed, she thought with a frown. And no helmet either. Typical.

She motioned the fairies back again. "You found him, you'll have to carry him." She stood and brushed the sand from her pants. "I'll hold his head up. Hop to it, half on either side. Grab his clothes and lift."

To her utter amazement they did as she asked, managing to float him fairly steadily from the ground. The journey home was quicker than Meara expected, and soon she had the man stretched out on her couch while she swallowed her pride and thanked the unruly sprites for their assistance. After they actually left her in peace, she grabbed what bandages and ointment she could find, debating whether she should call the paramedics right away. She had just picked up the phone to dial nine-one-one, when his voice made her jump.

"Please. No need to call an ambulance. I'm okay." He grimaced and tried to sit, forcing Meara to hang up the phone and urge him to lie down again.

"Um...I really think you should see a doctor. That's a pretty nasty gash on your head. Hang on a sec and I'll clean it up. Do you know who you are?"

"I'd rather know who you are," he replied easily.

She couldn't suppress a snort. "Are you trying to hit on me with all that blood running down your face?"

"Hmmm, not working?" His expression was so woebegone, Meara almost giggled.

"Meara Magee," she told him, going into the bathroom to run some hot water and find a couple of washrags.

After wiping off his face, she realized the cut was not as bad as she expected. What had looked like pints of blood pouring from a massive slash turned out to be only a halfway decent wound. "It should probably have stitches," she remarked, cutting a butterfly bandage to hold the skin together.

He grinned, propping up on one elbow. Pretty, pretty, Meara realized as his clear green eyes fastened on hers. With thick brown hair, bad boy leather riding jacket, and at

least six feet of tall, muscled flesh, he was a force to be reckoned with. Not to mention his perfectly beautiful smile.

“Got any aspirin? Or a bottle of bourbon? Or both?”

Meara chuckled despite herself. He was obviously incorrigible. “How about some warm milk?”

His face fell in utter disappointment. “Will you put a slug of whiskey in it?”

“As long as you let me drive you home.”

“Deal. By the way, how did you find me?” He watched her closely.

“Would you believe I just happened along?”

He shook his head.

“I didn’t think so. How about the fairies told me?” She asked the question flippantly, figuring he would laugh the comment off, but to her astonishment he heaved a great sigh of relief.

“Wow, they really did what I asked them to.”

Meara blinked stupidly. “Asked who?”

“Uh...” Now it was his turn to look dumbfounded. “Nothing...never mind.” He sat up and propped his head in his hands. “I could use that aspirin.”

“Right. Sorry.” Meara rushed into the kitchen, her thoughts whirling. Had he been serious when he said he’d asked the fairies for help? Did he see them too? And did she have the nerve to broach the subject again?

She had just found the aspirin and nuked him a warm glass of milk—with a decent shot of peach brandy—when she heard a soft knock on the door. What now? Deciding to ignore the interruption, she sat in her armchair and watched him sip tentatively at the drink before winking at her in appreciation.

“Very good.”

The knock came again.

“You gonna answer that?” He nodded to the door.

An ear-piercing shriek caused them both to jump.

“What the—” He stood shakily and scanned the room. “Do you have a gun? Baseball bat...anything?”

Meara felt her heart sink. Could this night possibly get any worse? “She’s not dangerous.”

“She? You know her?”

“Not personally.” Damn, how was she going to explain this? The shriek sounded again. “Give me just a second, I’ll send her home.” She walked wearily to the door, hoping against hope her new visitor would go away.

The shrieking built again...impossibly high, and Meara was forced to put her hands over her ears until the sound faded slowly away. Then she wrenched the door open.

“Begone. He’s not dead!”

The pale woman sniffed, bloodshot eyes weeping long trails of tears. Her hair stuck out in all directions, a knotted mass of silver and grey. “Ohhhhhh, noooooooo, he must be d-dead. I have to do my j-j-job.” She twisted her hands together in dismay.

Just then the man poked his head into the hall. “What the hell?”

When she started to scream again, Meara clamped her hand over the other woman’s mouth. “Shhhh, you’ll wake the whole town. Get in here and listen. This is—” She motioned for the man to come closer.

“Jamison. Jamison Murphy,” he said.

Well, that explained a lot, Meara thought. His ancestry was as Irish as hers. “Jamison had an accident...nothing major...and I was just getting ready to take him home.”

The pale woman’s shoulders slumped. “He’s really not dying?” She sounded so upset, Meara made her sit down.

“No, dear. I’m sorry.”

Jamison stared with his mouth open. “Is she what I think she is?”

Meara was beyond coming up with a suitable lie. Maybe when he woke up tomorrow he would think he’d been having delusions. “Banshee.”

He seemed totally fascinated by this bit of information. “And you were coming for me?”

Banshee nodded, her tears starting once more. “You probably think I’m h-h-horrid,” she hiccupped.

“Oh, no.” Jamison took her hand. “I am honored to meet you.”

“You are?”

“Absolutely. My family was always proud we could claim our very own banshee. This is fantastic.”

Now it was Meara’s turn to stare. “It is?”

“But you’re not dead.” Banshee’s tears actually stopped.

“I promise you I will be...someday.” Jamison gave her an amazing smile and Banshee almost smiled back.

“Oh, you are right! Do you think it might be soon?” she added hopefully.

Jamison winked. “You never know.”

Banshee stood and smoothed out her tattered skirt. “Then I guess I should be going, I might be needed somewhere else tonight. Very nice to meet you, Jamison,” she said, practically floating out the door. “I’ll see you again.”

Meara had never seen the likes—the man had actually charmed a banshee and acted as if he’d done it every day of his life. She watched him lean against the doorframe and cross his arms over his chest. His hair had fallen down to cover the gash on his head, and he was as handsome a man as she’d ever seen. Her breath quickened as she realized this was someone who could actually understand the complications of her life. He was dealing with the exact same situation.

“You tried to fool me before,” he accused, stepping away from the door. “You do see them, and they did tell you where to find me.”

The closer he came, the larger he loomed, and Meara suddenly found herself pinned against the wall with his body practically touching hers. Forgotten needs washed heavy over her skin. Heat and want and delicious desire. Meara fought back the urge to trail her hand across his chest. It wouldn’t do to be too needy. She’d seen women who were needy—cloying, desperate things who gave up all life of their own and bent over backwards to do their husband’s will. Not her style, no matter how appealing...despite the perfect mouth that hovered so close to hers and the muscled arms that rested easily against the wall.

Not good, not good at all.

“I think I should take you home.” She ducked beneath one arm and went to find her keys. It didn’t help that he followed her around the room like a stray puppy, wiggling his perfect ass, making her want nothing more than to pet him the rest of the night.

“You still haven’t answered my question.” He gave her a lopsided grin and Meara found him even more attractive—as if that were at all possible. “Tell the truth.”

Attractive and annoying, she corrected. “Yes, all right, I do see the miserable little horrors.”

“How does it happen in your family?” He smiled smugly and batted his lashes. “In mine it’s tied to the green-eyed thing.”

“My grand-mother said her mother saw them. Just my luck I got some freaky recessive gene that hasn’t shown up for generations. I’d rather have a great big wart on the tip of my nose. I could get rid of that.”

His laughter filled the room. “They can be a bit of a challenge. You just don’t know how to play their game.”

Meara’s attraction lessened as her annoyance grew. “I have no desire to play their games. All I want is for them to leave me alone. If you can find a way to manage that, I’ll owe you big time.”

He stepped toward her, his eyes taking on a wicked gleam. “What would you owe me?”

Meara’s mouth dropped open.

“I know their secret,” he continued in a na-na-nanana voice.

The man really was outrageous. “Of course you do.” But Meara’s mouth curved up despite herself. Okay, why not? She hadn’t had a conversation with a gorgeous man in ages and she was enjoying every minute of it. “So, if I actually believe one word of what you say, what would I owe you?”

“Interested, huh? Now we’re making progress.” He stepped toward her again until there was barely a space between them.

Meara stood as tall as she could and looked him straight in the eye. “Go on, but I warn you, this better be good.”

His mouth hovered a hair’s breadth from hers. “Kiss me,” he said. “One kiss and I’ll tell you everything.”

Chapter Two

Jamison couldn't believe his luck. Here he was, standing toe to toe with one of the most lovely women he had ever met...and she saw the same things he did. Not to mention, she took it as a daily occurrence when a banshee came to call. What he had thought was going to be a miserable night spent in pain on the beach had now become one of the better moments of his life. Granted his head still pounded like he'd been hit with a rock, and muscles he never knew he had were beginning to scream in protest—but he wouldn't have changed a thing if it meant not meeting the fascinating, freckled female.

Her strawberry blonde hair hung just past her shoulders, with wisps of bangs that tried to tangle in her lashes. Her eyes were the color of good brandy, soft and brown with just a hint of stubborn. She was tall and curved in all the right places, places he would love to touch and fondle and—

Ah, hell, he was already growing hard. Not that he minded. It had been a while since he'd been well and truly aroused. It had probably been a long time for her, also, if their fairy buddies meddled in her affairs as much as they did his.

"Well?" he demanded when she made no move to press her mouth to his. "I'm getting tired of waiting."

"Unh, unh." She shook her head and chewed her bottom lip. "Not until you tell me something I don't already know."

"I sleep naked."

She choked on a laugh, her eyes brimming with mischief. "So do I, but we both know that's not what I meant."

Now it was Jamison's turn to chuckle. They had another thing in common. Very nice. "You drive a hard bargain. Still, never let it be said that Jamison Murphy doesn't play fair. I bribe them."

"You bribe them. That's your big announcement."

“Works every time.” He moved his mouth smugly closer, but she pushed him away with a grimace.

“Not good enough. What do you bribe them with?”

“That will take a second kiss.” Before she could protest, he wrapped one hand around her nape and pulled her face to his. He was hungry and she was the only thing that would sate him. He’d imagined she would taste as fiery as she talked, but he was startled to find she was sweet like cherry wine or fine mead—one of his personal favorites.

Her hair slipped through his fingers, thick and straight. He thought nothing would feel better than to have that hair spread over his thighs while her soft sweet mouth wrapped tight around his cock.

Shit. He thrust his tongue between her lips, stiffening even more when he heard her moan of acceptance. Her arms curled around his waist, her fingers stroking his back, clawing into his skin when his tongue delved even deeper.

He took a chance and nibbled at her lip, using just enough pressure to make it sting, and almost spent in his jeans when she dug her nails into his back. So, she liked it a bit on the rough side. That suited him just fine...he liked it a little rough, too.

He thrust one knee between her legs, rubbing it against the heat of her mound while his hand traced the curve of her breast. Her nipple was already swollen. He rolled it hard between his fingers. She whimpered and pulled her mouth away.

“You said kiss, not groping,” she accused in a shaky voice. He noticed she still kept her arms wrapped around him.

“You didn’t like it?” He bent and nuzzled her neck.

“That’s not the point. You were trying to take advantage. Bad, bad boy.” Her smile was naughty.

His grin matched. “I could be even badder...if you gave me another chance?”

She shook her head, but there was interest in her eyes. “Not tonight. Time to go home.”

With a heavy sigh he stepped back, only to stumble and fall to his knees. His head spun and his legs had grown alarmingly weak. “I guess you got to me more than I cared to admit,” he managed ruefully. “Maybe I do need to go home.”

“Probably more to do with the accident than my womanly charms.” Her laugh was gentle as she helped him sit back on the couch.

“Don’t be too sure about that, Meara, me girly,” he answered, running a finger down her cheek. “Don’t be too sure about that at all.”

They were waiting for her when Meara got home, still remembering the last kiss Jamison planted on her lips before he thanked her again for coming to his rescue. Their wings buzzed in the dark like a plague of locusts ready to swarm.

“I know you’re there,” she yelled, opening the car door and sticking the swatter out. “The first one I catch gets locked in with the cat. Have you ever seen what a cat does with a trapped fairy...it’s not pretty.”

She fumbled for her key, making sure she had the right one before she made a mad dash toward the house.

