

SIRENS SONG

A Siren Sisters Anthology

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Siren's Song [A Siren Sisters Anthology]
by Melinda Barron, Midnyte Dupree, Jade Buchanan

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CONTENTS

[Sirens Song](#)

[Prologue](#)

[Iaha's Story](#)

[Dedication](#)

[Chapter One](#)

[Chapter Two](#)

[Chapter Three](#)

[Chapter Four](#)

[Chapter Five](#)

[Chapter Six](#)

[Chapter Seven](#)

[Chapter Eight](#)

[Chapter Nine](#)

[Chapter Ten](#)

[Chapter Eleven](#)

[Chapter Twelve](#)

[Chapter Thirteen](#)

[Chapter Fourteen](#)

[Chapter Fifteen](#)

[Adara](#)

[Dedication](#)

[Chapter One](#)

[Chapter Two](#)

[Chapter Three](#)

[Chapter Four](#)

[Chapter Five](#)

Siren's Song [A Siren Sisters Anthology]
by Melinda Barron, Midnyte Dupree, Jade Buchanan

[Chapter Six](#)

[Chapter Seven](#)

[Chapter Eight](#)

[Chapter Nine](#)

[Chapter Ten](#)

[Chapter Eleven](#)

[Chapter Twelve](#)

[Aella](#)

[Dedication](#)

[Chapter One](#)

[Chapter Two](#)

[Chapter Three](#)

[Chapter Four](#)

[Chapter Five](#)

[Chapter Six](#)

[Chapter Seven](#)

[Chapter Eight](#)

[Chapter Nine](#)

[Epilogue](#)

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Sirens Song

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[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

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[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Prologue

Poseidon pulled himself from the sea, laid out flat on the rock and reveled in the sunshine. It was a beautiful summer day, and he was happy to be alive. He had numerous beautiful women ready to do his bidding, control of the sea, and not a care in the world.

The sun shone brightly as he surveyed the Aegean Sea. He closed his eyes and tried to decide which female to grace with his presence tonight. He'd just decided on revisiting a beautiful blond he'd ravished three nights previous when a loud male voice broke his thoughts.

"You seem lazy today, brother. It's not often you pull yourself from frolicking in the sea, unless a woman is involved."

Poseidon opened his eyes and frowned at his brother.

"What do you want, Zeus? I'm relaxing and don't need an interruption from you."

Zeus laughed and ran his hand through his white hair.

"Whether or not you want my interruptions we need to have a talk, concerning your daughters."

Poseidon laughed. "Which ones? I have several hundred of them, you know."

Zeus's smile turned into a frown. "It's your youngest three, the half-humans, that are causing problems."

Poseidon's grin expanded. "Those three are my darlings. They never cause trouble. I don't know what you're talking about."

Zeus sat down next to his brother and shook his head. "They're telling people that their father is a Greek god. It could cause trouble for us."

"Nonsense. You would love it if the people believed in us again. Besides, who would believe them? I can have a talk with each one, if I can find them. They're off at different ends of the earth. You never know where you're going to find those three."

"I know just where to find them, well two of them anyway. The oldest is pretending to study the stars while she uncovers things that are best left under wraps. The middle one is messing with hurricanes. And the third one ... don't even get me started on her."

Poseidon stood and turned toward his brother.

"Stay away from my children. You have no right."

"I have every right. If the actions of your children risk our discovery then something has to be done. And if you won't do something to pull them back into line then I will."

"Stay away from them, brother. I warn you."

"You warn *me*?" Zeus threw back his head and laughed. "I am the king of the gods; you have no control over me. You will see to your wayward sirens, or I will do it for you. And you won't be happy with what happens."

A loud crack of thunder filled the air as Zeus disappeared.

Poseidon let out an angry cry and the sea below him, which had been calm and peaceful just moments before, turned into choppy waves.

He closed his eyes and envisioned his three Earth-bound daughters, each so beautiful in their own respect, just as their

mothers had been. All three of them knew that their father was a powerful Greek god. It had been hard for them to handle at first, but as they grew older they'd adjusted to the fact that they were only half-mortal, and that they had some of their father's powers inside their own minds.

Iaha, the oldest of the three, was staring at the stars. An astronomer, she'd been born in the United States, but had relocated to Greece at her father's urgings. Like her mother she was gorgeous, long dark hair with beautiful sea-green eyes. She had a voluptuous figure that attracted many a man, some of whom Poseidon had felt the need to chase away.

Poseidon watched her as she leaned into her telescope and stared upwards. How was she risking exposure of her powers or her lineage? All she was doing was looking at the heavens. No one was with her.

Her father shook his head and moved his inner eye to his middle daughter, Adara. She was swimming in a pool. What could be wrong with that? Again, she was alone. She was as beautiful as her older sister, and Poseidon knew that once again, Zeus had missed his mark.

Now the younger one, if anyone was going to cause troubles Poseidon knew it could be her. The fiery redhead Aella was a dreamer, always flitting about from place to place and causing mischief wherever she went.

When he located her she was swimming, as was her norm. She was so very like her father in that respect, always wanting to be in the water, playing with the underwater creatures and enjoying life.

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Zeus was wrong. They were doing nothing, absolutely nothing, that would risk the exposure of their lineage. Poseidon turned his thoughts away from his daughters and back to the beautiful woman he was planning to bed that evening. His daughters were fine, and if Zeus laid one finger on them, the king of the gods would have him to contend with.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Siren's Song [A Siren Sisters Anthology]
by Melinda Barron, Midnyte Dupree, Jade Buchanan

Iaha's Story

By

Melinda Barron

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Dedication

My thanks to the usual suspects for their help with this story.

Thanks for Midnyte and Jade for their great ideas.

This one is for the members of our Yahoo group for loving
these stories.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Chapter One

Iaha stared at the clear blue Aegean Sea. Her father must be in a good mood today, because the water was calm and inviting. She could always judge his moods, even when he wasn't anywhere near her, by how the sea behaved.

If the sea was calm, he was happy. If it was choppy, he was mildly upset. If hurricanes and other storms abounded, Iaha did her best to stay out of his way. Of course she didn't see him every day. But still, she knew he kept track of his daughters. She could feel his presence every time he looked into her life.

She'd felt it just the other day, and she'd expected him to pop in for a visit, but he hadn't. The waters were churning that day and she'd wondered at the cause. A feeling nagged at the back of her brain that it had something to do with herself and two of her sisters.

Iaha hadn't heard from Adara or Aella in quite some time. She made a mental note to try and contact them tomorrow. For now, though, she had work to do. She trained her telescope on the sea and sought out her target.

Usually she used her equipment to study the stars. It was only fitting, since her name was patterned after the Egyptian god of the moon. Her mother, Sandra, was a forward thinking British woman who traveled with her brother in the 1850s to explore Egyptian remains, and eventually became an Egyptologist. She'd fallen for a gorgeous man she'd thought to be a Greek of her time. Too late she realized he

wasn't mortal, but immortal, and not just any immortal, but the great god Poseidon.

By that time Saundra was already pregnant, with a child that had immortal traits. Iaha had a hard time coming to terms with the fact that every time she took a bath she sprouted a mermaid's tail. The first time her legs had transformed into the shiny red fin she'd been ten. She had screamed and cried when it happened. Her mother had always told her who her father was, but this was the first physical sign that she was truly different. As she aged, she learned to control the transformation. What's more, she learned to love it and the other immortal gifts she inherited from her father.

She shook off the memories and focused on the task before her. She'd seen the handsome man in town many times. She'd learned lots of things about him, chief among them that he was British and was searching for the lost city of Yumani.

Tales of Yumani had fascinated her since she was a child. She'd thought everyone had given up on finding the city. Atlantis was still popular, but Yumani had fallen by the wayside. She'd asked her father about it before, but he'd told her that some things were better left alone. When Iaha had pushed, he'd become angry. She never mentioned it again.

Iaha examined the ships anchored off shores until she located the one she was looking for. This particular vessel belonged to the absolutely beautiful specimen of a man. The shopkeeper said his name was Sheddric Collins, Shedd for

short. She scanned the deck of the ship and found two people on board, both of them men who didn't interest her.

That meant Shedd was probably diving right now. She imagined his body enclosed in a wetsuit and groaned. He was a handsome man, well built and tanned. His sandy blond hair and blue eyes attracted her more than she cared to admit. She'd first seen him at the market in town; their gazes locked and he winked at her. Her heart had double-tapped and her mouth had gone dry.

Every time she saw him after that, she studied him from a distance. Bad experiences with men in the past had taught her to be cautious. It wasn't easy being the daughter of a Greek god.

She was tempted to swim out to his boat and do some close up reconnaissance work. She would have to morph, though, and she didn't want her first true encounter with Shedd to be while she had a shiny red tail attached to the lower portion of her body.

She settled in a chair to study her star charts. Every once in a while she checked to make sure that the ship was still in place, and that Shedd wasn't on the deck. After two hours of waiting, her eyes widened when she focused on the deck and found the handsome man stripping out of his wetsuit.

Iaha quickly packed up her telescope and drove down to the dock. She parked and picked up a loaf of stale bread. She'd planned this "chance" meeting a week ago. When Shedd's ship got back to shore she would put herself in his path.

To him, she would look like a local woman doing nothing more than feeding the birds. Once he was on the dock, she planned to start a conversation. With any luck she'd have a dinner date for the evening.

She watched intently as Shedd and his crew piloted their ship into its berth. Then she trained her hearing on the deck. The men were mostly silent as they worked. Then one sentence hit her full center.

"I know someone who can look at that find of yours."

The voice was young, and Greek, and it could mean only one thing. Shedd had found something that dealt with Yumani.

"Pestola has lived on this island forever. If anyone knows what this is, he will."

Iaha smiled when she heard the name. That would be even better than meeting him on the docks. When he got to Pestola's house she would be there.

* * * *

"And how is your father, Iaha? He used to come and visit me some, but I haven't seen him in years."

"He's fine, Pestola. Although I haven't seen him for a while, either. He pops in on occasion to see how things are. And he always makes sure I have plenty of money."

"Poseidon is a very generous god. He's been good to me over the years, so I'm only happy to help his beautiful daughter. Tell me, do you want this man to know about Yumani, or not?"

Iaha considered her answer. Her father wouldn't tell her much about Yumani. Pestola obviously knew, and, unlike her father, he would tell her. But if he told Shedd everything it would ruin the fun of discovery, the fascination of the chase.

"How is it that you know about the lost civilization?"

Pestola looked at her with a frown. "I am Yumanis. A caretaker, if you will. One of my jobs is to see that Yumani is left alone. But for the daughter of Poseidon I would do anything. If you wish this man to know, then he will know."

Iaha shook her head. "I could not allow you to break what is obviously a vow, Pestola. I had no idea."

"You were not meant to know, dear one. But times are changing. Perhaps it is time that Yumani is brought back into the light. Otherwise, they may..."

A knock on the door startled them both. Iaha had been so fascinated by what the old man was saying. Was it truly possible that not only was Yumani real, but that its people lived there, and here, to this day? And they may what? Furthermore, who were they? She wanted to ask him exactly what he'd meant to say, but the sight of the blond Englishman walking into the room distracted her. She and Pestola exchanged a look and the older man nodded slightly.

"I hope I'm not interrupting anything." He turned a look on Iaha and she felt as if she would melt on the spot. "I know you. We buy fruit at the same market."

She nodded and smiled. "I'm Iaha."

"Iaha. Nice name. It's Egyptian, right?"

What was wrong with her? She nodded and tried to form words, but they stuck in her throat.

"And you are?" Pestola tried, and failed, to hide a grin.