Instantly the night was ablaze with light, mad orbs of color rushing toward her at dizzying speed. She struggled with the lock, dropping the key as the first wave of bodies dove toward her. They landed on her back, their nails scratching holes in her sweater. Good thing Meara had taken to buying all her clothes at the local Goodwill. She couldn’t afford to have cashmere or silk torn into shreds the first day she wore them.

She swatted blindly at the stinging hoard, grinning in evil delight when she felt her blows connect. “Take that, you miserable creatures.”

But they were winning, they always did. Her hair was already being twisted into knots, and she could see the scratches running down the length of her arms. In desperation she found her key and rammed it into the lock, heaving a huge sigh of relief when she heard the bolt slip free.

She even managed to slide through the door without any following her inside, before she threw the swatter down in absolute frustration.

She couldn’t take them anymore. Something had to be done.

Meara sat down at her computer and scrolled through the search list. Somehow, somewhere, there was a way to rid herself of the meddling fae once and for all.

Some of the Wiccan sites seemed promising. They advertised a spell for everything—including banishing and protection from evil. Were the fairies really evil? Granted they were winged monsters, tiny demons of the air, but evil?

The spell called for a black candle, saltwater, ground cinnamon and sage. You were supposed to ring your space with the ground herbs, light the candle, then wash all your windows and doorways with saltwater. Evil was guaranteed never to bother you again.

Meara looked at the mass of lights hovering over her herb garden and decided the spell was not nearly strong enough. She tried her favorite search...pest control.

Flypaper. Already done that, the fairies paid no attention to it at all. Bug spray—too messy. She didn't want poisoned fae gasping for breath on her doorstep. Roach motels? Nope, needed to come in much bigger sizes.

Oh, this looked good. A big plastic ball filled with honey. Well, it was actually a wasp catcher, but the logistics looked right. Fairies flew in, but they couldn't get out. She ordered two and had them shipped overnight express. If she managed to catch enough, the rest might just take the hint and leave her in peace for a change.

She heard Duchess hiss at the window and watched her cat paw frantically at the glass, trying desperately to reach the smirking fairy hovering on the other side. The cat jumped, slid down the window and knocked off an entire shelf of books and magazines.

Meara dropped her head on the computer keys, praying the catchers wouldn't get lost in the mail. She could see the headline now. "Woman driven insane...claims fairies won't leave her alone."

Grabbing her sketchbook, Meara funneled her fury into her work. The drawing took shape with little effort on her part, and in less than an hour she was looking happily at her latest creation. A tiger-striped cat sat licking one paw, a fairy wing sticking out of its mouth. The other paw held a struggling fairy in its out-stretched claws.

Meara wrote the caption in satisfied amusement. *Fairies, you can't eat just one.*

She liked this picture enough she decided to paint it before putting it up for sale on her website. It ought to bring in a decent price. She had quite a few fans who loved her work.

Her anger appeased for the moment, Meara studied the creatures gaping at her through the window, remembering that they had brought her the fabulous Jamison Murphy. Okay, score one point for them, but the tally was still miles from being even. Nonetheless, she was smiling as she pulled the curtains shut and got undressed for bed...until her eyes fell on the letter she'd left sitting on her dresser.

She didn't have to pick it up to know what it said. She'd been offered the job she'd applied for in Nevada—advertising designer for a new line of fantasy toys. The money

was decent, and she'd be stuck somewhere in the middle of the desert...a place she felt certain the fairies would despise so much they'd stay here and leave her in peace. She'd jumped at the chance when she'd first heard about the job, but suddenly Nevada seemed barren and bleak. There'd be no sound of gulls crying in the morning, no foggy nights or maple trees draped in dew.

No Jamison Murphy lying on her couch bargaining for a single kiss. Her timing had always been bad, Meara realized as she fought the curtains shut and threw her clothes on the floor.

Jamison hit the beach well before dawn and frowned at his half-buried bike. He hadn't been on a joy ride last night...not really.

But he had been blowing off steam. Furious that a known drug runner had slipped through his fingers again, Jamison had raced along the shore like a man possessed, his rage and frustration egging him into realms of stupidity he rarely visited.

Missing evidence. The same thing that had happened his last three busts. And it was beginning to look more and more like a deliberate sabotage. If he ever found out who was tampering with his evidence, he would hang them from the highest tree and dare anyone to be brave enough to get past him and cut them down.

Just remembering the entire situation set his blood on fire again. He deliberately turned his thoughts to the beautiful Meara Magee. His blood still burned, but the new fire was much more palatable. Delightful, he thought, running his tongue over his teeth as he dug out his bike and brushed off the clinging sand.

His gaze drifted to the horizon, watching the sun come up. There was nothing he adored more than the ocean. It was in his blood. His father and his father's father, and generations of his ancestors before them had all earned their living on the sea. She was their mistress, their lover, the one woman they felt understood their restless souls.

He ran his hand through his hair and glowered at the dawn. Some days he didn't know why he bothered—the drugs kept getting deadlier, the stockpiles kept growing, and the amount of money involved was mind-blowing.

A sappy poster sprang to mind, the one where a boy stood on a beach littered with stranded starfish and threw them one at a time back into the ocean. While he couldn't save them all, he could make a difference to a few.

That difference was why he stayed.

His cell-phone rang and he flipped it open. "Murphy."

"We've got a new lead," came the voice of Chief Chambers. "The DEA has an informant who works on the docks. Another shipment is due in very soon. They'll put a tracker on the boat and let it head back out. Then it'll be up to you to find their main warehouse."

Jamison allowed himself a thin smile. "Thanks, Chief. Has anyone else been assigned to watch the evidence lockers?"

"The DEA has promised us an extra hand...if you find what they're looking for."

"Don't worry, I'll get the information if I have to track them all the way to South America." He closed the phone with a satisfied snap. Just a few days until show time. And the lovely fairy queen to keep him company until then.

His mouth actually turned up into a grin as he started the bike and rode into town.

Meara woke early, struggling to keep her spirits up when she saw the storm clouds rolling in from the sea and the fairy heads trying to peek at her through the curtains. After giving the sprites a mocking wave, she shrugged on a thick terry robe and made her way to the kitchen, refusing to let thoughts of the delicious Jamison turn her away from the plans she'd made. She plugged in the coffeepot and was just deciding what to eat for breakfast when she heard a knock at her door. Jamison's voice called out her name and she ran to greet him, her move to Nevada forgotten in the thrill of the moment.

"Top o' ta mornin' to ya, Miss Meara Magee," he said in a decent Irish brogue. "Will ya be lettin' me in? I have a special gift ta tank ya fer rescuin' me last night."

Meara giggled and stepped aside, slamming the door shut behind him when she saw several fairies dive-bombing toward her. They slammed into the wood with series of thumps that made Jamison shake his head.

"No wonder they don't like you. You're mean."

"You don't know the half of it." Meara dug a swatter out of the closet. "Want one?"

“Not me. I’d rather stay on their good side.” He sniffed appreciatively. “Coffee?” He followed her into the kitchen and set a package on the table, his eyes never leaving the opening of her robe. “I like it here.”

Meara watched him prowl around the small room with its bright yellow paint and white lace curtains. She thought a home should be cheery, and she’d decorated her small cottage accordingly. The bathroom was eye-glaring turquoise, her single bedroom a pretty peach, her office was wild-rose pink and her main living room was apple green. Ireland in the spring.

“There used to be a lighthouse on that small outcrop.” She pointed out the window toward a tiny peninsula. “This was the caretaker’s house. The lighthouse was torn down almost seventy years ago and my family bought the land. We’ve been here ever since. My grandparents built a bigger house in town and my parents still live there.”

Jamison leaned in too close, his hips pressing into her bottom and his mouth almost nipping at her ear. “So we’re all alone, out here on the seashore?”

Meara frowned at the pixie crawling on her window ledge. “Almost.”

Jamison chuckled, a rich sound that caused her blood to heat. “That’s why I brought you the present.” He took her hand and pulled her back toward the table. “You open it and I’ll pour coffee.”

Meara was too entranced by the sight of the fabulous man being all domestic in her kitchen to argue. It seemed right to watch him poking through cabinets to find the cups before rummaging in the fridge.

“Milk?”

Meara nodded. “No sugar. I have some pop-tarts—first door to the left over the sink.”

“Nothing like a healthy breakfast. What flavor do you want?” He opened the cabinet and took down several boxes. “Good Lord, do you have every flavor?”

“I think so, but I ate all the strawberry ones.” She looked at the gaily wrapped package, wondering what on earth he’d brought her.

“You can open it anytime.” He was watching her in amusement.

She tore into the paper delightedly. It wasn’t every day a gorgeous man gave her a present. He brought two cups of coffee and sat next to her, his eyes glowing with mischief.

Meara tore off the top of the box and frowned. “What’s this?”

His laughter echoed around the room. "I promised you my secret. Fairy dust."

"Fairy dust." She snorted. "You've got to be kidding me." She took out the bags of glitter, sequins and tiny bits of confetti. "You bribe them with junk?"

"Not just any junk." He tore open a bag of glitter and poured it into the box. "Sparkly, gaudy, fascinating junk. They love it. Come on, help." Jamison opened another bag. "I mix it up and keep some in my pocket all the time. Whenever I need them gone...I just throw a handful out."

"Uh, huh." Meara ran her fingers through the sparkly mix. "It is pretty, I'll grant you that."

Jamison captured her hand in his. "Not nearly as pretty as you."

Desire hung thick between them. Meara remembered the way she'd felt in his arms last night. The way her body still thrummed in need as she'd tossed and turned for hours, the ache between her legs almost more than she could take. Eventually she'd pulled her vibrator out of the drawer, but it had been so long since she'd been interested in using it, the batteries had gone dead.

Then again, who needed a toy when she had the real thing stroking her fingers right now? He leaned forward, his lips nearing hers. He had great lips. Fabulous lips. Lips that were made for pleasuring a woman. Meara swallowed, suddenly nervous. She was certain those lips had seen more action than hers. Hell, the whole world had seen more action than she had. She drew back and took a sip of coffee, choking on the drink when he tucked a finger into the opening of her robe.

"Meara, if you let me, I would take you to bed right now and spend the entire day making you scream my name." His eyes were dangerously beseeching. His finger tugged her robe looser.

"You don't waste any time," she somehow managed to squeak out. She tried to stand, but he refused to let go of her robe. If she moved, he would pull the entire thing off.

"Do you think I act this way with every woman I meet?" His face had grown serious. Meara tried to laugh. "Only the crazy fairy-seeing ones."

"There are no other crazy fairy-seeing ones."

"That's just my point. What makes you think we're compatible based on just that?"

"What makes you think we're not? I already love your wicked sense of humor, the way you don't care if your hair is mussed or if your make-up is on perfect. I feel more at

ease with you after one day than with some women I've known for months. Life is short. I don't believe in wasting time." He ran his hand down her hair, brushing some wayward strands from her cheek.

Meara knew her indecision was written on her face. When Jamison sighed and leaned back in his chair, she felt like her world had come to a stop. His grin was sheepish. "Okay, okay, I know I'm pushing. How can I convince you my intentions are honorable?"

"Let me brush my teeth and we can start with a kiss. See how things go from there?" Meara felt herself blush all the way from her toes when he slipped his tongue over his teeth.

"You've got two minutes before I come looking for you." He tapped his watch. "Better hurry, I'm already counting."

Meara bounded to the bathroom. She finished her teeth and even managed to run a comb through her hair before she heard Jamison's voice counting down the seconds.

"Ready or not, here I come."

Meara giggled when she heard his footsteps crossing the floor. But her smile faltered when someone knocked at the door. Who could that possibly be? She'd had more visitors in the past twenty-four hours than she usually had in weeks. "Don't answer it," she whispered, meeting Jamison in the hallway.

"If you say so." He took her hand and pulled her close. "Now, about that kiss..."

Chapter Three

“Meara, darling,” called a too cheery male voice from outside. “Open up and let me come in.”

Meara froze, her heart racing. Damn, damn, damn. And just when she thought this day might actually turn out well. She gave Jamison a pleading look. “Do me a huge favor and just play along,” she whispered before heading to the door. “This shouldn’t take long.”

A blond giant stood on her small porch, a bouquet of wilting flowers held stiffly towards her. “For you, light of my life, my love, my heart, my—”

“Okay, I get the picture.” Meara made no move to take the flowers. “Lugh, come in. We have to talk.”

He had to duck to fit his seven-foot-plus height through her doorway.

Meara swallowed and introduced the two men. “Jamison, this is Lugh, Celtic god of fire. Lugh, this is Jamison...my fiancé.”

The god’s face crumpled. “Fiancé? Maybe I should sit down.” He moved to the living room and folded himself onto a tiny hard-backed chair.

Meara thought she’d never seen a more pitiful sight in her life. Jamison, however, looked as if he’d rather be tied to a stake and burned alive than here facing the immortal giant.

She gave him a nasty look that said you’d-better-not-screw-this-up, and Jamison finally managed to speak. “Nice to meet you,” he said holding out his hand.

Lugh gave it a perfunctory shake, his own fingers completely dwarfing the other man’s. “I’m not really happy to meet you,” he replied. “Sorry.” He looked like a puppy who had just been scolded for chewing up the carpet.

“I completely understand. Why don’t I get us both a drink. Meara, do you have any beer? I know it’s early, but given the circumstances, I could use a good stiff belt.”

“Beer’s in the fridge. There’s also that bottle of brandy on the counter.”

“Right.” Jamison left the room so fast she thought he’d actually break the sound barrier.

She turned to Lugh. “I’m sorry I didn’t tell you sooner, but you know as well as I do this would never work out between us. You’re a god, for heaven’s sake. Can’t you find some nice immortal goddess to fall for?”

Lugh sighed. His breath blew two paintings off the wall. Meara cringed when she heard the glass shatter.

Jamison poked his head around the corner. “You two all right in there?”

“Fine. But you’d better make that three beers.” She focused her attention back to Lugh. “Have you asked any of them out on a date? Or sent a note telling them how you feel?”

Lugh shook his massive head. “All the goddesses I know are spoiled and silly. Who wants to get blasted just for trying to steal a kiss? It’s not like in the old days when you could carry them off to your palace and live happily ever after. Now they want to talk about how they feel, and what they want, and whether or not I think they’re fat. It’s too much like work.”

Jamison returned, a dark grin spreading across his face. “Here you go, buddy. And let me tell you, you aren’t the only man who doesn’t understand women these days.”

Lugh’s face brightened just a bit. “I’m not?”

“Nope, not even close.” Jamison took a long slug of beer and motioned for Lugh to do the same.

Lugh downed his can in one drink and politely asked for another.

“Not too much,” Meara warned as Jamison headed back to the kitchen. “The last thing we need is a soused god on our hands.”

Lugh puffed out his chest. “I never get soused. Except for that one time about two thousand years ago...I was helping fight off the Romans—nasty little men, but they brought with them shiploads of very nice wine. Have you ever had Italian wine? It is some of the best ever made.”

“Here.” Jamison shoved another beer into Lugh’s hand and handed one to Meara.

She toyed with the can as the men raised theirs in a salute. “Isn’t there even some nymph you’re interested in?” she finally asked Lugh.

“I’ve dated every sprite or muse I could think of in the last several centuries or so. That’s why I was counting on you.” He raised pleading eyes to hers. “You were my last chance at love.”

When she frowned, Jamison chuckled. “Sorry, old man,” he offered. “But she’s mine and I plan on keeping her. Besides,” he added in a just-between-us-guys voice, “you’d get tired of her after a few years. She doesn’t do that adoration thing very well.”

Lugh’s face brightened. “I never thought of it that way. It would be hard to live with a woman who didn’t absolutely worship me.”

“Well, there you go.” Jamison clapped Lugh on the back. “Glad to have helped you sort this whole thing out.”

Lugh jumped to his feet. The small cottage shook alarmingly. “Forgive me, my lovely, beautiful, delightful Meara for breaking your heart, but it wouldn’t be right for a fabulous god like me to be seen with a simple mortal woman like you. You do understand...don’t you?”

“I’ll do my best to get over it,” Meara mocked, watching him bang his head as he ducked back out the door. She raced after him and turned the lock before Lugh could change his mind. She thought if he stuck his smirking face back in, she’d have to use the swatter. She took it out of the closet just in case.

“What was that all about?” Jamison was sitting on the couch with his arms stretched out and his legs spread wide in invitation.

Meara groaned. “He found out I could see him about six months ago. He swore it was fate and has been bugging me ever since. Do you believe he actually wanted me to kneel at his feet the first night he came over?”

Jamison chuckled. “Maybe I should’ve tried that approach.” He laughed harder when Meara stuck out her tongue. “Come here and do that,” he said. “Jees, what does a man have to do to get a kiss around here?”

Despite his flippant tone, his gaze was heavy where it raked across her skin. Meara shivered in answer as she let him settle her on his lap. Before she could say a single word, he tilted her head back and brushed his mouth over hers. It was a gentle kiss, asking rather than demanding. He teased her, drawing her out of her tentative response until she was the one who begged for more.

It would be easy, so easy, to do as he’d requested—let him lead her back to bed and show her what she’d been missing for so long...the warm and expert touch of a man. The

heat rose fast between them and Meara surrendered to the need as his mouth became more demanding, his tongue sliding between her lips.

When someone else knocked on the door, Meara wanted to scream her frustration. “What now? If we pretend there’s no one home, do you think they’ll go away?” She snuggled deeper into his lap, letting the warmth of him wrap deliciously around her.

He nuzzled her neck, his fingers slipping through the opening in her robe. Meara trembled when she felt him stroke one nipple, teasing it into a pearl of sensitive flesh. She laid her head on his shoulder, biting her lip against a cry of want as he rolled her nipple between his fingers, the swift sting of pleasure hitting hard between her legs. She could feel his cock swell against her bottom, proof that his arousal was growing to match hers. She wanted to touch the length of him, stroke her fingers around his shaft while he begged her to not to make him come too soon, his groans of hunger harsh and heady in her ears.

The knock came again, followed by the beginnings of a high-pitched scream. Banshee.

“What could she possibly want?” Jamison frowned. “I’m not dead again, am I?”

Meara smiled. He was beginning to realize just how annoying the magical creatures could be. “God, I hope not. Cover your ears,” she added as the shrieking rose to a head-pounding roar.

“Nothing like a good banshee wail to get one out of the mood,” Jamison grumbled, dumping Meara on the sofa. “I’ll go see what she wants.”

Meara smooched at him as he crossed the room. “I’ll be waiting,” she promised, assuming a seductive position...until Jamison returned with a clearly upset Banshee in tow.

“She, uh, asked to talk to you.”

Meara hurriedly drew her robe together and sat up straight. “I’m not dead, either,” she said. “Go away.”

Banshee opened her mouth to scream, but Meara stopped her with a slice of her hand. “No more shrieking.”

Banshee settled for sniffing and hiccups. “W-w-was he here?”

“Who?”

“L-l-l-uuggghhhhh.”

“Shhhhhh. No crying or wailing either.”

Banshee sniffed one last time and Jamison handed her a box of tissues. “Th-thank you.”

“What about Lugh?” Meara asked.

“I...I-I love himm.”

“You love that blond egomaniac?” Well, now this was very interesting. “Have you told him?”

Banshee shook her head. “He is so handsome. What would he ever see in me?” Her mouth started trembling again.

Meara considered. With some decent make-up, a new hairstyle and something sexy to wear, Banshee could be the answer to her prayers. If Meara fixed her up with Lugh, they might leave her and Jamison in peace.

She smiled at Banshee. “I have a plan. But it’s gonna take a lot of work. Jamison, we need you to go to town. I’ll make a list.”

Several hours later, Meara stepped back to survey her handiwork. “Almost,” she said, adding a final touch. “Are you ready?”

Banshee twisted her hands in her lap. “I-I think so. Will this really work?” she added in a hopeful tone.

Meara gave her shoulder a squeeze. “If it doesn’t, Lugh is a bigger dope than I imagined. You look beautiful. Really. Okay, do you remember how to do this all yourself?”

“Yes.”

“Then let’s have a look.”

Jamison poked his head in the room. “Can I watch?”

“Absolutely. We need a man’s opinion.” Meara motioned him closer. “Here goes.” With a great flourish, she spun Banshee around so she could see herself in the mirror.

For long seconds the fairy stared at her appearance in stunned silence. “Is that me?” she finally asked, running a hand down her cheek.

“Yep.” Meara couldn’t help but grin as she watched the other woman’s expression. “Isn’t it amazing what a little make-up and a good hair style can do?”

Jamison whistled his approval and Banshee actually blushed, the pale pink lighting up her perfectly formed face.

Truth was, Meara was a wee bit jealous. The fairy had a fragile bone structure that a human woman could not possibly match. High cheekbones, huge uptilted eyes, cupid's bow mouth and alabaster skin. A good concealer hid the shadows beneath her eyes, and waterproof black eye make-up made her look mysterious and haunting. Her untangled hair was soft as spun silk, the silver strands spilling over her shoulders, while a splash of rose lip gloss made her mouth glisten.

Meara had loaned Banshee a push-up bra and slinky gown to complete her new look. The whole effect was ethereal and otherworldly.

Banshee sniffed, huge tears welling up in her eyes. "I don't know what to say."

"Do not cry," Meara warned. "Even waterproof make-up has its limitations."

Banshee blinked back the flow. "What now?"

"Now," Meara waved them all into the living room, "you go find Lugh."

Banshee looked like she was about to be fed to the lions. "I c-can't do that."

"Why not?" Meara balled her hands on her hips. "Just go up to him and tell him that you absolutely worship the ground he walks on. He'll like that...trust me."

Jamison nodded when Banshee turned pleading eyes to him. "Meara's right. Just this morning he was telling us how he wished he could find someone to adore him. You, lovely Banshee, are exactly what that god is looking for."

"Take a deep breath, stand up tall and go get him," Meara ordered. "Wait, don't forget your makeup, hair brush and detangling spray." She placed a brightly colored cosmetic case into Banshee's hands. "And whatever you do, don't let him see you without your war-paint...at least for a few hundred years."

"War-paint?"

"Never mind." Meara led her to the door. "Good luck, okay? I mean that."

Banshee came close to smiling. "Thank you. Very much." She gave Meara a quick hug before flying out the door and into the evening shadows.

Meara grinned at Jamison. "You do good work."

"I didn't do anything."

"Oh, yes you did. When she saw the way you looked at her, she really believed she was beautiful. Should I consider her a rival?"

He grinned from ear to ear. “Only if I have to compete against Lugh. Otherwise, I am perfectly content to have a warm, human, Irish princess in my arms.” He stalked her across the room. “We never did get to finish our morning kiss.”

“We finished several as I recall.” Meara ran into the kitchen, giggling as Jamison followed close behind. He had her trapped against the sink, his mouth barely touching her cheek, when her stomach rumbled loudly. “Supper time. What should we have?” She turned to check her cabinets, pleased when he ground his hips against hers.

“Let me take you out to dinner.”

Meara was already shaking her head. “I don’t think that’s such a good idea.”

“Why not?” He curled his arms around her waist.

“You know why.” Meara pointed out the window where several fairies were buzzing against the glass. “Do you know what havoc they cause if I go into town? I’ve been thrown out of more places than I can count because of their damned pestering.”

Jamison’s smile broadened. “But I have the fairy dust. I can keep them occupied for hours—plenty of time to have dinner and get you back home. I promise,” he added, planting a small kiss on her neck.

Meara couldn’t resist. If he really could make the capricious fairies leave them alone, this might be a night made in heaven. “Let me get my coat. It’s getting cold today.” She even managed a quick swipe of mascara and lipstick before she returned. “You brought your car, right, not that silly motorcycle?”

He had the grace to duck his head. “Maybe you should drive.”

She chuckled. “Are you gonna pay or is this Dutch treat?”

He pulled a wad of bills from his pocket. “I’ll buy and get rid of the fairies. Fair enough?”

“Deal.” Meara grabbed her purse and keys. “You first,” she ordered when they reached the door. “Show me this great fairy magic.” She resisted the temptation to snatch up her swatter.