"Forgive me. My name is Shedd Collins. I'm an underwater archeologist who's been working in the Aegean. I found something today that I'd like for you to look at, Mr...?"

"Pestola. Just Pestola. Come, come, let me see."

Iaha studied Shedd as he opened a bag and took out what appeared to be a small statue. He was having more of an effect on her than she thought he would. She took a deep breath to try and get hold of her senses. He was just a man, obviously. She'd had lovers who were lesser Greek gods who didn't affect her this way.

The older man took the artifact and turned it round and round. He frowned, and the room remained silent for many minutes. Then, finally, he cleared his throat.

"Where did you find this?" Pestola's voice was full of authority.

"About twenty miles off shore. It was lying in some vegetation. Do you know what it is?"

Pestola shrugged his shoulders. "Probably just something that fell over the side of a ship."

"I don't think so. Look, the material it's made out of, I've never seen it before. Something porous, yet firm. And the face, it matches none of the gods, Greek, Egyptian, Roman, nothing I've ever seen before. This is something unique, something different. I'm told you're an expert on such things."

"I'm just an old man who's lived here forever. It's true, I know things. But I know nothing about this. I'm sorry."

He handed the statue back to Shedd, who nodded. Iaha could see his dejected reaction by the slump of his shoulders.

"I thank you for your time."

"Don't run off," Pestola said. "My wife will bring tea. You must sit and join us for a brief time. Tell me what you're searching for."

Shedd laughed, and then took a seat. While Mila, Pestola's wife, passed around tea, the room remained silent. When she was seated next to her husband, Shedd smiled.

"You know what I'm looking for, Pestola. You may act like you don't, but I know better. I'm sure I'm not the first person to search for the fabled city."

"What makes you think it really exists?" Iaha tried not to focus on his lips. She just bet they would feel perfect against hers, both on the top part of her body, and on the lower. She blushed at the thought.

"It's there. I've studied charts and graphs, and the stars. I've also looked at the journals of other archeologists. I know it exists, and I'm going to find it."

"You seem very sure of yourself."

"I am, Iaha. I'm positive that Yumani exists, and I intend to prove it."

Pestola laughed, and then changed the subject to the weather. Iaha laughed at his obvious tactic. The four of them talked for half an hour about inane things, and then Iaha stood.

"Thank you Pestola, Mila. I'll see myself out. Shedd, a pleasure."

"I'll walk you out." He thanked the couple and told Pestola he was sure they would talk again. Then he put his hand on the small of Iaha's back and propelled her out the door.

She shivered at his touch, felt the warmth of it all the way down to her toes.

When they got to her car, he turned her toward him.

"Have dinner with me tonight."

Iaha smiled to herself and nodded.

"Around eight? I'll pick you up at your house if you'll tell me where you live."

Iaha gave him her address and got into her car. She started the engine and then rolled down the window when he knocked on the window.

"Tell me, Iaha, when you left the docks today, how did you know I was coming here? Not that I mind. I'm flattered that a beautiful woman such as yourself would go out of her way to 'run into me'. I wondered, though, if you are a psychic?"

Iaha threw back her head and laughed. "I underestimated you, Shedd."

"I have a feeling I should not do that with you, should I?"

Iaha gave him a sly grin. "No, you shouldn't. Until tonight."

She drove off with a smile on her face.

Her father would be very angry with her but she had every intention of helping Shedd Collins find Yumani. And she would use her immortal skills, if she had to.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Chapter Two

Iaha fought to keep her focus on her plate. It was rude to stare at someone who was eating. But each time Shedd put a bite of food in his mouth, she felt herself go weak in the knees. Or should she say weaker?

The man was so handsome that it was hard to concentrate. After they ordered dinner he'd talked about his life in England, and love of the ocean. Iaha was happy to hear that he liked being by the sea. If things between them progressed to the serious stage, it would be easier for her father to accept a seafaring man.

Seafaring or not, it was hard not to wonder what Shedd's lips would feel like on her own. What his hands would feel like on her breasts. What his cock would feel like pressed against her aching center. Her clit ached and a flood of wetness seeped onto her thighs. It had been years since a man had affected her this way. She couldn't quite decide if this was a good thing, or a bad thing.

Of course it didn't help that they were sitting on a deck just inches away from the ocean, which was Iaha's favorite place. Add the setting with the man and you just about had the right mixture for an instant orgasm.

"Have you heard a word I've said?"

Shedd's grin split his face.

"I'm sorry."

"I asked how long you've known Pestola. You seemed very relaxed in his house."

"Oh, I've known Pestola since I was a child."

"Really, you grew up in Greece? You don't have an accent."

Iaha smiled. "My mother worked in Egypt, so I've spent time there. My father is from Greece, so I've spent time here. I have family in the United States, so I've spent time there. My family is very eclectic."

No need to tell him that her father had made her mother immortal, and that she didn't see family members very often because they questioned the fact that she always looked the same.

She took a sip of wine and studied his face.

"What do your parents do?"

"My mother is an Egyptologist, and my father..." *Hum, how do you say your father is a Greek god? She'd never told any of her suitors this early in a relationship, unless they themselves were minor deities.* "My father is independently wealthy and doesn't work."

He doesn't work. He only meddles in other people's business.

A huge wave crashed into the ocean, sending droplets of water over several diners, including Shedd and Iaha.

"Sorry, father. I meant no disrespect." She muttered the words under her breath and laughed nervously.

"Man, that came out of nowhere. The sea seems so calm tonight."

Iaha took a larger sip of wine.

"So tell me, Shedd, what makes you believe that Yumani is real?"

"Gut feeling." Shedd smiled at the waitress as she removed his empty plate.

"Baloney. You know something."

"Well, the artifact I found today gives me some clue."

Iaha shook her head. "You were searching before then."

"You know, in the moonlight your hair looks almost blue. I've never seen hair that black before."

"Quit changing the subject."

The waitress set plates of cheese and baklava on the table. Shedd picked up a piece and sent a smoldering look to Iaha. Her nipples shot out instantly. Another look like that and she might just bend over right here and let him take her. She fought back a giggle at the imagined reaction from the other diners.

"What do you say we ask for this to go? Take a drive down by the beach? Feed each other?"

"Are you trying to seduce me? Or is this just your plan to keep me from talking about your mysterious evidence about the fabled city?"

"I don't know, you tell me. Are your nipples hard because we're talking about the city, or because you're thinking about me sucking them?" His voice was deep, and Iaha felt her insides turn to jelly.

"I..." A blush crept up Iaha's face, moving down her neck to her chest. If he kept talking like that, she might just come on the spot.

"I bet you're wet, too. Are you wet, Iaha? Do you want me inside you? Because I know my cock is rock hard right now. The two would be a powerful combination."

"I don't even know you."

"Want to call a few exes for references? They'll tell you I'm a powerful lover."

"Really? Then why are they exes? Besides, I don't sleep with me I've just met. You'll have to wait at least a month."

Their gazes locked, and then Shedd burst into laughter. Iaha hoped that the look on her face let him know that she was teasing him. She wanted him as badly as he wanted her.

"They're exes because I can also be an ass. I'm just telling you how it is. I want you, Iaha. I wanted you the first time I saw you in town. There's no way I'm waiting a month."

"I want to know about your work. Tell me what put you on the path to search for Yumani."

His grin told her he knew that she'd purposely changed the subject. She didn't want to talk about sex. It was a dangerous subject with Shedd.

"A dream. I had it when I was very young, about ten or so. Mermaids and mermen swimming about. A beautiful city under the water."

"Were you a merman?" *More importantly, did my father send that dream to you? And if he did, why?*

"No, I wasn't. But I do remember this beautiful mermaid, with long flowing black hair and beautiful breasts. She had a gorgeous red fin."

Iaha coughed on her water. She closed her eyes and focused on her paternal parent.

Father!

Yes, daughter? His voice held mischief.

Why?

Do not question me. It is high time you settled down.
With someone of your choosing? What about my choice?
This whole time you've been leading me? How dare you!

Is he not handsome enough for you? Not sexy enough? He
is your mate, Iaha. It has taken too long to make things come
about. Act with your heart, daughter, not with your head. This
man is meant to be in your life. You have things you can
teach each other and a destiny to fulfill.

Meant to be because of fate? Or meant to be because you
won't let me choose on my own? I'm not a child! You can't
make my decisions for me.

You will not speak to me that way. I will do as I see
necessary.

So will I, Father. So will I.

"Iaha?"

She opened her eyes to see Shedd looking at her with
great concern.

"I'm sorry, it's just.... Mermaids? Such an imagination you
have." She laughed nervously. She focused on the table. The
cheese and baklava sat in little boxes. A signed credit card
receipt sat on the table. How long had she been talking with
her father?

Shedd stood and offered his hand. "Let's go enjoy the
moonlight."

When they were in the car, she nervously pulled at her
skirt.

"Please, just take me home."

"No, I have something I want to show you."

He drove with ease down winding paths, stopping the car at a deserted parking lot near the beach.

The moon was high in the sky, glittering off the water as he led her from the car to the spot where the ocean met the land.

"Take off your shoes."

Iaha wanted to run, to scream. Everything she thought she'd felt for this man had been brought about by her father's meddling. The waves increased and she shook her head.

I don't care what you think, Father. This is so unfair! Just once I'd like to do something without your interference.

Did it ever occur to you, daughter, that I didn't send him that dream? The two of you were fated to be together? I'm leaving now. Please, listen to your heart.

Iaha jumped. Shedd was on his knees, his hand holding an ankle as he pulled off first one shoe, then the other. He stood and slipped out of his own shoes. He rolled up his pant legs, then held out his hand.

She wanted to turn and run. Then her father's words replayed in her mind. Fated to be together. Was it possible, and if it were, how would she know? How could she tell the real thing from her father's ideas? Damn her father and his meddling. And if Shedd didn't receive the dream from Poseidon, then who did send it? And why?

"Have I said something wrong?"

"I'm sorry, Shedd. You've done nothing wrong." She placed her hand in his and smiled. "I'm just moody."

"I'll keep that in mind." He smiled and led her out into the sea. When the gentle waves were hitting her around the

knees he stopped and stepped behind her, molding their bodies together.

Iaha felt his rock hard erection nestled against the small of her back. It felt wonderful, and she fought the urge to turn around and strip him bare.

She moaned when his hands came around and cupped her breasts.

"Your nipples are still hard. Sweet little pebbles that feel like diamonds under my fingers."

"Shedd." Iaha pushed herself back against him.

He rubbed and gently twisted her nubs through the material of her blouse and bra. When her soft moans turned into sharp gasps of pleasure he ran his hands down her stomach. He gathered the material of her skirt in his fingers, inching it up as he nibbled on her ear.

Iaha smiled as he dipped his fingers between her thighs.

"No panties. I like that in a woman." His laugh resounded deep in her ear. He cupped her mons and kissed her neck.

"You asked why I was so interested in finding Yumani?" His fingers dipped into her wetness and she gasped.

"Are you kidding me? You want to talk now?"

"Do you feel the ocean around your legs?"

Iaha nodded. His fingers were caressing her folds, driving her to the edge of madness and back.

"It may sound crazy, but I'm destined to live here, in Yumani. I know it in my heart. I felt it when I set foot on the land. Something is calling to me from there. Something that I have to find."

His fingers found her clit and Iaha's knees buckled. He caught her around the waist with his free hand and rubbed the engorged flesh faster and fast.

"Will you help me, Iaha? Will you help me find out what all this means to me? What's calling to me from under the surface of the water?"

Iaha screamed as her orgasm overtook her. She ground herself back into Shedd's cock while waves of pleasure rolled through her body.

"Yes." The word was a whisper. "I'll help you."

She turned and pressed her lips to his. He cupped her face as the water lapped around them.

"Would you like help with this, too?" She palmed his erection, pressing his tight jeans around the bulge.

He kissed her gently as she lowered the zipper. Seconds later, he was in her hands, hard and throbbing.

"Iaha." His voice sounded deep in her ears.

Their gazes locked as she worked her fingers up and down his shaft.

"What happened to a month?"

"I didn't say you could take me," she said, her voice full of mischief. "But that doesn't mean we can't play." She smiled and continued to caress his erection. "Hard and long and thick. How wonderful this will feel sliding inside me."

He groaned and ground his hips into her.

"I want your cock sliding into my mouth, and into my sweet pussy." She tingled. She loved the modern words that lovers used. The waves lapped around them as she stroked him.

He cupped her face and brought his lips down on hers, lapping at her with his tongue until she opened her mouth and welcomed him inside.

Her hand never faltered as they kissed. Finally, he broke away from her lips, and tried to stop her hand.

"I'm going to get you awfully messy here in a few seconds."

She wrapped her free hand around his and they stroked together.

"We have a lot of water to clean us." Her laughter spurred him on and seconds later he came, sending jets of his liquid over they joined fingers.

He kissed her again, his tongue darting out to gently lick her lips.

Shedd traced his lips over her cheeks and down her neck. She threw her head back to give him better access.

Perhaps my father was right. Perhaps this is fate.

"Shall we go eat our baklava and cheese?" She could hear the relaxation that his orgasm had brought in his voice.

"Will you feed me?"

"Only if you promise to come for me again."

Iaha giggled. She rose on her tiptoes and kissed his nose as she stroked his cock, which had softened in her grasp.

"I think that can be arranged."

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Chapter Three

Shedd stepped into his house and sighed. It was after one in the morning and he was scheduled to pick up Iaha the next day to go diving. The afternoon would prove fun, if tonight were any indication.

She'd shuddered in his arms several times, and he'd enjoyed each quake that had rocked her body. He'd wanted to take her properly but he didn't want to break the spell the two of them had been under.

Stroking each other's bodies had been magical. Tonight, however, he would lay her down on his bed and fill her properly. Then, maybe then he might let her in on the real reasons behind his search for Yumani.

He pulled out the old book he'd found in his mother's house after she'd passed away. He opened the pages until he came to the spot where the paper had been cut enough to fit the gemstone. He lifted it out and it sparkled in his hands.

He'd been angry with his mother, because he knew the stone was hers. She knew her son's fascination with mythical things and she'd hidden the stone, an obvious mythical item, from him. Of course, he'd been angry with her most of his life. Right after his seventh birthday, actually, when his father's sister, Margaret, had left him know that he "wasn't her true nephew, so she didn't know why she bothered buying him a gift."

His eyes had watered, and he'd felt deep pain inside him at her words. But his father, or the man he'd always known as

his father, had told her to "keep her interfering mouth shut," and had informed Shedd that he "shouldn't listen to her."

Years later, when his father was dying, he'd told Shedd the truth. He'd never been able to father children, and he'd known that Shedd wasn't his, biologically. But, he'd loved him with his whole heart, as if he had been his son.

The day his father died, Shedd had cried for hours upon end, locking himself in his house and refusing to come out or answer the telephone.

The day after the funeral he'd confronted his mother, demanding to know the truth. She'd told him that his real father "had been of no consequence," just a man she'd met on vacation. When Shedd had reminded her that he'd been born seven years into his parents' marriage, she'd had the good sense to blush.

But then she turned away from him and told him not to bring the subject up again. Shedd had tried tracking down records of his parents' vacations, but his mother, foreseeing this, had destroyed all photos and mementos that would give a clue as to where they had been.

And then, Shedd had found the gem.

Was it his imagination, or had the stone sparkled more since he'd been in Greece? In England, it had just seemed like a large trinket, a golf-ball sized aquamarine stone, cut to where it came to points at either end, the sides flattened out.

He held it between his thumb and forefinger and sighed. This stone, he knew, had something to do with Yumani. The night he'd found it, his dreams had become more vivid, almost as if the stone were sending him messages.

Shedd had taken it to several gemologists in Britain, but they'd all pronounced it ordinary and not good for anything but use as a piece of bric-a-brac. But Shedd knew better. The stone meant something, and he was bound and determined to find out what it was.

He walked to the desk and sat the stone next to the statue he'd found that day. He'd spent the hours between talking to Pestola and picking up Iaha polishing the stone. It was a green jadish sort of thing, very beautiful now that he'd cleaned it properly.

The face on the god was not familiar, but it was a person, not a merman as Shedd had thought it would be. He had always imagined the people of Yumani to be merpeople, swimming around with their bright red tails, just like the woman in his dreams.

He stared at the trinkets, willing them to do something to prove to him that he was right, that they were connected with Yumani.

He shook his head in disgust when they didn't glow, or change colors, or meld to each other. They just sat there, one a piece of stone, the other a gem.

He would take them both with him tomorrow. The pouch he carried around his waist when diving would fit them, and more.

Perhaps, if things went well, he would show the gem to Iaha and see what she thought of it. Maybe, just maybe, he could find some answers very soon.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Chapter Four

Father, I need to talk to you. Please, answer me.

Iaha sat in her bedroom, her eyes closed, her thoughts focused on her father. Her heart rate had finally slowed, but she didn't know how long it would stay that way.

The large black piece of marble, carved into a thunderbolt, was a clear signal from her uncle, the great god Zeus himself. She'd woken that morning to find it lying on the pillow next to her. What it meant she had no idea. She was pretty sure it had something to do with Shedd, and the fact they were going diving to search for the ruins of Yumani. Was her uncle angry with her? Was this a warning? Stay away from things you have no business messing with and I won't strike your ship with lightning?

Father! You mess with everything else in my life, why have you abandoned me now?

Silence greeted her mental outburst. Last night, before Shedd took her in his arms and provided her with an earth-shattering orgasm, Poseidon had promised her that he was leaving, that he would not meddle in her relationship with Shedd any longer. Now, when she needed him, where was he?

Shedd would be here within the hour. They would travel on his boat, the *Penelope*, some ten miles off shore, where they would dive and explore. Correction, Shedd would dive. Iaha hadn't quite come up with an explanation as to why she wouldn't don SCUBA gear and join him.

She didn't think the truth would go over well.

"You see, Shedd, I sprout a tail when I'm in the water. Sure, I can control it, but being around you makes me forget about everything else. I'm afraid I would stop concentrating on the fact that I was supposed to stay human, turn into a mermaid and you would freak out. I could see the story now, 'Mermaid spotted off Grecian shore ... film at eleven.'

"Father!" Iaha screamed at the top of her lungs. The sound bounced off the walls of her house and carried out the open French doors to the sea. No answer came and she yelled again.

"Am I interrupting something?" Shedd stepped onto the deck, a confused look on his face.

Iaha lifted her face to him and quickly schooled her eyes to hide her anxiety.

"Of course not." *I just received a strange message from my uncle, and I was yelling to let my anger out.*

"Hum. Strange, though, to yell at someone when nobody's around."

"Moody. Told you" She held up her hands and shook her head.

"Right. May I come in?"

"Of course. Sorry, I'm just a little frazzled." *And expecting a lightning bolt to send my hair into permanent frizz mode.*

"Hmm. Will this help bring you back to Earth?" He cupped her face, his thumbs caressing her cheeks before he brought their lips together. His kiss was soft and gentle and Iaha felt it all the way down to the tips of her toes.

"I think it might. Hi."

"Hi." He kissed her again, his tongue flicking out to trace her lips. "I knocked, but nobody answered the front door."

"Sorry." *I was too busy yelling for my father, and looking out for my angry uncle. You haven't met them yet. My father controls the seas, and my uncle, if angry enough, could set the house on fire with a flick of his wrist. I think he's pissed about what we're doing today. Maybe we should reconsider.*

"That's OK. If I thought we had time, we'd make love before we left."

"Really? Maybe we should make time." She cocked her head and grinned.

"Actually, I was thinking about turning you around and taking you from behind." His fingers trailed over her spine, sending shivers of delight through Iaha's body. "I could pound you really hard that way. Would you like that, sweet Iaha? I can almost feel your wet pussy wrapped around me, warm and inviting. Can you feel me, Iaha? Can you feel my hands holding your sweet hips while my cock pounds in and out of you? I can. Damn, I knew coming in here was a bad idea. I should have just tooted the horn."

Iaha shivered and grasped his shoulders. "Let's stay here. We can dive some other time."

"We can't. The crew is waiting. Tonight, though." He laughed and shook his head in a playful manner. "Be prepared."

He grabbed her ass and squeezed, then pulled away quickly. "Let's lock up. If we make the crew wait too much longer I'll be in the dog house."

Iaha's gaze turned to the thunderbolt she'd found that morning. She could feel the heat radiating from it. Obviously, Zeus wasn't happy about their little expedition.

She closed her eyes and bit her lip. *Uncle?* The same silence greeted her as when she tried to contact her father. This promised to be a very, very long day.

* * * *

Shedd tapped a gauge on his equipment and turned a frown on Iaha. Her beautiful black hair was unbound and caressed her body, and she was clad in a red one-piece swimsuit.

For the first time since last night he reconsidered his decision to tell her about his dreams, and to invite her to help on the dive. Just the sight of her made him hard. She was too much of a distraction, and there was too much at stake.

"I thought you knew how to dive."

"I do." She smiled at him and he nodded. "I just don't want to go down today. I, well, I've had a bit of a cold..."

"Right. Your cold didn't bother you earlier."

"Please. I'll go tomorrow."

"OK. Listen, if you're reconsidering your decision to help me, just say so."

"No, that's not it at all. I promise, tomorrow, I'll go. You go down now and find something fun for me."

He nodded and turned toward the end of the boat. After his equipment was fastened into place, he plunged into the water. Two other divers, Blaine and Cody, were already down.

Shedd had made sure that the boat was in the exact same spot they were in when he'd found the artifact the day before. He aimed down and forced an image of a naked Iaha out of his mind. She was beautiful, that was for sure, but right now he didn't need the distraction. He needed to focus on the dive.

He loved being in the water. He always had, even as a child. His mother had long teased him about her son sprouting gills whenever they were near water. He forced that image away. She'd teased him, yes, but she'd also hidden things from him. Now that she was gone, he would never know the truth about his parentage.

Blaine appeared beside him and gave him a thumbs-up signal, pointing down toward an outcropping of rocks. Shedd turned his face toward the stones. Cody was already there, looking around and pointing his camera at different places.

As he usually did while in the ocean, Shedd felt the pull of the water, the wonderful sense of belonging that wrapped around his heart and squeezed gently, reminding him that he was exactly where he was supposed to be.

And Yumani was close. He knew it. For years he'd searched for the long lost civilization. He'd been all around the Grecian coast, diving and coming up empty handed. But when he'd arrived here, he knew that he was close.

The artifact he'd found yesterday convinced him of that. Shedd put his fingers against the pouch that carried the stone, and the statue.

They felt warm, even in the cold water, almost as if they were radiating heat. But that couldn't be, he knew. Neither

object had shown such ability yesterday. They were nothing more than stones.

He shook his head and swam around the outcropping of rocks, touching the porous material lightly in some spots, knocking on it in others as if willing it to open and reveal a gateway to Yumani.

After an hour in the water, with nothing catching his eye, he turned to Blaine and Cody and shook his head. They both nodded and pointed up. Shedd returned the nod, a feeling of failure filling his stomach as they started toward the surface.