“Watch.” He placed his finger to his lips and walked into the yard. Almost instantly he was surrounded by the blurry bodies of the fairies. They swarmed around him like flies, picking at his clothes and hair.

He winked at her as he reached into his pocket. Then he flung a handful of his magical mix high into the air. It caught on the wind and blew in all directions, the sunlight glinting off it as it dazzled and sparkled overhead. Jamison was completely

forgotten as the fairies chased their new amusement, the sounds of their wings growing fainter with every second.

“Works every time,” he said smugly. “So, my lady, drive us into town.”

Chapter Four

It was a peaceful drive along the coast road, no winged monsters mugging up her windshield or hanging onto the rearview mirrors until she couldn't see a thing behind her. The ocean sighed peacefully against the shore, its salty smell comfortingly familiar. In winter when the Nor'easters brought their wind and snow and ice the sea danced as if possessed, but today the sun sank slowly beneath a bank of shadowy clouds while the water glowed as if littered with diamonds.

Jamison whistled a lilting tune, content to watch the world flow by, and Meara let herself relax, lulled by his nearness and the blissful peace he'd brought her.

They ate at one of the best seafood restaurants in town, by big glass windows that gave them a spectacular view of the coast. They both licked their fingers after the meal, lingering over a bottle of champagne while the crowd thinned until only a few other couples cuddled in the shadows.

Meara didn't know when she'd had so much fun. The food was perfect, her companion was perfect, and there hadn't been one sign of fairy trouble all night. This was a life she had long given up on—a normal, sane life with a normal, handsome man. Well, not normal, she amended as sparkles of fairy dust glinted in his hair. Maybe normal wasn't all it was cracked up to be.

"So, what do you do for a living?" Jamison leaned back in his chair and watched the play of candlelight on her skin. She looked as ethereal as ocean mist, as beautiful as moonlight on the waves.

He wanted to see her spread out across the bed, watch her eyes turn stormy with desire, feel her body hot and tight around his length. He stiffened at the thought, the pulse of need flowing hard into his cock. He smiled at the pleasure and continued to imagine her sweaty and whimpering in his arms.

He could tell she didn't have much experience with men...he liked that idea more than he should have. The truth was, he'd never had much experience with women until

he'd found how to bribe the pesky fairies and keep them away from his dates. But it could be a crapshoot. Some days the fae were more inclined to stay and interfere with his life no matter how many handfuls of glitter he threw. Of course, he wasn't about to give Meara that tiny bit of information.

"I'm an artist. I do fairy drawings." Meara toyed with the stem of her glass. Jamison pictured her fingers playing somewhere completely different. "I torture them hideously in paint and ink and make quite a decent living at it. I have an online business."

Jamison chuckled. "Fairy therapy?"

Meara nodded. "Absolutely. What about you?"

"Coast Guard."

Her eyes widened and a smile tugged at the corner of her mouth...her beautiful, tempting, very sexy mouth. "So it's true? They don't follow you over water?"

Jamison smiled back. "Every now and then one gets brave and decides to hop on board. After hours spent on deck while the boat rolls and dips, it's pretty much cured of the need to bother me at work again."

Her laugh tinkled across the air. "You are good, I'll give you that."

He leaned forward and captured her hand in his fingers, his eyes never leaving hers. It was time to make his move. "I am good at other things, Meara. I want to teach you, show you the pleasure you've been missing."

She snatched her hand away. "What makes you think I'm so ignorant?"

He pointed out the window to where a single fairy snarled at them through the glass. "I am the same as you. I know how it is. The first time I ever kissed a girl one of them flew down and bit her on the ass. She thought I'd pinched her and smacked me for my trouble." He chuckled at the memory, encouraged when Meara smiled with him.

"One time a boy asked me to dance and several tied his shoelaces together. He tripped and knocked us both down, somehow managing to break his wrist." She sighed and her expression dimmed. "Not much action after that." She watched several fairies join their companion outside. "Looks like time's almost up."

"It doesn't have to be. Let me stay with you tonight. I'm off until tomorrow afternoon. We can make love for hours and sleep in as late as we want."

Her head shot up when he said "make love". But he needed her to know exactly what he was asking. If she came home with him, he didn't want to leave anything to chance.

He fully intended on making her scream as he discovered every inch of her...and let her discover every inch of him.

“I have been very patient,” he added. “All day long.”

“You’re not supposed to have sex on the first date.”

“Says who?”

“All the experts.” She crossed her arms over her chest.

“What do the experts say about seeing fairies?” he countered. “We have to decide what works for us...and you have to decide what works for you.” He tucked her hair back from her cheek, barely resisting the urge to beg her to say yes. “I said make love,” he added softly. “We both know there’s a difference.”

A crease of worry tried to form between her brows. He smoothed his finger down the wrinkle. “I intend to love you, Meara, whether you believe me now or not.”

He could still see her doubt. Taking her hand, he pulled her to her feet, throwing a stack of bills on the table. “Back to your place so I can get my bike.” He didn’t try to hide the disappointment in his voice, and was completely astounded by her next words.

“I think my bed’s big enough for two. You don’t snore do you?”

Jamison led her to the bedroom and closed the door behind them. Meara trembled when he turned to her again and she saw the hunger simmering in his eyes. She took an involuntary step back and he smiled at her softly.

“Come here.” He held out his hand and leaned against the door, legs spread wide as he waited for her to obey. His gaze narrowed when she still hung back, but his hand didn’t drop an inch. “Do you want me to go home? Last chance to back out.”

Meara tried to return his smile. “I just don’t want you to think I’m too easy.”

His chuckle would have charmed a nun. “I know you’re not easy. How long has it been? Tell the truth. No smart-ass answer, not this time.”

Grinning despite her nervousness, Meara glanced at him through her lashes. “Figured me out already, huh?”

He shook his head. “Not at all. But I intend to spend the next several years making strides in that direction. Tell you what, forget the true confessions bit. How about I’ll take off my shirt and you take off yours.” He pulled his tee shirt over his head. “Your turn.”

Meara swallowed, the atmosphere suddenly grown dark and dangerous. He was more beautiful than she’d imagined and she wanted him with a fever. However it ended up in the morning, she needed to be with him now. Taking a deep and calming breath, she unbuttoned her blouse, wishing she had on some frilly bra and panties. Not that she thought he’d let her keep them on long.

She saw the appreciation on his face as she stepped closer, thinking he was every bit as glorious as any Celtic god or hero of old. Muscled and tanned from the hours he spent on the ocean, his body invited her to run her hands across it, feeling the heat of his skin, tasting his lips and whatever else she could manage to get her mouth on.

He hooked a finger down the front of her bra and pulled her against him, his sigh of triumph a magical sound. “Kiss me, lassie,” he commanded, his hands cupping her bottom to urge her hips against his. “Make the first move, and I’ll do the rest...this time.” He ran his tongue across his teeth, his smile growing by the minute.

Meara giggled, relaxing into his embrace. He really was wonderful. He knew all the right things to say—and she was absolutely certain he knew all the right things to do.

She traced her fingers across his mouth, watching in fascination as his eyes darkened and his breath sped up. His cock swelled in his jeans and he wiggled her harder against him, the thrill of the contact sending a blaze of desire racing from between her legs—a need so intense, Meara could not suppress a whimper.

“Now we’re making progress,” he said in satisfaction. His fingers traced up her back to undo the hook of her bra before sliding the straps off her shoulders. “I’m still waiting for that kiss,” he mouthed against her hair, one finger dipping beneath her bra to barely brush against her nipple. Meara felt it swell, begging for a harder touch.

He thumped his head back against the door, as if daring her to come and get him.

It was an unspoken offer Meara couldn’t resist. Leaning deeper into his embrace, she rose on her tiptoes and gently touched his lips with hers. He opened his mouth instantly, eagerly allowing her to delve deeper, and Meara let the kiss grow stronger, teasing him with her tongue...only to cry out in stunned desire when Jamison took over.

He wrapped one hand around her waist, holding her steady while he drove his tongue deep into her mouth. Meara shuddered and her knees grew weak as he plundered the heat

of her. He took his time, easing the pressure, gentling the kiss, giving her a second to catch her breath before his tongue speared once more between her lips.

Without warning, he picked her up and carried her to bed, pulling away just long enough to peel off her bra and unzip her jeans. He tugged them down her legs and tossed them onto the floor before doing the same with his own.

“So much for ceremony,” Meara muttered, pleased when he smiled and jumped next to her on the bed.

“Do you need ceremony, sweet fairy princess?” He laid his hand on her stomach and she tried not to tremble. “You are as beautiful as I imagined.”

Meara felt herself blush. “I have too many freckles.”

“I happen to adore freckles.” His hand roamed lower. “I don’t need perfect...I just need you.” His fingers slipped into her curls before sliding down her thigh. They closed around one knee and pulled her legs apart.

Meara shook when those fingers trailed up to nudge into her slit.

“Um...shouldn’t we turn off the light or something?” Her voice sounded as breathless as she felt.

“I’d rather not,” he replied, his fingers beginning to circle her clit.

Meara whimpered and bit her lip. Jamison chuckled and captured her eyes with his as he snugged one finger high into her cunt. She was wet, ready, the scent of her desire strong and heady in the air. Jamison’s eyes burned as he pressed his finger deeper.

“Oh my G—” she started to cry, but Jamison stopped her with a shake of his head.

“Don’t you dare say god,” he warned, grinning wickedly. “Unless, of course, you are referring to me.” He let his thumb rub her clit while she squirmed and bucked against his hand. “More?” he asked bending his head to lap at one nipple.

Meara fought back the urge to scream like Banshee as Jamison continued his magical seduction. When he clamped his lips around her nipple and sucked it into his mouth, the sensation that shot down her stomach was wild beyond imagining. His teeth bit the budded flesh, tightening to the point of almost pain, and Meara threaded her fingers in his hair, not certain whether she was drawing him nearer or pushing him away.

She cried out when he released the pressure, licking softly as if to soothe her now aching flesh. But he soon had a different torment in mind.

He sat up and took both her knees in his hands, spreading them wide across the bed until she had no way to hide from the heat of his eyes upon her. Then his hands moved to part her sex even more.

“Sweet, soft and ready for the taking,” he murmured, rasping his thumb over her clit. Meara gasped and grabbed handfuls of the sheet.

“Relax, my little fairy. I promise you will not regret it.”

“I don’t know if I can,” she replied. “I swear my toes are already curling up.”

A chuckle rumbled deep in his throat. “Then I won’t keep you waiting.” He trailed his mouth down her stomach. “Very nice,” he whispered before thrusting his tongue into the heat and wet of her sex.

Meara cried out and arched off the bed, but Jamison held her down as he tongued her hard again. Now his mouth nibbled at the sensitive pearl of her clit, slipping over and over her flesh until Meara grew weak with the bliss of it.

His thick finger drove high into her cunt, this added pleasure wringing another cry of longing from her throat. She had never known it could be like this...that her entire being could ache and burn with so much desire she thought she would melt from the heat of it.

When he pushed a second finger in with the first, the shock of the stretch caused Meara to gasp. Jamison stilled instantly, but did not pull his fingers free.

“It has been a long time.” He moved up to look at her again. His face glowed with triumph and need. “Trust me,” he said, bringing his mouth to hers.

He was gentle, letting Meara explore the taste of her on his tongue. For a long time he did not move the fingers he had buried in her cunt, allowing her to adjust to his touch. His thumb began to circle her clit, faster and faster as he built her need again. Meara’s hips rose and ground against his hand, begging for him to give her release and let her fly into the paradise he offered.

At last he slipped his fingers free, only to plunge them into her once more. Meara cried out his name, her words swallowed by his kiss. Deeper and harder he took her with his hand, working the tight sheath of her cunt until Meara couldn’t think, couldn’t speak, the spark flaming deep inside her body to rise in wave after wave of release. She shook wildly in his arms, her body clenching tight around his fingers, needing more, wanting more, giving him everything he demanded.

“Ahhhhh, uhhhhh, Jamison!” Meara screamed, unable to stop the words as she came. Every inch of her body begged him to continue his punishing touch. “Please,” she whispered, her teeth digging into his shoulder. “Give me all of you.”