Shedd turned toward the rock and gently caressed it. *Tell me your secrets. Show me what I want to know.*

Warmth filled the lower half of Shedd's body. Was it coming from the statue, or the aquamarine? He opened the pouch and touched the stone. The heat he'd felt earlier had intensified.

He tried to keep his breathing even. It wouldn't do for him to put himself in danger by breathing too quickly while diving. Iaha. He needed to talk to Iaha. Maybe he could convince her to come back down in an hour or so and see if she felt the same thing that he did.

He kicked his feet to start his ascent, and panic gripped his insides. Something had a hold of him. He kicked out again and the hold strengthened. He bent and ran his fingers over his ankles. Nothing was there, physically. Whatever was holding him in place didn't have a corporeal body.

Panic set in. His breathing, already more rapid than it should have been, quickened.

He shut his eyes and tried to calm down. Whatever kept him tethered to the spot tightened, and tugged on his body.

Iaha! Help me! Iaha, please, I need you.

The pressure on his calf moved to his thigh and Shedd gave in to total panic. Blaine and Cody were already gone. Whatever had been calling to him from Yumani was there, and it wanted him to stay.

* * * *

Iaha gripped the side of the ship. She could hear Shedd's call for help in her mind. Something had gone wrong. She ran to the stern, watching, her breath coming harder and harder as bubbles appeared.

Blaine appeared, with Cody behind him. They were helped on board and the area behind them remained silent. Shedd was still down there. The workers all stared at each other uneasily.

Iaha could hear his pleas for help, echoing in her mind. Something had a hold of him, and wasn't letting go.

Once the workers were all at the stern, looking down, Iaha moved toward the bow, shedding her bathing suit as quickly as possible and diving in. Her legs disappeared and her tail appeared as soon as she hit the water. She plunged downward, praying she was not too late.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Chapter Five

The water grew colder the further she dived. She passed octopus after octopus, cuttlefish, jellyfish and sea urchins. She could feel Shedd's presence, but he was no longer calling for her. He'd either lost consciousness, or he didn't think she could come and help him and had stopped trying.

She flashed her tail quicker in an effort to reach him faster, her heart beating rapidly.

When he came into view, she stopped, her eyes widening.

Two mermen were on either side of him, their arms liked through his own. They were propelling Shedd through the water, heading out toward the sea. She swam toward them, yelling for them to stop.

When she drew closer to them, she could see that Shedd was unconscious, his head lolling down. She could see his chest moving, so she knew that he was still alive.

"In the name of Poseidon, stop at once!" She swam along side them but the men did not stop, nor did they answer her. They rounded a cove and she stopped dead, rearing back as two more mermen came toward her. One of them pulled in front of the other, his eyes narrowing at Iaha. He pointed a spear at her. The second man held one at his side. The other two men were moving further away, with Shedd still locked between them.

"I am the daughter Poseidon. I demand that you release the human, at once!"

"Do you think I care what you want? Your father, your uncle, and all the gods have forsaken us. We no longer follow laws they set down."

The merman was large, his top half muscular, his tail a brilliant green. His companion looked the same.

"My father is king of the seas. Do as I say or he will destroy..."

"Your father no longer holds power over us. Is your hearing infected? Go away. We have no fight with you, but if you choose to try and stop us, you will lose."

"Father!" Iaha screamed out.

Iaha received no answer and the man laughed as she yelled out again.

"It would seem, daughter of Poseidon, that your father has forsaken you, also. Either that, or you're lying."

He made to move toward her, the anger clear on his face.

"I have no problem harming a daughter of Poseidon. Perhaps you will regain consciousness before you hit the open air and live. If not..." He shrugged and advanced toward her, his spear pointed at her chest. He stopped suddenly when a harsh voice rang out.

"Gyles, stop."

Another merman swam into view; he was older than the others, his long hair graying. He studied Iaha and then nodded to the first man.

"Bring her."

"As you wish." The one named Gyles swam toward her. His look was angry, almost as if with one flick of the wrist he

could kill Iaha. "If you want to see your friend again you should come with us, without putting up a fight."

Iaha turned to the older man, who nodded his head at her.

"Daughter of Poseidon, you are welcome here."

Iaha wanted to run. She wanted to fight them, take one of their spears and go after Shedd, but she knew that would be futile. There was no way she would win a fight against these mermen.

She nodded to the leader, then swam after him as they moved off, praying they hadn't done damage to Shedd, wondering what they wanted with him.

* * * *

The water grew colder the deeper they swam. Fear invaded Iaha's mind, but she fought it back as best she could. If they had meant to hurt them, they would have done so already. Or would they?

And where were they taking them? She'd thought there were four mermen at first. Now, she counted eight. Some of them held spears, while others seemed to be watching around them as if expecting an attack.

Iaha swam closer to the older man who had rescued her from Gyles.

"Please, where are we going?"

The man didn't answer, just continued to flap his tail and move into the darkness.

"My father..."

"My name is Anstice. I have known your father for years, Iaha."

"You know my name?"

"Yes, and that of your two sisters, Aella and Adara. But surely you three don't think you are the only offspring of the great god?"

"Of course not. I know that my father..."

Iaha stopped short, rearing back so that her tail moved out in front of her. The darkness they had been swimming into had suddenly turned into light, a beautiful light. Stretched out before them, lying on the ocean floor was a city, surrounded by a globe.

She felt her stomach drop out. Anstice had continued swimming. The others, including the men who were holding Shedd, had already disappeared inside the bubble.

"Where are we?"

"Where do you think we are, Iaha?" Anstice turned and swam back to her. Gyles stood at the entrance, his spear at his side, an angry scowl on his face.

"Yumani?"

"Yumani," Anstice continued. "A place where years ago your father kept a few of his many concubines. Now, there are some of us who still have Poseidon's blood flowing through our veins. But our world is dying, and your father has refused to help, fearing the wrath of his brother. So we have gone in search of our savior."

Iaha shook her head in confusion, and then understanding dawned.

"Shedd?"

Siren's Song [A Siren Sisters Anthology]
by Melinda Barron, Midnyte Dupree, Jade Buchanan

"He holds the stone. He is the descendant of one of our more powerful citizens. He will marry, procreate, and hopefully, restore our energy and therefore, our lives.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Chapter Six

When they were inside the bubble, Iaha was surprised to find that her tail had disappeared immediately, and she was standing on solid ground. She looked around her, gawking. Of course the people who were gathered were gawking at her, too.

One woman, who looked to be about twenty, brought a shimmering robe to her, and Iaha shrugged into it. She bit her lip, then her eyes trained on Shedd, who lay on the floor in the center of the room, a woman kneeling over him.

Iaha ran to them, her angry gaze focused on the beautiful woman.

"Get away." She quickly removed Shedd's diving mask and checked his breathing. It was shallow, but still there.

"You are his mate?" The young woman's eyes were large as she studied Iaha.

"No." *But I want to be.*

The woman nodded, her expression sad.

Anstice stepped forward. "Maki, Evander. Take our guest to my quarters. See that he is well cared for. Iaha. Come with me, we have things to discuss."

"No. I'm going with Shedd." She kept her eyes on Shedd. The color seemed to be returning to his face.

"He is not yours to care for. You just said so."

"Well, I've changed my mind. We may not be married but we're together. I'm not leaving him. If you want to talk with me, they *you* will come with *me*."

Iaha turned an angry glare on Anstice, who laughed.

"You are definitely your father's daughter. Very well, we will have our discussion there. But I ask you to remember that you are a guest here."

Iaha didn't answer him. Instead, when the two men picked up Shedd she fell into step behind them. She wanted to run and explore this mythical place she'd found, but her first priority was Shedd.

That, and trying to find a way out of here.

* * * *

Iaha wiped a wet cloth over Shedd's face. His eyes had fluttered a few times, but he had not woken.

"When he has adjusted to the pressure, he will waken," Anstice said from behind her. "Come. My wife has prepared tea."

Tea? Iaha didn't know what she expected to drink here but it wasn't tea. Maybe kelp water?

"We will stay in the room with him. We mean him no harm."

"What do you mean for him, then?"

"I've already told you. The woman who knelt by him, Adelpia, is his mate. They will procreate and hopefully restore the power to our land."

"Your land? Maybe you should start at the beginning." Iaha stood up and shook her head. "And Adelpia will not mate with him. I told you already, he is mine."

Anstice laughed. "It has been foreseen. The one who carries the stone will help restore our land. Your Shedd has the stone."

"What stone?" Iaha's voice had risen to a high pitch.

"Come and sit," Anstice said, his voice low.

Iaha stood and walked to him. A beautiful woman was pouring tea into cups. Anstice sat at a table that was filled with various sweet treats.

"So, you have ovens and ways to bake?"

Anstice shook his head at her, a disappointed look on his face. He indicated the chair across from him as his wife took the one next to him. Iaha sat down, glancing back over her shoulder at Shedd. His chest rose and fell in a shallow rhythm.

She sat at the table and folded her hands in her lap.

"OK. Talk."

"So like her father," the woman said with a laugh. "I am Desma. Welcome, young Iaha."

Anstice took his wife's hand and gave it a affectionate squeeze.

"You will listen and not interrupt?" Anstice tipped his head at her. "It will be easier that way, if you just sit until I am finished."

Iaha nodded, not trusting herself to agree to what he wanted.

"Many years ago, your father created this world. He tired of sharing the women he wanted with Zeus. So, he turned them into mermaids and brought them here, where even Zeus couldn't reach them."

"Typical," Iaha said.

Anstice smiled. "He flooded the world with power, to give us sunlight and food, and yes, even ways to cook. As is the way of the world, the concubines grew pregnant, and other merpeople found out about this marvelous place. It grew, from outside influences and from the offspring of Poseidon."

"So does that make you my uncle, or brother, or something?" Iaha gave him a sheepish smile.

"Perhaps. But the blood of Poseidon is diluted. He has not visited here for many, many years."

"Are you immortal?"

"No. Unlike you, we will die. Which is where your Shedd comes in."

"He's not a doctor," Iaha said, shaking her head.

"No, but he does possess the stone."

"Okay, you keep coming back to that. Want to explain it to me?"

"Yes, and for someone who promised not to ask questions, you've kept your mouth open quite a bit."

Iaha pursed her lips together. His tone had been full of mirth and she shook her head.

"Sorry."

"As things go, Zeus found out about our underwater colony. He grew very angry. He made Poseidon promise to destroy it. Poseidon could not bring himself to destroy his own children, so he decided to do it another way. He gave us a large statue of himself. Imbedded in the heart was a beautiful aquamarine stone. It provided power to our land. Then, one day about thirty-three years ago, it disappeared."

"Stolen?"

"Yes. Some people say Zeus himself stole it. The legend, however, is that Zeus bribed one of our more nefarious residents into stealing it and bringing it to him. The thief, named Olanda, was one his way to Zeus with the stone in hand when he came across a mortal woman, sleeping in the sand."

"He had his way with her and left her with child. And lost the stone next to the woman's body as she slept."

"Well, Zeus is all powerful," Iaha said. "Even if the man lost the stone, Zeus could have found it. There's no reason for you to think that Shedd has it."

Anstice sighed. "True. Zeus confronted Olanda, and tried, but failed, to kill him for not completing his task. He tried to destroy the stone, and realized that Poseidon had protected it with his own magic."

Iaha's heart began to beat faster. If Shedd had the stone, that would mean...

She turned toward him, then swiveled back to Anstice. "Shedd is Olanda's son?"