Before her trembling had even stopped, he pulled a condom out of his pants pocket, slid it on and rolled on top of her, positioning the wide head of his cock at the entrance to her cunt.

“Look at me,” he ordered. “See how much I need you.”

His eyes were dark, the green of long forgotten forests. She was not frightened by the hunger. She longed for it as much as he, raking her nails along his back as he speared her slowly with his length. Inch by inch, he worked himself inside her, controlled and careful not to cause her any pain.

But Meara grew tired of his cautious coupling. She curled her legs around his hips and pulled him in as far as he would go.

Now it was Jamison’s turn to cry out as he felt her sex clench tight around him. They fit together perfectly, as if she had been put in the world for no one else. He could feel the thick wall of her cunt contract, quivering as her body made room to accept him.

The last of his tenuous control slipped. He pulled out and drove hard into her again, reveling in the sound of her whimpers as she clung to him in desperate need. There was nothing that could stop him now.

His cock swelled and jerked inside her, his balls clenched tight against his body, and he swore his love to her over and over as the rush of release nearly broke him down. He had never been so satisfied in his life as he fell into her arms.

“Jamison,” Meara whispered, her hips still wiggling beneath his. “I, um, oh hell, could we please do that again?”

Chapter Five

“Meareee!”

Meara rolled over and looked at the alarm clock. Nearly four a.m.—way too early to wake up. If she woke up she would think of Jamison. And if she thought of Jamison she would grow lonely and hot and needy. The ache was already beginning to build and he’d been working double shifts for two days straight.

“Meeeeaaaarrreeeee!”

This time she turned on the fan, hoping the noise would drown out the sound of the sniveling outside.

“MEEEEAAARRREEEEEE!”

This was bad, really bad. How was she supposed to sleep with all that racket going on? She pulled on her robe and stomped her way to the door. After turning on the porch light, Meara stared in utter disbelief at the large plastic wasp-catchers she’d stuck up on plant hooks just before she’d gone to bed. Although she’d been forced to make the holes larger, the end result had succeeded beyond her expectations.

Nearly a dozen trapped fairies jostled and pinched at each other in their struggle to be free, and several pieces of wing and fur stuck to the sides of the bubbles.

“Well, well, well,” she said, opening the door and crossing her arms over her chest. “Lookey what I’ve got here.”

“Meareeee,” whined one, its face twisted into a pitiful expression. “Lets us outs. We don’t likes it here.” It screamed when another fairy clawed up its back to bare its teeth at Meara.

She watched them for several long moments, their pleas for freedom actually tugging at her heart. What was she supposed to do? Leave them trapped to die slow and horrible deaths, tearing each other apart in their desperation to escape? It was one thing to make them suffer horribly in her work...quite another to actually do it in real life.

“Will you go away and leave me alone?”

Their pinched faces glared back blankly. A fight started in one catcher as two of the more aggressive fae attacked a smaller one who was trying to lick some honey off the side of the ball. The sound of rending flesh was more than Meara could take. She twisted the plastic catchers open and ducked back into the house before they had time to fly free. Amazingly they did not scratch or claw at the door. After several minutes of silence, Meara grew curious. She opened the door a crack and snuck a peek outside. The fairies were nowhere to be seen, the only sign of their capture the tiny bits of iridescent dust that floated in the lamplight.

A single feather drifted down to land on Meara’s porch, so badly mangled she couldn’t even tell its color. Without thinking, she reached down to pick it up, shaking her head in disgust when she realized her intention.

Her plan had worked. They had gone and left her alone. Funny that she felt more abandoned than fulfilled. Stupid...silly...sad.

Meara clutched her robe tighter and stepped into the night. No lights flickered in the trees, no orbs glowed in her garden. It was dark and silent and no other thing was near. A crisp night breeze rose up from the ocean, bringing with it the faint sound of waves lapping against the shore. Drawn to watch the surf roll in, Meara slipped on a pair of old sneakers and made her way slowly to the edge of the cliffs.

A few clouds scudded across the moon’s bright light and stars twinkled like jewels in the bowl of the sky. The surf sighed against the strip of beach, and Meara could see the bob of fairy orbs surrounding two glowing forms.

Intrigued, Meara moved closer, curious to see if some young lovers were having a hidden tryst near the water. High-pitched laughter was followed by a deeper male chuckle, and as she listened, Meara began to think she knew the secretive pair.

“Banshee? Lugh? That you?” Her voice carried far in the still of the night.

The laughter grew as the two forms floated up to hover in the air, holding hands and smiling in sheer delight. Banshee and Lugh acted like two teenagers in love as they waved happily.

“I see you managed to find each other,” Meara said wistfully.

“She adores me.” Lugh wrapped one huge arm around the fairy’s tiny waist. “And I think she is more beautiful than any creature I have ever seen,” he added, his eyes glowing.

“We can’t thank you enough,” Banshee gushed, blushing when Lugh stroked her cheek. “If you ever need a favor, just ask.”

Meara smiled. “Someday I might take you up on that.”

Lugh glanced worriedly across the dark expanse of ocean. “We have to go. I promised Banshee we’d watch the sun rise over Ireland, high in the clouds where no one else can find us.” He wiggled his eyebrows and Banshee giggled before they sailed up and out of view.

The fairy lights followed them in an arc of color, leaving Meara alone again. She smiled, however, knowing Jamison would be off by late afternoon. And he’d promised to show her his place...starting with the bedroom.

The phone woke them before dawn had even broken. When Jamison answered his voice grew dim. “This isn’t funny anymore.” He slammed his cell-phone shut.

Meara smiled and swiped the bangs out of her eyes. “Whasa matter?”

Her sleepy gaze lulled him back to peace. With a sigh, he slid back in bed beside her and ran his fingers across her cheek. “Boring work stuff.”

“Mmmm.” She propped up on one elbow and the sheet slipped off her shoulders to catch on the soft swell of her breasts. “I like boring work stuff.” She shook her head when she saw the way his eyes had fastened on the tightening nipples outlined by the sheet. “Nope. I need some coffee first.”

She yawned and stretched, letting the sheet fall completely free.

He leaned in fast and sucked one of the dusky pearls into his mouth. His cock stood to attention when she stifled a whimpered moan.

“You are so bad,” Meara scolded, running her fingers through his hair and pulling his mouth closer. “I like that in a man...after he makes me breakfast and coffee.”

Jamison looked down at his swollen cock and sighed. “Are you really going to make me wait?”

Her laugh made him want to touch her even more, and when she threw off the covers and ran bare-bottomed to the kitchen, he followed, letting his cock lead the way. He’d feed her and woo her with his excellent morning brew...then he’d get to have his fun.

A few minutes later, Jamison poured coffee and sat next to Meara at the table. “Drink fast,” he said, nudging an elbow into her side.

Meara laughed before sipping slowly at the steaming liquid. “Got anything that remotely resembles pop-tarts? Sugar, flour, butter?”

“I could make you some whole-wheat French toast.”

“You’ve got to be kidding. I don’t do whole wheat. No doughnuts?”

Jamison chuckled and stood. “You’ll love it, I promise.”

Meara snorted. “Tell me about what’s bugging you at work.”

Jamison watched her open the fridge. “Butter is in the little cubbyhole marked butter. Eggs in the egg holders.”

“Good grief,” he heard her mutter. “Do you have everything in here where it’s supposed to be?”

“A place for everything and everything in its place. Too many years of military training.”

“Uh huh.” She stuck out her tongue as she plopped the butter on the counter.

He let his gaze darken. “Do that again,” he ordered, one hand tangling in her hair to pull her face to his.

“After breakfast.” Nonetheless, Meara touched her fingers to his mouth, the gesture compelling in its simplicity.

Jamison sighed and turned back to the toast.

“Work?” Meara prompted.

“You are as single-minded as a kid,” he teased, breaking eggs into a glass bowl. But he really wanted to discuss his frustrations with someone. Someone who would take his side and then take him to bed to soothe his worried mind. “I’ve had three recent cases where evidence has gone missing. No evidence, no trial. The bastards walked off scot-free.”

In spite of himself, he threw an egg across the room. It hit the wall and splattered in all directions. “Sorry,” he said when Meara raised a delicate brow. “It’s just...when I find out who’s stealing from the files, I plan to put us both out of our misery.” He flipped the French toast with way too much energy and growled when the piece landed in the sink.

“That one’s yours.” Meara curled her arms around his waist. “But are you sure it’s a someone, and not a something?” She pointed out the kitchen window to where a group of fairies tugged insistently at the lock on Jamison’s mailbox.

“Oh, hell.”

“Yeah, you think you’ve got them under your thumb,” Meara stated in an *I-told-you-so* voice, “but you can’t control them anymore than I can...not twenty-four/seven.”

Jamison pounded on the window. The twisted faces stared back at him in utter disregard. “Shit.” He piled the hot bread on one plate and doused the entire lot with powdered sugar.

“Now you’re talking.” Meara licked her finger and stuck it in the fine white powder.

“Then why just my evidence?”

“You’re their best friend?” She poured them both more coffee. “How do I know? They smell you?” She took a tentative bite of the French toast. “Mmm, not bad, but it needs a bit more sugar. She reached for the box but stopped in mid-grab, slapping a hand to her forehead. “Why didn’t I think of this before? I have the perfect solution. A fairy catcher.”

Jamison gave her a frown. “A fairy catcher. This is your perfect solution.”

“Yep. I have two at home, and they work great. Only problem is, I don’t know what to do with the miserable creatures once I’ve caught them. But the fairies can’t resist if you put something sugary and sweet inside.”

Jamison looked at her as though she had finally lost her mind. “What on earth are you talking about?”

Meara gave him a glance that said *oh-you-stupid-man* and started to explain. “I bought two wasp-catchers. I was going to see if they would catch fairies. Well they work—at least the one time I tried. I caught about a dozen...of course I had to let them back out again. Damn things look so pathetic trapped with their little noses and faces smooshed against the cage.” She frowned. “I used up the last of my honey. Do you think they’d go for lime Jell-O?”

Jamison looked as if she were talking some foreign language. “How does this help me?”

“We put one in the evidence room. If fairies are responsible for the stuff being taken, they won’t be able to resist.”

Realization dawned slowly over Jamison's face. "And if we don't get any fairies, we'll know it's a someone and not a something."

"Duh." Meara tapped her knuckles lightly on his head. "Get it?"

"And, um, how do we plan on getting this fairy trap in the evidence room?"

Meara let her smile widen. "That's your problem. I can't be expected to think up everything."

"I can't believe I let you talk me into this." Jamison stared at the blobs of green Jell-O dripping on the floor.

"Hold it still," Meara ordered, spooning in more of the sticky lime goo. "Almost done."

"Why do we need both?" Jamison sat one plastic orb on the table and picked up the other one. He'd never done anything so utterly ridiculous in his life, he thought, staring stupidly at the contraption. Two pieces of plastic screwed together to make a single ball, with a narrowing tube that opened into one side. The theory was that wasps, bees, and yes...even fairies...could crawl in, but the smaller opening inside prevented them from crawling out. The bait—in this case, lime Jell-O—was spread liberally inside to lure the creatures to their doom.

Except, of course, Meara insisted on setting them free, with a stern warning not to bother her again. Which, as far as Jamison could tell, worked about as well as ordering the grass not to grow.

"There." Meara smiled her satisfaction. "I'll go hang one up, and in about five minutes, we should catch at least four or five." The look in her eyes was almost maniacal as she carefully suspended one trap on a pole outside her door.

"Shhhh," she motioned him back inside, and they both peeked out of a window to watch the show begin.

She was right on the money, Jamison had to admit, as the fairies swarmed in by the dozen. They actually fought to be the first inside, the temptation of the sweet treat vastly overcoming their caution or control.

In minutes the catcher was full, with more tiny creatures still trying to get inside.

"Told ya." Meara's voice was triumphant. "The miserable things can't resist."

Jamison gave her an assessing glare. “You’re taking this way too seriously. Should I be concerned?”

She laughed. “Maybe. But as long as I stick to fairies and not Hansels and Gretels, I think the world is safe. Are you ready?”

“Do I have a choice?” He frowned at plastic ball now swinging wildly back and forth, knowing, with a true and utter defeat, that he really had none at all.

Barely a half hour later, Meara pulled her car onto a side street behind the police station. She watched Jamison fling a handful of fairy dust high into the night sky—just in case any wandering fairies decided to get nosey—and followed him to the back door.

“This is crazy.” He stopped dead in his tracks. “If we get caught, I’ll be arrested...and so will you.”

“If we don’t do this,” Meara replied, “the bad guys will never get caught. Sometimes you have to do the wrong thing to get the right result.”

He stared at her for several long seconds. “I never thought of it like that before,” he said, slowly shaking his head. “Not that I intend to go along with your twisted logic every time you ask me to.”

Meara snorted. “What makes you think I’m ever gonna ask you to again?” She poked him in the ribs. “Shhhhhh, we’re almost there.” She peeked in the window of the door, enjoying the subterfuge with an almost eager delight. She hadn’t done anything this risky in her life. “Is that him?”

Jamison looked to where the new guard sat snoring in his chair. “The idiot’s actually fallen asleep. This could be our lucky night. If we’re caught, I’ll just claim I was proving he was not doing his job. Come on.” He took out his key and unlocked the door. It slid open soundlessly and they crept quietly down the hall.

The guard didn’t move as they opened the evidence room door and hurried quickly inside. It was filled from floor to ceiling with metal shelves, each one stacked with perfectly matched brown boxes. Hundreds and hundreds of brown boxes.

“How on earth do you ever find anything in here?” Meara ran a finger along the edge of one shelf.

“Shhhhhh.” Jamison frowned. “That guard could wake up at any time.”

Meara snorted. “Hardly.”

She shut up anyway when he gave her a nasty glance. Huh, he would pay for that one later. She felt like poking him again just for fun.

“Where should we put this damned thing?” The scowl on his face was so serious, Meara giggled. When his lips thinned even more, she giggled again, clamping a hand over her own mouth to keep the laughter from spilling over. Tears streamed from her eyes as she tried desperately to remain silent despite the increasing humor of the whole situation.

She nodded to the corner. “Stick it over there,” she whispered through her fingers.

Jamison took it out of the box and cursed when a glob of green Jell-O fell on his shoe. Meara thought she would die from the effort it took not to squeal in amusement.

“And now?” His mood had grown even darker.

“We...we...h-have t-to h-hide,” Meara managed to choke out between chuckles. “Then you h-have t-to s-s-say...h-ere little fairies...h-h-here l-little—f-f—” She couldn’t finish the sentence she was giggling so hard.

Jamison glowered and shoved her behind a metal rack, pressing his face close to hers. “So, you think this is funny?”

Meara nodded, still not trusting herself to speak. Then she saw a small gleam of mischief twinkle in his eyes.

“What was I supposed to say? Here little fairy...here little fairy fairy?” His mouth twitched up at one corner.

Then they heard the unmistakable sound of buzzing wings.

“I’ll be damned,” Jamison said. “This crazy scheme of yours might actually work.”

Meara fought down the urge to scream *I-told-you-so* as they watched a trio of fairies hover over the catcher.

They seemed torn between temptations—eat the Jell-O or poke into the boxes. The Jell-O quickly won out. Like a bad cartoon show, they followed each other into the catcher, practically rolling in the sticky goo as they purred their satisfaction.

In seconds, Jamison had picked up the plastic ball and shoved it back into the box. The muted protests of the fairies barely floated on the air.

“Time to go,” he said, opening the door. Over his shoulder, Meara could see the guard still asleep in his chair.

The box began to shake as the fairies realized their dilemma and tried to escape. Jamison held onto it for dear life as he followed Meara back to the outside door. But before he could get it open, the guard snorted and raised his head.

Chapter Six

Meara shoved Jamison into the closest doorway just as the guard opened his eyes. “Um...could you tell me how to get back to the front desk?” She twirled her hair, opened her eyes wide and gave the befuddled man her best Marilyn Monroe imitation, fighting the urge to grimace when he boughed it tooth and nail.

“A pretty lady like you shouldn’t be wandering back here alone.” The guard stood and hiked his pants up around his substantial girth. “You could get into all kinds of trouble.”

Meara attempted a sultry pout, wanting nothing more than to roll her eyes at the man’s stupidity. “You’re not gonna arrest me, are you?” When Jamison snorted, Meara coughed to cover the noise. “I was supposed to meet someone for dinner, but it seems he stood me up. Can you imagine that?”

The guard’s smile grew. “The man must be a total fool,” he said, stepping close and running a hand up Meara’s arm.

She tried not to shudder as his sweaty palm scraped across her skin.

Just then, Jamison stepped back into the hallway. “There you are, my dear,” he said, taking her other arm and pulling her away from the guard. “I’ve been looking all over for you.”

The guard dropped his hand to his holster. “Who are you?”

“Jamison Murphy, Petty Officer First Class, United States Coast Guard Investigative Service.”

“Got any ID?”

“Of course.” Jamison handed the box to Meara. “Don’t open this until we get outside,” he admonished. “It’s a birthday present.” He pulled his badge from his pocket and showed it to the guard.

The guard frowned. “You’re not allowed in here.”

Jamison frowned back, and Meara could see he was gearing up for an argument. Men, why did they always feel the need to pull rank?

“Jimmy, baby,” she whined, batting her lashes at him. “I’m hungry. You promised me a special dinner.” She stamped her foot, making sure it landed on Jimmy-baby’s toes.

He grunted, but was smart enough to take the hint. “You are so right, my darling. Dinner it is.” He turned back to the guard. “Sorry to have bothered you, my man, we’ll let you get back to your job.” With a quick nod, he grabbed Meara’s arm and practically hauled her down the hallway. He unlocked the door and let them out, heaving a huge sigh of relief when they were finally back in Meara’s car.

“That was way too close. If that guard decides to write a report, I’ll have a lot of explaining to do.”

The box shook violently and the sound of shrieking fairies grew.

“We’d better not let them out here.” Meara started her car and drove quickly to the quiet street her parents lived on. “Don’t let them go until they’ve answered some questions.” She turned on the inside light and watched Jamison pull the catcher out of the box. The trapped fairies blinked as their eyes adjusted.

“Jamseeee.” A pretty sprite with rainbow wings smiled, showing a double row of teeth.

Jamison shook his finger at it. “Are you the ones who’ve been taking my evidence?”

They stared at him in complete non-comprehension.

“Have you been messing with Jamsee’s things?” Meara added. “If you tell the truth, we’ll let you out. If not...somehow I don’t think you want to stay in there forever.”

The sprite bared her fangs even more.

Meara shrugged and nodded to Jamison. “Okay, put them back in the box.”

“Wait, wait, wait,” begged one with sticky purple feathers. “We’ll tell, we’ll tell.” It pulled off a piece of the sprite’s wing, who turned and bit off a mouthful of its feathers.

“I’m listening.” Jamison sat the catcher on his lap and folded his arms across his chest, looking for all the world like a disgruntled father scolding his wayward children.

Meara had never thought of Jamison as a father, but she realized he would be a good one—the perfect mix of discipline and fun. She imagined him laughing as he tossed their son or daughter in the air or smiling softly as he kissed one a sweet goodnight. She shook her head to clear the pictures from her mind. Wanting too much was never a good thing.

“Bad things in room,” the third fairy offered, licking Jell-O off its foot. “Not for Jamseeeee.”

Jamison gave Meara a puzzled glance. “Do you think they’re talking about the drugs?”

“Drugs, drugs, drugs, drugs, drugs,” the purple one sang. “Nots, nots, nots, nots, nots.”

Meara had to chuckle. “Do you think that’s the fairy version of just say no?”

“I hope not. How am I supposed to convince them to leave the stuff alone?”

Meara shook her finger at the fae. “If you take the drugs, Jamsee cannot catch the baddest guys.”

“Baddest?” His voice was thick with amusement. “And I don’t think we’re going to start this Jamsee business.”

Three pairs of fairy eyes grew round in surprise. Then, to Meara’s utter astonishment, the trio put their heads together and whispered among themselves in some language she had never heard. When they looked at Meara and Jamison again, their expressions had changed completely.

“Done,” said the purple-feathered fae. “Jamsee catches.” The other two nodded their heads in agreement.

Jamison gave Meara an interested look. “Should we believe them?”

“I don’t know. I’ve never heard them sound so serious. Do you think they really understand?”

“We does, we does,” came the affirmative reply.

“Then off you go.” Jamison unscrewed the plastic ball and let the fairies free before rolling down his window and watching them fly off into the night. “I guess that settles that.”

He closed the window and put the box in the backseat before he pinned her with a sultry look.

“Take off your jeans,” he said suddenly, his voice calm and in control.

Meara’s wasn’t. “Here?” She glanced around uneasily. “What if somebody sees?”

His laugh soothed her ears. “This from the woman who just broke into a police station and could have been arrested for stealing valuable evidence? Come on, Meara,

getting arrested for public indecency is a much smaller offense.” Jamison’s look dared her to refuse. “Do it.” He reached over and turned off the car light.

His eyes narrowed as Meara reached down to untie her shoes. She slipped them off and reached for the zipper of her jeans.

“Go on.”

Her heart raced when she realized he was serious. Without another word, she did as he demanded and shivered when her bare legs met the cold. A flick of his wrist turned the car back on, and a welcome heat blew from the vent.

“Are the doors locked?”

Meara pushed the button and nodded.

“Good. Now take off your panties, lean back against the door and spread your legs.”

She felt wanton stripping in the car, brazen and sexy and bold. She managed to get her panties off without too much difficulty, and leaned back against the door. Her bravado faltered, however, when she came to the next part of his demand. Raising her legs up onto the seat, she let her knees slowly fall apart.

Jamison wasn’t satisfied. He hooked both hands behind her knees and pulled her hips toward him, pushing one leg back to the floor. When the chilly air hit her open sex, Meara shivered until he placed one hot hand on her mound. His fingers probed the hill of her clit, rasping and pinching the knot of flesh into wild and vibrant life.

“Tell me what you want. Should I make you come like this or do you want my fingers inside you?” Desire spiked high into her cunt, the blast shooting all the way to her breasts. His fingers stilled when she did not answer. “Talk to me.” He made no move to continue.

Her heart was pounding so loud she thought surely he would hear it. “Both. I want both.”

“Now we’re getting somewhere.” His fingers began to strum her again, easily working her arousal higher. Meara squirmed on the seat, nearly screaming in frustration when he refused to give her what she’d asked for. Her body was open, empty and waiting...needing him to fill her and take her over the edge.

She could feel the climax building—with each circle of his fingers her want built higher. Without shame she bucked her hips against his hand. “Damn it, Jamison I—ahhhhhh.” Her voice cried out in shocked surprise as Jamison finally took her with his hand.

Meara moaned when he drove his fingers inside her with one hard thrust. She cried his name when he wiggled even deeper, stroking the sensitive wall of her sex while his other hand worked at her now begging clit.

“Come for me,” he told her, surging his fingers high again. And again. And again.

Meara couldn't have stopped even if she tried. Jamison stroked deep inside her in a way he hadn't done before. The teasing of his fingers against the thick bundle of nerves sent the madness racing from her toes. Her climax hit her hard and fast, the rush of pleasure climbing and climbing as her cunt clenched hard around his hand and her body shook uncontrollably.

He continued to thumb her clit as the waves of bliss subsided. When Meara's breathing slowed, she peeked at him out of one eye. “Come here and kiss me,” he said, reaching for her hand. “And then take me home with you. I have other plans for us tonight.”

Jamison sat on her couch, his shirt unbuttoned and his legs spread wide. He pointed to the floor in front of him. “Kneel.”

Meara swallowed when she saw the look that crept into his eyes. She took a tentative step toward him, willing her legs not to falter.

“Now,” he added without the slightest bit of humor. Meara wasn't certain whether she should be totally turned on or apprehensive by this new side of Jamison's personality.