Anstice nodded. "After Zeus tried, and failed, to destroy the stone, he realized that it would be far from us in the hands of a mortal woman, hidden or simply thrown away. Our land would be without power and die."

"But that was more than thirty years ago, and you're still here."

"We have sorceresses who have helped us along. But the stone must be replaced."

"OK. I get that part. But if Shedd is just the son of a..."

"Thief?" Shedd's voice sounded deep and groggy.

Iaha ran to him and knelt, putting her head to his chest as if to assure herself that his heart was still beating.

"Olanda was not a thief," Anstice said. "Misguided, maybe, but not a common thief. He had tendencies that made him an easy target for Zeus."

Shedd sat up, and Iaha sat next to him, taking his hands in her own.

He gave her a tentative smile, then focused on Anstice.

"Tell me why you think I have to mate with this Adelpia woman."

"You've heard?" Iaha squeezed his hands and he nodded.

"One of our sorceresses made a prophecy that the one who returned the stone would mate with our strongest resident, the woman whose blood held the deepest ties to Poseidon, therefore helping our land to prosper again."

"Great. I'm the bastard son of a thief who gets to mate with a god's descendant. How fun for me."

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Chapter Seven

"You have the stone?" Anstice stood and walked toward them.

Shedd leaned back and unzipped his diving pouch. He reached in and pulled out the statue, sat it on the bed and then pulled out the stone. Even though its wrappings they could see the glow.

"Wow," Iaha said as he peeled back the fabric.

Light radiated from the stone, illuminating the room.

Shedd lifted his eyes to Anstice, who stared at it in fascination.

"It has been years since I've seen it. I'd forgotten its brilliance."

"Can't I just put it in the statue and leave?"

Anstice shook his head. "The prophecy must be followed. He put his hand out for the stone and Shedd pulled it into him.

"Not so fast. I have to think about this, and Iaha and I want some time alone, to think."

"Very well. I will give you until the morning. Then, the stone will be replaced and you will mate with Adelpia. We will leave you here, then show Iaha to a separate room."

"We're staying together," Shedd said, standing for the first time. His legs felt like rubber but the pounding in his head had disappeared.

"No. You will not dishonor Adelpia in that way."

"I don't know Adelphia," Shedd said, sarcasm evident in his voice. "And I have all the bargaining chips, ergo, I make the rules."

He held up the stone.

Anstice's eyes narrowed and his lips turned into a deep scowl.

"I will give you several hours together. Then you will separate for the night, by force, if need be."

"Feodore!" The door to the room opened and a man walked inside. "Watch them."

"Yes, sir," Feodore said. He was a tall man, muscular and young.

He sat down in a chair and helped himself to sweets and tea as Anstice and Desma left.

"You know, you failed to mention that your father was a Greek god," Shedd hissed at Iaha.

"Well, it's not exactly dinner conversation."

"You could have dropped a hint."

"A hint? In the last one hundred and fifty years I've only told three men. And two of those were demigods who..."

Iaha's voice trailed off. Shedd stared at her, his mouth open.

"One hundred and fifty years?"

She shrugged her shoulders and nodded.

"You know, if I didn't know better, I'd say I ascended too fast, developed an embolism and died. And this is hell."

He threw out his arms and snorted in disgust.

"We should try just replacing the stone and swimming away."

"Good idea. Except for the fact that I'm sure my tank is out of air. Do you think your *fin* could propel us both to the surface?"

"You don't have to get nasty. And yes, it could."

"Nasty? I find out I'm the son of a thief who's destined to save an ancient race and you think I'm being nasty? Besides, if I was the son of this, what's his name, wouldn't I be half merman? Wouldn't I have sprouted a tail today, too?"

"You would have. If Zeus hadn't cursed you." Shedd and Iaha whipped their heads toward Feodore, whose head was slumped against his chest.

"Father?"

Iaha sprinted across the room, flinging herself into her father's arms.

Shedd sat on the bed, staring at the figure before him. Poseidon wasn't the elderly god as popularly depicted. Instead, he was young, robust, his hair long and dark with only flecks of gray. He held his daughter close, patting her on the back to comfort her.

Shedd watched dumbfounded as he pushed Iaha back gently and examined her, finally kissing her forehead. They were talking low, and he couldn't understand what they were saying. After a few minutes, he grew restless.

"Um, excuse me?" He waved his hand. "I think we need to take advantage of this time to talk. You say I'm cursed? Things just keep getting better and better."

Poseidon threw back his head and laughed. "Not exactly cursed. Zeus was angry with me for deceiving him. But he couldn't destroy Yumani, because it belongs to me. When he

convinced your father to steal the stone, he didn't count on your mother, lying on the shore in the sun.

"After your conception, Zeus cast a spell to make sure that your merman tendencies would never appear. I countered that order, by saying they wouldn't appear until the stone had been replaced in my statue, and you had mated with your true love."

"Why haven't you helped these people?" Iaha stepped back from her father and Shedd could feel her anger all the way across the room.

"But I have. Do you think their sorceresses are strong enough to keep a civilization living for thirty-five years? I have kept it living. But I am not strong enough to counter the spell that my brother placed on the stone. It had to be brought here by Shedd."

"So, I say we replace it and swim away," Iaha said, holding up her hands. "Simple. Father can hide us, and then we don't even have to swim. He can transport us to the surface."

Shedd cocked his head at Poseidon. "That wouldn't work, would it, um, Mr. Poseidon?"

"Just Poseidon. And no, it wouldn't. These people expect their chosen one, Adelpia, to mate with the one who replaces the stone. If that doesn't happen, then, even with the stone, the civilization will wither and die."

"So I have to stay here, is that what you're saying."

Poseidon shook his head. "I think the two of you are very smart. You should use this time together to consummate your love. And then, the answer will come to you."

He snapped his fingers and Feodore's head snapped up.

"You! Guard from the hallway."

Feodore walked zombie-like from the room.

Shedd watched in amazement as Poseidon again kissed his daughter on the forehead and disappeared.

"Father! Come back here!"

Shedd crossed the room quickly, his strength fully returned, and gathered Iaha in his arms.

"Hush."

"But, he's always doing that. He meddles and then..."

Shedd captured her lips with his, then pulled back. "He said one smart thing. We need to consummate our love. I love you, Iaha. I've loved you since I first set eyes on you."

"Oh, Shedd. I love you, too. But tomorrow? What happens when..."

He captured her lips again, her words going into his mouth and dying.

With their lips still locked he picked her up, wrapping one arm around her chest and using his free hand to urge her legs to go around his waist.

She followed his lead and he walked to the bed, setting her down gently. She kept her legs wrapped around him and pulled him on top of her.

"Hey, Iaha, you may be the daughter of a god, but I'm in charge here. Understand?"

She giggled and saluted him, then unlocked her legs.

"Then love me, Shedd. Make me yours."

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Chapter Eight

Shedd stood and threw off his wetsuit as quickly as he could. Iaha watched him, her fingers toying with the tie on the robe she wore. As he lowered the suit over his hips her eyes fastened on his cock. Long and thick, it seemed larger than it had the other night when they'd played at the beach.

She shrugged out of the robe, then reached out and grasped him, tightening her grip on his hardness as he groaned.

"Fuck me. I want you inside me."

He lifted his eyebrows at her and shook his head. "Did you not hear what I said? At a hundred and fifty you may have more experience than me, but I'm the alpha here."

He dropped down and began to lick at her nipples, his tongue sliding from one to the other until Iaha was sagging beneath him.

"Shedd, please!"

He continued to torment them, not sucking one into his mouth. She moved her hands to his hair to try and force his head down and he captured them in his own, pushing them down to her sides as he continued to torment her.

"You taste so good," he whispered, his breath hot against the wetness of her nipples.

"Shedd, please, I'm begging you." Her words came out on short puffs of air. She arched her hips toward him and whimpered.

"Do you want something, Iaha? Tell me."

"Shedd!"

"Hum, I wonder what's down here." He trailed his lips over her stomach.

Iaha laughed and wiggled under him as his tongue round about her navel, moving down to her bare mons.

"Naughty girl," he whispered as he licked along her slit. She hissed out her delight, her answer unable to pass her lips.

He let go of her hands and ran his fingers over her thighs, gently pushing them further apart. When he was satisfied, he lowered his head again and licked her slit over and over again. It parted for him on the third pass and his tongue dove inside, lapping up her wetness as he continued to explore her.

"Please, Shedd, I'm ... I'm..."

"Yes." He lifted his head up to utter the one word before going back to his task, his tongue dancing around her clit.

Iaha bucked against him, her hard nub screaming for release as she clutched the robe under her.

"Fuck me! Oh!" Shedd captured her clit with his mouth, gently sucking it between his teeth and then running his tongue back and forth over the engorged tip.

Iaha came, her body undulating under him as she rode the tidal waves of pleasure.

"Shedd!"

He lifted his head and smacked his lips. "Delicious."

Then, he scrambled onto her, his laughter mixing with her own.

She wrapped her legs around him and drew him nearer to her, his cock poised at her entrance.

"Do you want me inside you?" He leaned over and nuzzled her neck.

"Yes."

"I have no condoms, my immortal lover."

"Please, Shedd. Don't tease me anymore."

He gently pushed inside, then drew back out and pushed in further.

"I love you, Iaha. No matter what happens tomorrow, remember that."

"And I love you."

She lifted her hips and he slid inside. Iaha's head swum with pleasure as he gently thrust in and out of her, his lips moving across her neck and shoulders as he whispered soft words that she could barely understand.

She tightened her legs around him, and then ran her nails up his back.

"Is that a hint?" He was so winded, it sounded as if he'd just run a marathon.

"Yes."

He thrust harder, lifting up so that their gazes were fixed on one another.

She reached up and nibbled on his lower lip. Then she tightened her inner muscles, marveled at the deep groan that left his body, and flushed when he called out her name as he flooded her insides. The throbbing of his cock sent her over the edge again, as did his hoarse promises of love.

So very, very good. She relaxed against the sheets as he panted above her, his sweat dripping down to mingle with her own.

"Yes, it was. Just like it was meant to be." He backed up enough so that her legs loosened from him, then lay down next to her and pulled her into his chest.

Iaha sat up on her elbows, starting at him.

"What did you say?"

"You said it was very, very good. I said yes, it was."

His chest heaved from the exertion.

"No. I didn't say it. I thought it, in my mind. Shedd, do you know what this means?"

"Yeah, you've worn me out. I need to sleep."

She jumped up to her knees and pushed him over onto his back.

"No. I can only mentally communicate with the people I have a strong bond with, my sisters, my father, and my mother. This means my father was right. We do belong together."

Shedd nodded, his hands going to his chest.

"Think something at me. Now."

"What?"

"Just do it!"

Iaha, I love you.

And I love you.

"Did you hear me?"

"Bloody hell. What does this mean?"

"This means father was right. You're my mate, and I'm yours. And we have to find a way out of here. Now."

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Chapter Nine

They had barely dressed in robes they'd found in the closet when Feodore came back inside.

"They're coming."

"Not so fast," Iaha said. "They said a few hours."

"It has been a few hours, since we spoke with your father and made love."

Shedd kissed her gently and she put her head on his shoulders.

"We need to have time to plan."

"We'll think of something. Don't worry, I won't let them separate us for good. I've looked for the perfect woman for too long."

"Perfect? Well..."

Shedd laughed. "Perfect to me."

They were locked in each other's arms when the door opened and Anstice and Desma came inside. Adelphia was with them, as was the snarling Gyles.

"We thought you might like to see some of Yumani before we dined," Anstice said.

"Love to," Shedd replied, taking Iaha's hand in his own.

Anstice frowned at the movement. "You disrespect your mate."

"I'm sorry, Adelphia, but you're not my mate," Shedd said. "I mean you no disrespect."

The young woman nodded, then looked down at the floor. Did the woman think that she and Shedd would love each

other because folklore demanded it? Of course, she must have been told that her entire life.

"Perhaps we should have the ceremony right now," Anstice said. "That would put things in their proper place."

Iaha's heart dropped at the idea. They hadn't had time to plan.

What should we do?

Relax, my love. They won't do it yet. They thrive on tradition, and doing it so quickly would weaken that. He's just trying to scare us.

"We can't," Desma said softly, putting her hand on her husband's arm. "We were hoping the god would appear."

"My father?"

"Yes," Anstice said. "We'd hoped your appearance would bring him here, despite the fact he hasn't visited in more than thirty years. Perhaps I could introduce you to some of the offspring that came of that visit?"

"If you're trying to shock me, or upset me in some way, don't bother. I know that my father takes women right and left. The fact no longer concerns me."

Anstice shrugged his shoulders, then moved out of the room. Desma and Adelpia filed in behind him, with Shedd and Iaha after that. When they passed Gyles, he sneered at them.

"Nice to see you, too," Shedd said. "We missed you."

What a moron.

Shedd, please, don't antagonize him. He's just looking for an excuse to hurt you, or me. Besides, maybe he could help us.

Yeah, help push us out of this bubble.

That would work. We'd sprout tails and take off.

Shedd stopped short and looked at her. "Wh..

In case you missed it, I don't know anything about having a tail.

I'll teach you. She leaned over and kissed Shedd on the cheek.

Gyles came up next to them. This time, the frown on his face wasn't rude, or angry. It was contemplative, as if he were trying to figure something out in his mind.

"Don't lag behind," he said softly. His tone of voice was the nicest it had been all day.

They started moving again, then Shedd stopped again, rooted to the spot, his mouth hanging open.

"Wow."

Iaha laughed and put her hands to her mouth. She'd been so busy worrying about Shedd earlier that she'd failed to notice her surroundings.

Yumani was beautiful. The bubble enclosed a world full of light and colors. Bright flowers dotted the land, and green grass grew between each building. The buildings themselves were all made of stone, large and supported by columns as the Greek buildings of the past had been.

"Unbelievable. How did this happen?"

"Poseidon," Anstice said. "His magic can create anything."

The women were all dressed in colorful robes, some of them short, some long. The men wore kilts and were bare-chested. There was not a weapon in sight, compared to the number of spears they'd seen upon their arrival.

I guess they don't think we're going to hurt them.

Guess not. Shedd walked to the edge of the cobblestone path and stared at the huge aquarium that took up space. It was enormous. He stepped back.

"It goes for miles."

"Yes," Anstice replied. "We love to swim. And staying in Yumani keeps us away from the dangers of the sea."

Shedd laughed as he watched mermaids and mermen of all ages swim around in the brilliant blue water. They were joined by seahorses, octopus and brightly colored fish of all nature.

"It's so beautiful," Iaha said. She came up and touched Shedd's arm. "Would you like to take a swim? Try out your tail?"

He shook his head, a confused look on his face. Several seconds later, the confusion turned to wonder and he nodded.

"Yes. Yes, I would."

Adelphia stepped in front of them. "Come this way."

She moved around the far end of the pool, taking off her robe and leaving it lying over a railing as she began to climb the stairs.

Iaha frowned. *They're not shy, that's for sure.*

Why should they be? She's beautiful.

Iaha backhanded Shedd's stomach

He jumped and let out an umph.

Sorry.

You have no idea how sorry you'll be if you continue to stare at her.

I can look at her. But I'll look at you, and love you, not her.

He laughed and shrugged out of his own robe, leaving it over the railing and jumping the stairs two at a time.

Iaha did the same and took off after him. When she reached the top, she found him standing at the edge, staring at the merpeople who had come up to stare right back at him.

"Go on, go on," Anstice's voice was full of merriment.
"You're new, so they're curious."

Adelphia dove into the pool, her legs turning into a sparkly silver tail the minute her hands hit the water. Iaha kissed Shedd's cheek and followed right after her, her shiny red tail fluttering behind her as she dove under the water, loving the feel of the warm waves against her.

She lifted her head out and looked at Shedd, who stood at the edge, his cock semi-hard as he watched her swim.

Come, my love. Let me teach you how to be what you truly are.

Shedd stared at Iaha. When she'd hit the water he'd been flabbergasted. Suddenly, she was the woman from his dreams, a mermaid with long flowing black hair resting over her bare breasts, and a stunning red tail.

She beckoned to him with her hands and with her mind.

He took several deep breaths. What would happen when he hit the water? According to Poseidon, the curse that Zeus had put on him would end the minute he'd made love with his soul mate. And he knew that was Iaha.

So, technically, my feet should turn into a fin the minute they're wet.

Iaha's laughter rang in his mind.

My love, you'll know what to do. Trust me.

He sat down on the stone side of the pool, dipping his toes inside experimentally.

The minute the water touched him, he felt warmth spread through his legs. They tingled as if they were on fire, then they melded together, forming one glossy purple tail. He flicked the fin, then felt himself move as the slippery scales slide off the stone surface he was sitting on.

He hit the water, going under and flapping his arms until he felt Iaha grab him around the waist. She wrapped her tail around his and brought her mouth down on his own, kissing him with an intensity that took his breath away.

My breath. My breath. I'm breathing under water.

She giggled as her tongue snaked inside his mouth. She flapped her tail up and tickled his back. He hissed, then returned the kiss, his mind reeling over the fact that he'd just opened his mouth underwater, and he wasn't coughing or panicking.

She shimmied against him and he sighed.

I think I've got a hard-on.

I know you do, my love.

Can we make love this way?

Of course. It's much different, more a melding of bodies. It's very intense. Tonight, after everyone's gone to bed, I'll show you.

I want to do it now.

In front of everyone? If we break the surface like this, Anstice will scream at us again. You can wait.

Iaha pulled back from him just as Adelfia swam up. She looked shyly at both of them, and then swam away.

They broke the surface together, Shedd laughing as he moved his long tail from side to side, splashing it against the water.

"Stop that," Iaha said, laughter in her voice.

"Never!" He thwacked it against her backside and she yelped in mock distress.

Anstice cleared his throat, bringing both of them back to the place they were, in a public pool, with an audience.

"It is time for food, and for sleep. The ceremony is early in the morning."

Shedd swam back to the side, lifting himself up on his arms and sitting on the edge. His tail disappeared, replaced by his own legs.

"Wow. That's cool."

He watched Iaha do the same, shaking her head and smiling at him. He wanted to love her again, right now. But tonight, in the pool, would be sensational. He could wait.

"So, it gets dark here," he said, turning to Anstice. "How is that possible?"

"Everything is courtesy of Poseidon. We have day and night, air and water, food and relaxation."

"What kind of food?"

"Lobster, mostly."

"You eat fish?" Shedd shook his head, surprised to find that although he hadn't used a towel, he was already dry.

"Yes, some. Lobsters are bred for that purpose, as are crab. They have no souls, so it's not like we're eating

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ourselves, if that's what you fear. There are fruit trees, and vegetable gardens, too."

Anstice leaned toward him. "Don't you eat fish?" There was wonderment, and confusion, in his voice.

"Of course. Show me the way, good man."

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Chapter Ten

Shedd crept toward the pool stairs, wondering how Iaha would get away from her own minder. For him, it had been easy. He'd opened the door to his room to find Feodore sitting in a chair, his head dropping around his shoulders.

"Thanks, Big P."

No problem, my daughter's one and only. Shedd had jumped, then laughed as he'd hurried down the corridor.

Now, he paused on the stairs and listened. The faint sound of water moving around a swimmer reached his ears and he smiled. He moved to the top and stopped, a wide smile appearing on his face.

Iaha floated on her back, her beautiful breasts firm and pointed upwards, her red tail swishing back and forth. His cock hardened at the sight of her and he was tempted to tell her to come outside, so they could make love like humans.

But the idea of making love to her in his new form won out. He wanted to know what it was like to be with her as a merman. He shrugged out of his robe and padded toward the pool.

"Took you long enough." Her voice was like honey. She glanced at him and murmured her approval. "Is that for me?"

"Only for you."

"Then come in, and let me love you."

He dove in this time, marveling at the fact that he felt his legs turn into his tail when his fingers hit the water. He twisted and turned, reveling in his new toy, excited in the fact

that, since he loved the water so much, he could now breathe underwater without the need for equipment.

And that wasn't the only thing that he loved.

Iaha.

Yes? Her tone was playful.

Come here.

Come and get me. She took off toward the other end of the large pool, winding through long stalks of green vegetation and around colorful pieces of coral, beautiful clown fish and giant sea cucumbers. There were also a few large turtles that swam past and gave him no notice.

How far does this thing go?

For miles. And if you want me, you'll have to find me.

She swam back to him, zipped around him and took off at lightening speed.

Hey, I'm not that fast.

He took off after her and found that, much to his delight, he was that fast. He'd caught her in seconds, grabbing her around the waist and pulling her back into his chest.

You better not have slowed down to make it easy on me.

She giggled in response and slipped out of his arms, taking off for the vegetation that dotted the far side of the pool.

He caught her just before she darted inside some particularly tall stalks of seaweed. This time, he made sure his grip was tight enough so that she couldn't wiggle away from him.

You're mine.

Promise?

He kissed her deeply, wishing for legs that he could wrap around her to ensure she would stay put. Instead, their tails entwined, sending glorious tendrils of pleasure throughout his body.

Oh, Iaha. That feels so good. Oh, baby.

Yes, it does. I love you.

And I love you.

The pleasure intensified. Shedd felt as if his cock were buried deep inside her, pulsing with energy and desire. When she threw back her head and moaned, he devoured her neck, nipping and licking at her until her moans turned into cries for more.

He angled his head to her breast, taking the nipple deep inside his mouth as his other hand toyed with her hard nub. They thrust against each other in unison until he thought he would burst. Not wanting it to end, he slowed the movement of his hips.

This is incredible.

She lifted his face back to hers, kissing him deeply before turning in his arms. She thrust back against him and he felt himself enter her from behind. They swam together, their tails entwined as they rocked against each other.

I want to find your clit. I want you to come.

No need, my love. Having you inside me this way will make me come. Just being with you will make me come.

She turned her head toward him and kissed him again as they neared an outcropping of rocks that surrounded a sandy shelf of beach. In the shallow water just outside the beach, they settled into the sand, their lower bodies still entwined.

He ground into her, pushing her down into the soft grain as she giggled and wiggled under him. Then, suddenly, she gasped. Her orgasm ripped through her body, and Shedd felt her tightening around his cock.

Shedd, oh my darling, so good. So very good, oh, oh.

She exploded again and Shedd could take no more of the fantastic feeling of her body clenching around his.

He blasted off with her, the pleasure flowing through his body like nothing he'd ever felt before.

Iaha. Every time I love you it gets better and better.

I suppose we'd better buy a defibrillator, then. Before long, your heart will stop from the pleasure.

He kissed her gently, then moved beside her, propping himself up on one elbow as he caressed her bare stomach.

That brings up an interesting question, my love.

What's that?

You're immortal. I'm not. The people here die, just like humans.

Yes, but I think they live longer.

Does it change the way you feel about me?

Not in the slightest; I love you too much for that. We'll cross that bridge when we come to it.

He kissed her again, his thumb gently caressing her cheek as their tongues flicked against each other.

We'd better get back. She wiggled away from him and slid into the water. He slid behind her, catching up quickly so that they were side by side.