Turned on won when he lowered the zipper of his jeans. She dropped to her knees before him, her gaze riveted to the swelling bulge between his thighs. His fist tangled in her hair, pulling her face toward his stomach. He smelled of sweat and male arousal, and Meara rubbed her cheek against his skin as if she could draw his scent into her.

He let out a sigh and leaned back into the couch, shoving his hips forward. His hand stayed threaded in her hair, keeping her close against his stomach. “Taste me, little fairy. I want to feel your lips around me.”

Desire hit heavy again between Meara's thighs. The ache already tingled in her sex, an urgent need to please him in any way he demanded.

Timeless magic surrounded them in the night. Was he the hero who had rescued her from danger, now awaiting his reward in the hot kiss of her mouth? She would repay him

in full for his bravery and daring, listening to him cry her name as she brought him to sweet release.

Wind howled as it swept in from the sea, whistling through the cracks in her small cottage, creating an atmosphere that reeked of myth and legend.

As her hands slid up his thighs, Meara admired the feel of well-used muscle, strong and thick beneath the tight denim. Jamison sighed again, the sound mingling with the wind-song and the faint crash of waves upon the shore. She felt wanton and bold, like a woman who knew all the secrets of love and intended to share them with the man who held her heart. Trailing her face down his stomach, she let her hands move to cup his cock. This time his sigh grew into a moan as he arched up to press himself against her. Meara fingered his zipper all the way down and pulled his jeans apart to set his swollen length free.

“Take them off,” he ordered, lifting his hips.

Meara did as he demanded, her eyes widening in admiration as she slid the pants to the floor. He raised his feet to let her peel the jeans off completely. This time she let her mouth travel up his leg, splaying her fingers over his hips.

His hand tugged in her hair, tilting her face back until her eyes met his. “You are the fairest of them all,” he whispered, running a thumb over her bottom lip. “Tell me you love me, Meara, that you know we belong together.”

She wanted to say the words, she really did, and he made it sound so easy to believe as he whispered his truth for her to hear. Instead, she smiled and sucked his thumb into her mouth, rolling her tongue over his skin until his eyes slid shut and he growled his need.

She let her teeth scrape against his chest as she moved her mouth down his flat stomach. His erection pressed between her breasts and she cupped them together with her hands, encasing him between the soft mounds of flesh.

“Please don’t stop,” he said. The words came out like a plea.

Meara had no intention of stopping as she took the velvet length of him in her hands. She rolled his cock between her palms, loving the way his skin slid so soft and supple over hers. She stroked him faster, his groans like music in her ears as the wind blew wilder outside in the night.

But she needed more. She needed to taste the strength of him, run her mouth over his flesh until he both begged her to stop and begged her to continue. At last she wrapped her

lips around the tip of his cock, letting the heat of him slide into her mouth inch by delicious inch. He jerked as she sucked him in. His thighs quivered on the couch and Meara could feel him fight to keep from thrusting too hard against her.

She withdrew her mouth slowly, listening to him swallow back his cry of frustration. Her own body burned with a rising fever, her cunt aching to feel the weight of him pushing deep inside. It was a joyous pain, one she would never care to give up. She sucked him faster and faster, matching his rhythm as his hips rose to meet her mouth. The taste of him dripped on her tongue, tangy and thick and perfect man.

She glanced up to see his head thrown back against the couch, the muscles in his neck taut as he struggled to keep control. She let a hand reach down to squeeze his balls before she grew even bolder, licking her finger to nudge it up into the crease of his ass.

To her absolute surprise he bent one knee and placed his foot on the couch, giving her greater access to explore the tight ring of muscle.

“Fair warning,” he whispered through gritted teeth. “Whatever you do to me, I plan to return in full and greater measure.”

A thrill of fear and expectation raced up Meara’s spine. Did she dare? Was she ready to take their discovery further? Already her tiny entrance screamed in need, asking for things she’d never dreamed of. The thought of him reaching deep into her ass drove her desire to a pitch she had never known before.

Throwing all caution to the wind, she wiggled her finger deep between Jamison’s cheeks, piercing the ring of muscle while he cried out her name. When he growled, she pulled her finger out and sank it deep into him again. He clenched both hands around her shoulders, pulling her mouth hard onto his cock as she continued to drive her finger into the opening of his ass.

Every muscle in his body tensed and she felt his balls curl up into the root of his cock. He screamed, a low and guttural sound as the length of him stiffened even more and he came with a rush in her mouth.

Meara held onto him as he jerked his hips beneath her, swallowing the seed he juttied down her throat. His growls died slowly and his breathing became more steady. Meara slipped her lips away and laid her head down on his thigh.

“Look at me,” he finally commanded.

Meara found herself suddenly shy as she remembered his earlier admonition. Full and greater measure he had promised...she began to anticipate just what that meant. Very

slowly she lifted her eyes to his. They were the darkest green she had ever seen, almost black in the candle light.

“You know what I am going to say,” he warned her, a terrible smile tugging at his lips. “Now it’s your turn to pay.”

Meara felt the blood heat up her cheeks. Damn, she hadn’t planned to blush. She’d planned to act as if she’d done this every day of her life. But Jamison knew better. She’d told him as much in the beginning. And the feral look on his face made her want to run away and lock herself in her room.

“Come here, my precious,” he hissed, crooking his finger at her. “My turn to play.”

Meara shivered in need and hesitation. Did he plan what she thought he planned? “Um...I, uh...what are you going to do?”

Her nervousness must have shown in her voice, for his eyes softened and an easier smile tilted up one corner of his mouth. “Nothing you don’t want me to...but you already made it clear you wanted to. Do you have a vibrator?”

Meara swallowed. “The batteries are dead.”

“Doesn’t matter, go get it anyway. You don’t really want me to wait...do you?” The hint of threat in his voice was enough to spur her to delicious dread. “If you don’t have any lubrication, we’ll need some olive oil. Got any?”

“In the kitchen,” she whispered, her throat closing around the words. “The cabinet over the sink.”

He chuckled, a rich and heady sound. “You have three minutes to get your toy and meet me back here.” He pulled her face up to his and kissed her gently on the mouth. “Say no now,” he stated.

Her legs were shaking so bad she didn’t know how she would stand. “What if I don’t like it?” The catch in her voice was obvious.

The truth in his was just as plain. “Then we stop and move on to other pleasures.” He bent close and bit the lobe of her ear. The sting was enough to make Meara whimper as a new thrill of longing raced across her flesh. “Two minutes,” he whispered.

Meara swallowed and stood, somehow managing to make it to her bedroom without stumbling. She could hear Jamison whistle as he rummaged in her kitchen, and she wanted to shout at him to stop, give her more time to decide...but all the while she was digging through her drawers, searching for the thing he’d demanded.

She actually squeaked when she heard him come into the bedroom. “I can’t find it,” she admitted, clasping her hands together. Then she froze when she saw the new look on his face.

He stood rigid in the doorway, a piece of paper crumpled in his hand. “When were you going to tell me about this?” One clenched fist held up the letter for her to see. “You must have thought it was some great joke to hear me tell you how much I love you while all the time you were packing to leave.”

Meara felt her hackles rise at his unfounded accusation. “That’s not fair, and you know it. We only met a few days ago. Do you really expect me to change my life based on some sexual fling?” She wanted to bite back the words as soon as they’d left her mouth. The need to run to him and beg his forgiveness set her teeth on edge. She gritted back the emotion—Meara Magee never begged for anything...at least not until she’d met Jamison.

But his face had already paled beneath his tan and the hurt in his eyes was unmistakable—so was the resolve that turned their green to black. “You are right,” he bit out. “What could I possibly have been thinking?” He let the letter slip to the floor before striding back into the living room.

Meara fought with herself as she listened to him put on his jeans and shoes. Wasn’t it easier to end things now? Let him go and get on with his life while she got on with hers?

No. No it wasn’t. She ran to catch him, to beg him to come back, but she was too late. The furious sound of his motorcycle engine ripped through the air, growing fainter and fainter as he raced out of her life.

The storm rolled in just after noon the next day. By dusk it had grown to near gale force, the wind and rain slicing through the air like glass. Meara paced her small living room, growing more and more worried as she watched the weather outside. Lightning streaked from the clouds to crash wildly into the water and thunder rattled the windows.

She’d tried to call Jamison all day, but if he was home, he’d refused to answer.

In desperation, she decided to call him at work. The gruff voice of the Chief Petty Officer only added to her despair. Jamison had gone out on assignment just after dawn. They’d lost contact with his boat several hours ago. If they heard anything they would let

her know, but it was too dangerous to send anyone to search for him when they had no clue where to look in the still growing storm.

Jamison was out there somewhere, lost, alone, his radio long dead and no one coming to his aid.

Meara looked to where the lighthouse once stood on the bluff and thought of all the women who had waited through the years for their men to return from the sea. No welcoming glow lit up the night; no beam of light shone to guide her sailor home.

A sharp knock on her door had Meara running to open it, only to freeze in panic when she saw Banshee's dripping form.

"No." Meara backed away. "No. Not now. Go away, I don't want you here!"

She tried to slam the door shut, but Banshee's icy hand closed over hers.

"He is not mine yet," she said, her voice barely quivering. "But he will be soon if you don't do something."

"Me?" Meara's throat wanted to close around the word. "What can I do? You promised me a favor...this is what I want. Find some way to save him!"

Banshee shook her head, true sorrow shadowing her eyes. "We are forbidden to interfere. It has always been so. Meara, if he goes...if he does die, I promise I will see him safely across. It is all I can do." Tears spilled from her eyes as she floated slowly into the sky, her hair and dress trailing like tatters behind her.

Meara wanted to scream, cry, anything to release the harsh emotions rushing through her. She could feel the frenzied energy of the storm. It pulled her toward it, urging her to leave the safety of shelter and journey into its beckoning grip.

She didn't even bother to put on a coat as she followed the call of the elements. Drawn by an ageless need, Meara bent her head and trudged through the mud and muck until she stood on the bare outcrop of land, hoping for any sign of Jamison at all. She knew she was crazy, knew and did not care.

The sea-spray stung her eyes and skin, but she refused to cower from the blast as she paced back and forth, her hair whipping around her like a shroud, her body shaking from the numbing cold.

She couldn't see a thing. The world was dark, bleak, not even the smallest hint that Jamison was near. And yet she swore she could feel him call her across the distance; saw the stubborn look on his face as he struggled to reach her side. They were the same, he

had told her, and Meara knew it was true. He was her other half, her soul. Without him, she would shatter. Without him, she would never be whole.

A light bounced along the ground beside her. Meara frowned at the bedraggled fairy who grinned at her through the rain. What on earth would possess it to follow her out into this mess?

On another day she would have cursed it into oblivion, but now she found a comfort in its pulsing light, as if at least one friend had come to keep her company.

She was startled to see another join the first, their contrary natures seeming to take a gleeful delight in taunting the elemental powers. They soared above the water, skimming the sand as they came racing toward Meara's perch on the bluff. And then, to her utter astonishment, hundreds of them descended upon her, talking and laughing as they tangled her hair and picked at her clothes.

Too preoccupied to swat them away, Meara turned again to the ocean, offering pleas for Jamison's safety to every power she knew. Still the fairies continued to flock around her, their combined light so bright she was forced to shield her eyes.

In a flash of understanding, Meara finally saw their game for what it was, the feisty fae's way of helping her cause.

They glowed with the power of a thousand candles, untouched by the wind and rain, their lights shining strong and clear and bright. If Jamison was anywhere close, he would surely see and be guided home. She smiled at them for the first time in her life and stood proud to be among them as they swarmed gaily in the storm.

Jamison struggled to keep his boat afloat. He'd chased the drug runners way too far in his determination to discover where they kept their stash. But he'd found them, the bastards. He knew exactly where they were hiding, and he'd managed to call in the coordinates right before his radio went dead. Now he was trying to make it home before his boat was slammed onto the rocks that littered the coast, and he was lost at sea as so many of his ancestors had been before.

He thought he saw Banshee streaking through the rain-drenched night, her wails of warning drowned out by the shriek of the wind and the pounding of the surf. In a perverse way it comforted him to know she was there, that if worse came to worse, someone familiar would ferry him over to the other side. But he had no intention of dying...not now...not tonight.

Meara was still in her cottage by the sea and he had to see her one last time, even if he had to call the very gods themselves to aid him in his quest. He couldn't let his angry words be the last thing said between them.

He grinned fiercely as he fought the raging sea, battling her fury as men had done for ages. "Do your best," he shouted through the gale. "You haven't beaten me yet!" Forcing his numbing hands to keep the wheel steady, he plowed on through the churning waters.

But the elements were winning. Waves splashed over the sides of the boat, filling the hull and weighing her down. He couldn't reach the pump. If he left the wheel he would crash on the rocks.

Banshee swept closer, the look on her face both terrifying and soothing. Shit, he thought, I'm not gonna make it. Damn it all anyway, he still had things to do.

He heard the boat grind and felt it lurch as it scraped across a hidden rock. More water poured in and she listed to one side. Banshee dropped to hover behind him, nodding her head toward a far and distant spot. Jamison followed her glance.

An arc of rainbow colored fire swept to the heavens, radiating a glow that could not be missed. It twisted and writhed in the mist and clouds, but remained a constant beacon, giving him hope that land might be near. In a last ditch effort, Jamison guided his sluggish boat in the direction of the glow. It would be a long shot at best, but given the odds, he didn't have a choice. League by agonizing league, he struggled to make it through.

He hit another rock as the water grew shallow. This time his boat had had enough. With a groan of regret, her bow went down and she sank without another sound. Jamison screamed his frustration as the icy water closed around him. Even with the life jacket he was too far out—he couldn't keep warm long enough to make the swim to shore.

He choked on a mouthful of ocean that forced its way down his throat. His fury knew no bounds. Another wave pushed him under again, holding him below for what seemed like hours. He couldn't breathe, couldn't find the surface. Could feel nothing as the cold set in.

Fuck.

A deathly pale hand reached down for him to grab; Banshee was determined to do her job. He hesitated, torn between coming to terms with his situation, and the need to see his beloved Meara one last time.

Banshee had no such reservations. She curled her fingers in a death grip around his and hauled him from the water. “Not one word,” she whispered in his ear as she carried him the last of the way and dumped him on the shore. He could have sworn he actually saw her smile as she vanished like a wisp of smoke.

He laughed in celebration as the fairies swooped to surround him. He didn’t care that they poked fingers up his nose or yanked out fistfuls of his hair. He was alive. Period.

“Jamison Murphy,” he heard Meara call as she raced to meet him on the shore. “I swear, if you ever scare me like this again, I’ll kill you myself and spare Banshee the trouble.”

Her face was as beautiful as he remembered, even with mascara dripping down her cheeks and her skin turning blue from the cold. “Maybe Nevada wouldn’t be such a bad place to live,” he answered, letting his eyes snap shut.

“I’ve changed my mind,” he heard her say as he passed out in her arms.

“What in the world?” Jamison stared in fascination at the bits of cloth, string and plastic Meara had strung across the yard. Wind-chimes and pieces of colored glass hung from every tree and bush, spinning and tinkling in the breeze blown from the sea.

Fairies swarmed among the chaos, flitting from one new toy to the next like children the day after Christmas.

Meara smiled wickedly. “That should keep them occupied for quite some time. When they get tired of those—” she pointed to a huge stack of boxes sitting in the kitchen, “—I have plenty more to tempt them with.”

Jamison grinned and pulled her tight against him. “Do you have something tucked away that you could use to tempt me?” He rubbed his morning stubble against her neck, causing her to shriek delightedly. He had just gotten her back into bed when they heard the baby laughing.

“Your turn,” Meara said, snuggling under the covers. “Bring her in...she might go back to sleep.”

“Fat chance,” he muttered, pushing open the nursery door. Their new daughter, Brianna, lay staring out the window, babbling excitedly at the fairy preening itself on the outside of the glass.

“Your mother is not going to like this,” Jamison said, picking her up and holding her close. “So, let’s not tell her for a while, hmmm? A long, long while.”

About the Author

To learn more about Gia Dawn, please visit www.giadawn.com. Send an email to Gia at info@giadawn.com or join her Yahoo! group to join in the fun with other readers as well as Gia Dawn! <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/giadawn>.

Look for these titles by Gia Dawn

Now Available:

Lord Demon's Delight

Lady Strumpet

Journey to the heart of Celtic legend.

Love and Lore

© 2007 *Carolan Ivey, Gia Dawn and Sela Carsen*

Samhain is pleased to celebrate its second anniversary with three novellas that will lure you into the labyrinth of Celtic myth and legend.

In *Wildish Things*, Carolan Ivey brings together an artist who is wounded in both body and spirit, and a sexy Irish bad boy on a Harley. Their whirlwind fling across Ireland takes a dangerous turn when their sexual chemistry awakens the deadly lust of an ancient goddess.

Gia Dawn's offering of *A Fairy Special Gift* has it all: A woman who can see fairies and wishes she couldn't, and a man who promises to help her with her "problem"—for the price of a kiss. Stir in the Celtic god Lugh who wants the woman for himself, rowdy flock of untamed pixies, and a pining Banshee in need of a makeover, and let's just say there aren't enough fairy traps in the world to control the chaos.

The *Heart of the Sea* beckons in Sela Carsen's take on the Selkie legend. When a woman accidentally falls into the sea and turns into a seal, the man she loves believes her drowned. Seven years later, she rescues him from a shipwreck and for one blissful night, she returns to her human form. But only for a night. Can true love overcome the Selchie curse?

When she bargained with the devil of her dreams, they both found their heart's delight.

Lord Demon's Delight

© 2007 Gia Dawn

Lady Jessaline Nolan is as stubborn as her fiery red hair implies; thwarting her father's wishes every chance she gets. The day of her impending forced marriage proves no exception. She swears she would rather marry a Demon of Dunmore than the man her father has chosen.

Lord Llewellyn Dunmore is happily unwed, as the men in his lineage have remained for generations. It's become a family tradition. But he is drawn to the beautiful damsel in distress and agrees to save her on one condition—that she willingly succumb to his every sensual demand. To his utter surprise, she agrees.

While Jessaline's father schemes to bring her back by any means necessary, Jessaline and Llewellyn spend their nights in decadent delight and three rather cranky fairy-godmothers lend their magical help to the lovers.

Darker secrets lurk, however, as well as a shadowy past that Jessaline is unaware of. Can the new love between Jessaline and Llewellyn survive when confronted with hidden truths?

First book in the Demons of Dunmore Series

Enjoy the following excerpt for Lord Demon's Delight:

Jessaline hesitated just outside the door. Her fingers shook and she was more nervous than she cared to admit. She had no doubt he would claim his portion of the bargain—no doubt he was more than capable of demanding his husbandly rights. She had seen and felt the proof of that more than once this day.

But he was huge, so long and broad she did not know how she would manage to fit him all inside her. Despite his words to the contrary, she was afraid he would hurt her. The goblets on the tray tinkled as her hands trembled again, and the newly familiar ache shuddered up from between her thighs.

Anticipation. Desire.

Taking a deep breath, she pushed the door open—and almost dropped the tray in shock when she saw him sitting naked by the fire.

His hair was wet from where he had washed it, rivulets of water dripped down his neck. His chest was broad, smooth, a few faint scars from battle traced across the skin. She let her gaze

roam lower, past the tensed muscles of his stomach, along the line of chestnut hair, to stare again at his heavy cock, watching in wonder as it moved beneath her gaze.

He shifted in his chair, stroked a hand across his balls, and adjusted the now rigid length of flesh so it rose up to lie across his stomach.

The glass chimed again as Jess's hands began to shake in earnest.

"Are you afraid?" His question surprised her. She dragged her gaze back to his face. He studied her from beneath his lashes. "I have promised not to hurt you." So soft, his voice, soft and beguiling. "Put down the wine and come to me."

It was a command Jessaline could not refuse. Her heart pounded too fast as she placed the tray on the floor. She longed for a glass of wine to calm the sudden rush of her breath and steady the shaking of her fingers so he would not see her discomfort.

He held out his hand and motioned her forward. Jess stepped closer, wishing she had some easy words to lessen her growing nervousness. She swallowed, her throat gone suddenly dry as she moved to stand before him.

"Take off your gown, lady." His voice was still soft, but Jess heard how it had deepened and grown thick with his own dark emotion.

She lifted the hem and began to pull the heavy garment up her legs, knowing he watched her every move. She slid it across her breasts, feeling her nipples tighten as the rough wool scraped over them. She let the gown drop to the floor and stood draped in only her linen kirtle.

"That, too."

Jess jutted out her chin and gave him her best glare. "Are you just going to watch me all night?" She needed him to touch her, to know whether his hands would prove as soft as his voice.

He chuckled, a purr that sent ripples of anticipation across her skin. "Oh, no. I intend to touch, stroke, explore and plunder every inch of your perfect flesh." He straightened in his chair and leaned toward her, his smile one that would make the devil proud. "But first I want to look at you. All of you."

Again that shock of fire quivered between her thighs. Jess tried to press her legs together, hoping to ease the throb radiating from their depths. He saw her squirm and his smile grew broader.

"The kirtle," he said.

In a last spark of bravado, Jess tore the laces apart at the neck and shrugged the garment to the floor. Her skin tingled in the sudden chill, the goose bumps puckering her nipples even more. She felt wanton standing naked in the night, her husband's hungry gaze traveling the length of her.

“You are beautiful,” he whispered. Jess was pleased to hear a tremor in his voice. For the first time she thought of herself as wanted, desirable, someone more than just her father’s pawn.

“Come.” He held out his hand and sat back in the chair.

Jess placed her fingers in his, feeling the faint tremor that shook them. He drew her down onto his lap, her back turned toward him and pressed against his chest. She felt her body shiver as he tucked her into his warmth, and sucked in her breath as the mass of him settled between the cheeks of her bottom.

He wrapped one strong arm around her, gathered her close, and let his other hand tangle in her hair. Jess could not stop her trembling as he nuzzled his face into her neck and let his lips trail across the sensitive skin to nibble at her earlobe.

Jess sucked in her breath as the delicious feelings washed over her. Now his hand swept through her hair to brush the outside of her breast. He hesitated, teasing her skin before closing his palm over its weight.

“Ahhh!” The sound escaped her as he found her nipple and let it slide between his fingers. He pressed harder and Jess had to bite her lip to keep from crying out again. She held her breath, tried to think, made a last effort to keep control as he took her nipple and pinched, firmer, rougher, while Jess twisted on his lap, trying to find some relief from the unbearable need that blasted down her stomach.

She heard his own intake of breath as her wiggling jostled his stiffened cock. Now his hand dropped to fall heavy on her thigh. Jess tensed when his fingers inched their way up her leg.

“Tell me to stop,” he said. His hand stayed motionless at the very top of her thigh. “Just say the word and we can come to an amicable parting.”

She shook her head and settled harder on his lap. Some wicked part of her she did not know she possessed urged her to wiggle once more against his turgid length. She could hear the amusement in his voice when he whispered in her ear.

“Is that the game you wish to play?”

His other hand fell to her opposite thigh and he slid both hands toward her knees. In one swift movement he spread her legs wide, holding them open with his thighs. Jess shivered when she felt the air hit the moisture of her open cunt. She felt exposed and unprotected—but she could not deny that she enjoyed the position she was in.

Slowly, he slid his hands up toward her mound, stretching her legs wider. Jess heard her breath grow heavy and hesitant, the anticipation almost more than she could take.

When he finally brought one hand across her tangle of curls, Jess felt her body jump to meet him. One finger rubbed into her slit, slowly moving back and forth as he spread the wet of her to make the passage smoother.

Jess moaned, the ache of need almost more than she could stand. “Please,” she whimpered, turning her head to nestle against his neck.

“Open for me,” Llew replied. “Let me touch inside you.”

SAMHAIN PUBLISHING, LTD.

It's all about the story...

Action/Adventure

Fantasy

Historical

Horror

Mainstream

Mystery/Suspense

Non-Fiction

Paranormal

Red Hots!

Romance

Science Fiction

Western

Young Adult

www.samhainpublishing.com