Which reminds me. How did you get past Adelpia?

It was simple. I told her that I wanted to take a swim. She offered to go with me, but I refused. She seemed to know that I was meeting you, and she didn't care.

That's interesting.

They reached the side of the pool, Shedd lifting himself out and offering his hand to Iaha after his legs had appeared.

He wrapped her in her robe, then turned for his own.

From the top of the stairs, Gyles's head appeared.

"Do you never sleep?" Shedd said, his voice full of anger as he pulled on his clothing.

"I could ask the same of you," Gyles said.

"Here to arrest us?"

Gyles stepped closer to them, then swiveled toward the stairs as Adelphia bounded up. She threw herself into his arms and their lips locked.

"Well," Shedd said. "That explains a lot."

Their kiss broke and Gyles kissed the tip of Adelphia's nose, then pulled her into his chest.

"We've hidden our love from everyone," Gyles said. "We were prepared to run away together, to live on the surface as mortals. Then you came along."

Gyles drew himself up to his full height and for the first time, Shedd noticed he had a spear in his hands.

"She will not mate with you tomorrow."

"Listen, haven't I been saying that the whole time? I don't want to mate with her. No offense, Adelphia. You're a beautiful woman, but I'm in love with Iaha."

"I understand," she replied. "But Anstice will have it no other way, and he is our leader. We *must* leave, tonight."

"Or we can kill you," Gyles said.

"Now wait a minute," Iaha said, stepping in front of Shedd. She hadn't figured this moment would come so soon.

But Shedd gently pushed her aside.

"There's no reason for violence. Gyles, I want you to show me the statue of Poseidon. And then, I want you to show me a copy of the written prophecy. I want to read it, every last word of it."

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Chapter Eleven

Iaha stretched in her bed, feeling relaxed and loved. When she closed her eyes again, she remembered the feel Shedd's body next to hers, his hard chest against her soft breasts. His gentle hands as they caressed her.

Last night Shedd had been perfect, in every way. He'd come up with a fantastic plan for the mating ceremony that was scheduled to take place in just a few hours. She was sure it would be perfect, and that Gyles and Adelpia would live happily ever after, as would she and Shedd.

She sat up, a huge smile lighting her face.

Father?

She got no answer, which puzzled her somewhat. She expected that he knew exactly what their plan was, and would tell them whether or not it would work.

Father? Are you here?

Again, Poseidon didn't answer her. Iaha sighed, then leaned her head back on the pillow.

Aella? Adara? Can you hear me? I've found the man of my dreams. And together, we found Yumani. Can you believe it? It actually exists!

She waited a few minutes, then frowned.

Hello? Is anyone there?

Uneasiness crept into her stomach. She hadn't been able to reach her sisters for weeks. And, although she'd talked to her father just yesterday, she expected him to come today, to

watch the ritual replacement of the stone and see the mating ceremony that everyone had talked about so much.

Shedd?

Yes, my love?

I can't reach my father. Or my sisters. Something is wrong. Very, very wrong.

Don't worry. It's probably because we're under the ocean.

She laughed, and then shook her head.

Doubt it. Do you forget that we're mermaids? The water enhances our abilities, it doesn't hinder them.

Which brings up a question. If some of the people here in Yumani are related to you, how come you can't communicate with them?

My sisters and I are very close. We were raised near each other, and spent lots of time together. I told you, the link is strongest with those I have a strong bond with.

Sorry. Forgot about that.

Say, sailor. Wanna meet me in my quarters after the ceremony?

Love to. But you have to be on top this time.

With pleasure.

The door opened and Desma walked in. Her robe was a shimmery blue, and she handed a bright red one to Iaha.

"Have you spoken with your father?" Her voice sounded worried.

"No."

"I hope he comes for the ceremony. It will be wonderful to know that he supports us again. We've worried for quite some time that he'd abandoned us."

"I'm sure he'll be here." Iaha bit her lip as she spat out the lie. She knew no such thing. Her father might show up, but she was deeply concerned that she had not been able to reach him since yesterday.

Desma nodded, then placed the robe on the bed and left.

Iaha stood and ran to the shower, bathing quickly and coming back out. Despite her misgivings, she felt great joy about today's events. Shedd had assured her that things would turn out just fine, and she had to agree with him. By the end of the day they would be together. They could have their own private mating ceremony and then plan a wedding, with her father officiating. Then, later, they could marry in the legal human way.

She was not worried about Shedd being not being immortal. For the first time in her long life she'd found someone that she loved enough to pledge herself to. She planned to enjoy every year that they had.

She donned her robe and stepped into the main room. Desma was helping Adelpia into a silvery, flowing robe. The younger woman's blond hair hung around her shoulders, and she worried her lip, as if frightened about what was about to take place.

When Iaha came inside, she turned to her and winked. Iaha returned the affection, then plastered her own, mournful look on her face. It would not do for Iaha to let Desma know that she was happy about the day's events, after she'd put up such a fuss about Shedd being her man.

When Desma pronounced that Adelpia was ready, the three of them stepped out of the house and moved toward

the temple that Iaha now knew housed the statue of her father.

Shedd would be waiting there, with the aquamarine stone in his hand, ready to place it in the statue, or so Anstice and Desma thought.

They stepped inside and Iaha took in the crowd. It seemed that all of Yumani had appeared to watch the stone being replaced, to watch what they thought was the restoration of Poseidon's protection and approval of them.

Shedd stood at the front, with Gyles standing not far behind him. Anstice stood next to the statue, a huge smile on his face.

Desma ushered Adelphia up the aisle and Iaha laughed when she thought how much this looked like an actual wedding ceremony. She knew from what Gyles had told them last night that the mating ceremony would not take place in front of everyone.

Instead, after the stone was placed in the statue, Anstice would join Shedd and Adelphia's hands and they would be ushered into an antechamber that contained the ritual bed where Shedd was to take Adelphia's virginity.

Iaha smiled. Adelphia had remained true to that part of her heritage. She was a virgin, waiting for her lover. But the lover would be Gyles, and not Shedd, a fact for which all four of them were very, very happy.

As Adelphia mounted the steps, Iaha sat down in the front row, next to Desma. Adelphia stepped next to Shedd, and Anstice started toward them. When he was only twenty feet in front of them, the temple shook.

The congregation made nervous noises, breaking into screams as the temple shook harder.

Iaha stood, but before she could move toward Shedd, there was a blinding flash of light. When the light cleared, the crowd gasped. Standing at the top of the stairs, his face angry, a trident in his fist, was mighty Zeus.

"Uncle. Stop! I..." She started toward him.

"You stop, Iaha. This whole thing will stop. On my orders! I..."

A second flashing light appeared and Iaha jumped as her father appeared next to her. She'd never seen Poseidon look so angry. His eyes flashed in rage. His own trident was drawn, pointed at his brother.

"If you have something to say, Zeus, say it to me. I will allow you to hurt these people, my people, no longer."

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Chapter Twelve

"You will not allow *me*? You think that you have the authority to..."

"I have dominion over the seas, not you."

"And I have dominion over you! What gave you the right to create this place? To hide it from me?"

"Is that what bothers you? That I hid it? I wished not to share with you. Have you not a place of your own such as this?"

Zeus's eyes narrowed, and Iaha knew that her father was right. Zeus had his own colony somewhere, hidden from everyone where he kept concubines and their offspring. His hatred of Yumani was simply because his brother had created it, and not him.

Her father's laugh sent chills up her spine.

"You are so arrogant. You could not live with the fact that there was a place that you didn't own, could you? I gave the people here my protection, and you had to hire someone to steal it. Now, it's back, and there's nothing you can do about it. Yumani is mine once more."

"Do you think, brother?" Zeus whirled, his trident pointed at Shedd.

"No!" Iaha screamed and ran toward him, her heart racing as a firebolt shot from the end of Zeus' weapon.

Shedd took the stone from his pocket and threw it at Gyles, who ran to the statue and placed it above the stone heart of Poseidon. The room lit up just as Zeus's thunderbolt

sailed across the room toward Shedd. A second bolt flew from her father's weapon, hitting Zeus's seconds before they both hit Shedd's chest.

Iaha watched him fall, her screams becoming louder and louder as she raced toward him.

"My power here is restored," Poseidon yelled. "Be gone with you."

Zeus disappeared, his cry of anger filling the temple.

Iaha knelt next to Shedd, who had fallen to the floor.

"Shedd! Shedd!"

Darling. Can you hear me?

...love you. I...

"NO! Father, help him."

Her father stepped toward her, his trident at his side.

"He is merely stunned. The bolt that intercepted Zeus's deflected much of his power. Give him a moment, daughter. He will recover, and you will be together."

Poseidon lifted his head and screamed his brother's name.

"Never interfere here again. If you do, I can promise you that I will find one of your civilizations and punish their people, as you've punished mine!"

Anstice stepped forward and bowed to Poseidon.

"Great Master, we bid you welcome. But, the prophecy says this man," he pointed to Shedd, "this man must mate with your descendent and restore power here."

Poseidon held up his hand. "The prophecy says that the man who replaces the stone shall wed Adelpia. Shedd did not replace the stone, he merely brought it here. Gyles

replaced the stone. And Shedd will mate with my descendent, Iaha."

Adelphia let out a squeal of delight, then launched herself up the stairs and into Gyles's arms.

Shedd stirred under her hands, and Iaha bent over and kissed him gently.

"Bloody hell, that hurt."

She laughed. "How are you feeling?"

"Don't worry, my love. You won't get rid of me that quickly. I love you too much."

"And I love you."

She kissed him again, and then they lifted their heads to watch Anstice lead Adelphia and Gyles to the room where the mating ritual would take place.

The multitudes yelled in approval and mighty Poseidon laughed. He turned to the crowd and surveyed it.

"Father?"

"Go with your man, daughter," he said, raising his eyebrows at several of the ladies. "I have been gone from here a long time, and have work to do."

He started into the crowd and Shedd relaxed into the ground with a sigh.

"Your father's an old horn dog."

"Yes, he is. Are you sure you're feeling all right?"

"I told you, yes. I'm a little woozy, however." He wiggled his eyebrows at her. "It's a good thing it's your turn to be on top."

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Chapter Thirteen

Iaha lay with her head on Shedd's chest. He slept peacefully, his chest rising and falling in a relaxed, and comforting, rhythm.

The scene where Zeus's thunderbolt shot toward him played through her mind. She didn't know what she would have done if her father hadn't been there to deflect the power. Shedd would have died, and her heart would have died with him.

It brought home to her the simple fact that Shedd was mortal, and would die as was the way of man. And she, a daughter of Poseidon, would never die.

How would her heart take it what had happened today had caused his death? She wasn't sure that she would be able to survive without him. She loved him too much, needed him too much.

And you're thinking too much.

She jumped as Shedd's voice entered her mind.

I don't want to be without you.

You're not. I'm here. Awake and holding the woman that I love. Life is good.

She nuzzled into him more.

What happens, though, when it's for real?

Then we'll deal with it, as all people do.

I...

"No more. I want to make love." His voice boomed out in the room and Iaha laughed.

"You almost sound like my father, or my uncle, with your deep commanding voice."

Shedd laughed loudly. "Perhaps that lightening bolt did more than just stun me."

He caressed her shoulder, then leaned over and kissed her forehead.

"Madam. I believe it's your turn to be in charge."

Iaha laughed, sliding up into a sitting position and running her fingers along her chest.

"Hmm. What to do, what to do. I suppose I could take your wonderful cock in my mouth, run my tongue around it and suck it down my throat."

She looked down and grinned as his cock hardened and lifted. "Goodness. Looks like someone likes that idea. Or I could massage you, make sure my hands found your balls, squeeze them gently, feel you grow harder in my hands."

His cock hardened more and he hissed.

"You like that, too? Well, how about if I just mounted you and rode you until neither of us could stand the pleasure?"

"Iaha. Stop. Tormenting. Me."

"Why? I rather like it." She giggled when he grabbed her and pulled her on top of him.

"I'll take a generous helping of all three, please."

He lifted up and captured her lower lip between his, sucking it in until they were both hissing around each other's lips. She pushed him back and licked her lips.

Her hands traced his shoulders and his arms, moving at a slow rate. The friction made her nipples tingle and she moved

her fingers to his own, sliding them between her hands and massaging gently.

"Oh, baby."

"Yes?" She bent over and flicked her tongue around one nipple, and then the other, sucking them in gently, putting just enough pressure on them with her teeth until he groaned.

When she released them, she trailed her tongue down his stomach to the patch of hair above his cock. She ran her fingers through it, and then gently thumbbed his hard erection.

Before he could protest, or order her to hurry up, she wrapped her fingers around him and took him deep inside her mouth, sucking him in and out, loving the feel of him throbbing inside of her.

Her fingers moved down to his balls as she continued to suck, gently tracing lines back and forth over the hardening sac.

"You'll be the one to kill me, not the lightning bolt."

She released his cock and it fell back onto his stomach. "Do you think? Can you stand years and years of me tormenting you with my lips, my hands, and my pussy?"

She lifted his cock again and centered herself above him, pushing down and taking him deep inside her.

This time she was the one who hissed as he grabbed her hips and urged her further down, moving her back and forth and up and down.

"Shedd! Oh, Shedd!"

He released one hand and used his thumb to find her clit, which he rubbed and pushed as Iaha tossed her head back

and forth, her gentle rocking turning into a hard pounding as she rode him.

"Shedd, please!"

"There, or there? Or there?" His thumb pushed just above her clit and Iaha came, screaming out so loud that she was sure every person in the colony heard her.

He continued to torment her clit and she came again.

"Please, Shedd, please, no more. I ... I.... oh, Shedd." She melted down onto his chest, her own heaving as he moved his hands up to her back and rolled them over.

When he was on top of her, he pushed her thighs apart, grabbing each of her ankles as he began to pound into her harder and harder.

Iaha felt as if the world were spinning. She'd never felt the closeness to a man that she felt to Shedd at this very moment. Their gazes locked and she knew that he felt the same.

Stay inside me forever.

With pleasure, my love. With pleasure.

He slowed his pace, his gaze dropping to where they were joined. In response, she tightened herself around him, clenching and releasing until he lifted his head and groaned.

I repeat. You'll be the death of me.

He rocked in and out of her gently, releasing her ankles and lowering himself so he could take her nipples into his mouth, moving back and forth between them as she moaned under him.

Siren's Song [A Siren Sisters Anthology]
by Melinda Barron, Midnyte Dupree, Jade Buchanan

Finally, he held still, lowering his lips to hers and caressing them gently. She squeezed him gently, then harder, and harder still.

He rocked slowly according to her movements and seconds later he came, pouring himself into her as they whispered I love you back and forth in their minds.

Will our children be mortal?

I don't know. It's something I have to ask my father.

You will have my child, right?

I'll have a dozen of them, as long as they all look, and act, like their father.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Chapter Fourteen

Iaha was settled securely in Shedd's arms when her father's voice resounded in her mind. She pushed away from Shedd gently and he did not stir, his chest rising and falling in deep slumber.

She stood, donned a shell bra, gathered a robe around her and followed her father's command, meeting him at the pool. He sat at the edge, his beautiful green tail moving in and out of the water as several beautiful mermaids played with a ball in front of him.

"Shedd says you're a horn dog."

Poseidon laughed. "And he's right. It is a quality that I've possessed all of my life. One that I would not trade for anything."

He looked up at her and smiled. "You are happy, daughter?"

"Very. I'm also frightened, father."

"Whatever for? You fought, and defeated, your uncle. And you've found the man of your dreams. What is there to be frightened of?"

She dropped the robe and dove into the pool, then hooked her arms over the side, laying her head on her forearms.

"He is mortal. I love him so much, when he dies, I won't want to live. And he asked about our children. If they will be mortal."

"Your children will have the same powers as you have. As for your future husband, when he absorbed Zeus's

thunderbolt, he absorbed great power. It would take more than a mortal man to withstand that."

"Father, what are you saying?"

"That you don't have to worry about losing him. And your children? Well, let's just say they will probably be able to give their grandfather a run for his money."

Iaha's face lit up with joy.

"Father!"

"I didn't mean for it to happen this way. I knew from the day that Shedd was born that the two of you were meant to be together. But I did not want to push you, because I feared that you would reject him, as is the right of any person, even with those they are meant to be with."

"I would never reject him."

Poseidon laughed. "Just a few days ago you swore you would have nothing to do with him, because I was interfering with your life."

She blushed and turned her head.

"Will you marry us?"

"I would be honored. And when you have a wedding on land, I will attend and give my daughter away. I'll even wear clothing."

She laughed. "I think Shedd would appreciate that. But then again, so would I."

Her father gently stroked her hair.

"I am concerned about something, though."

"What is that, daughter?"

"I can't reach Aella, or Adara. Is something wrong with them?"

His face fell, and then lifted again.

"Your sisters are fighting their own battles."

"Then I must help them."

"You must stay here, with your husband. I can marry you tonight, if you like."

"I think that's a perfect idea." Shedd dove into the pool, then came up behind Iaha and kissed her neck.

"The sooner, the better. And tell me, um, sir, how long does it take to get a hold over this?"

Shedd held out his hand and a thunderbolt flew toward a stand of seaweed. The strand burst into flames, then smoldered as it hit the water.

Poseidon laughed as Iaha gasped.

"You'll learn, my son. You'll learn."

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Chapter Fifteen

The temple had been decorated with flowers, beautiful colorful blossoms that gave off perfect color and sweet smell.

Iaha had wound a crown of red blooms in her hair, to match her tail. The robe the smiling Adelphia had brought to her was a brighter red than Iaha had ever seen. It swirled around her and left a long, flowing train.

"You look so beautiful," Adelphia said, kissing Iaha's cheek. "I don't know how to thank you. Because of you and Shedd, Gyles and I can be together, and stay at home."

"We're glad that you're so happy together. We wish you many, many children to repopulate Yumani and make it strong again."

They started to walk toward the temple. When they neared it, Iaha slowed her pace. She saw Shedd, talking with Anstice, her father, and a man she didn't recognize, but who clearly was related.

As realization dawned, her eyes widened.

She hurried over to them and grabbed Shedd's arm. He leaned over and kissed her. She could see dried tears on his cheek.

"Iaha. This is my father, Olanda."

"Olanda. I'm honored." She leaned over and kissed his cheek.

The older man laughed. "Some may not share you welcome, but I was very surprised, and pleased, to find Anstice on my doorstep this morning. And I'm overwhelmed

to meet the son I knew I had, but had given up on ever finding."

"We'll wait for you inside," Poseidon boomed out. He pushed the other men in, then Iaha turned to Shedd.

"Are you ready for this?"

"Yes. It's been a strange day. I loved my parents, both of them. My mother made me very angry, but I still loved her. The man who raised me knew that I wasn't his, but he always told me that he loved me, that he cared for me."

"Olanda won't replace him," Iaha said. "And our children will know the names of both men."

Shedd kissed her gently, and then held out his arm. "Well, now when you're introduced to people you can say, for real, that you have a last name, Mrs. Collins."

She giggled and kissed him back. "I don't think Greek gods have last names, my love. You'll just have to be known as Shedd the Magnificent, or Shedd the Great."

"I prefer it as Shedd the Grateful."

"Then I will be Mrs. Grateful. Forever."

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Siren's Song [A Siren Sisters Anthology]
by Melinda Barron, Midnyte Dupree, Jade Buchanan

Adara

By

Midnyte Dupree

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Dedication

For two fabulous authors, Jade and Melinda, for letting me be part of this wonderful anthology with you. And thank you both for keeping me inspired to continue writing. I love being a Siren! I hope all of you readers enjoy our stories.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Chapter One

Adara felt her eyes blaze with fire as she watched her lover fuck another woman. His tan hips thrust in and out, flexing those delicious muscles along his thighs. The light from the window ran over Jace's back, like it too wanted in on the action. The moans from the woman filled the room and Adara's heart broke. She could feel the vile muscle shatter inside her chest.

Her feet refused to move as she watched him in the bed covering the bronzed skin of the woman, with her legs spread wide for both their pleasure. He hadn't expected her back so soon, the bastard. Cutting her trip from Spain short, Adara was eager to get home to Jace on their little isle of Balaerie in the Tyrrhenian Sea. She'd had a much better image in her mind of her return than this.

Her father, Poseidon, had told her that humans couldn't be trusted, but did she listen? No. Even though her mother was human, the woman could never have been trusted either. She saw the sea God for a means to escape her dull life. And boy did she escape it. Now she lived below the sea in a prison of sexual desire for his sea creatures. Father had tried to warn her mother not to mess with him, but still she tried to prove his existence to the world for monetary gain. Thank goodness Adara was more her father's daughter than her mother's.

Yet, she had hoped she could trust Jace.

Finally a masculine cry rang out into the room, signaling Jace's release. The woman cried out as well. Damn the bitch

and the cheating bastard! Jace had no idea just what type of damage a siren could do, did he? Holding tightly to her control, she watched them as their bodies relaxed into the bed. With Jace still inside the woman, Adara finally decided to make her presence known.

"Why dear, what a pleasant welcome home. I see you've missed me." Anger boiled inside her as she fought with the uncontrollable urge to launch a lightning strike at his bare ass. Jace quickly flipped over and the woman's eyes grew wide as she grabbed at the blankets to cover herself. But they both lay on top of them and the battle was lost to her. The blankets remained beneath their bare, sweaty bodies. Instead, the woman used her arms and hands to cover her breasts.

Adara rolled her eyes then focused her attention on Jace who bent his knee and rested his arm there to look at her. His cock now resting limp between his legs, Adara could see the glisten of both their climaxes still on his shaft.

"Hi honey. You're home early?"

Adara just looked at him. Hoping beyond hope she would be able to control her temper. But it wasn't looking good. She felt her fists clench around her bags and she knew her eyes had changed to silver, which made them stand out even more than they already did against the dark midnight of her hair and her pale skin.

Adara turned to the woman who tried to slip from the bed unnoticed, but stopped as soon as Adara looked her way.

"I hope it was worth it, bitch. I'm out of here Jace. I just hope my father doesn't find out."

She knew that would do it. Jace's face paled and he scrambled from the bed to her side. He reached out to grab her shoulders, but she stepped back so he dropped his hands at his sides. Jace knew who her father was. He had never believed her until she showed him that she could change into a mermaid. She had expected to spend her life with him. Adara had wanted to share her secret so badly with someone, and she thought she could with Jace. Now she wished she never had. The bastard.

Her father would take care of Jace's memories of her, leaving her world once again in secret.

"Adara, please. I love you sweetheart." The woman behind him gasped.

"—but I thought you said you loved me?" Her whiny voice cut through the room and Adara glanced behind Jace to see the woman's eyes welling with tears.

Good Gods!

"Whatever, Jace. Have fun with your new toy while you can."

And with that, Adara rushed from the little cabana house, dropping her bags as she went. She wouldn't need any of it where she was going. It was about time she visited the depths of the sea.

Jace's voice rang out into the darkening sky. She kept walking, never to look back. Men sucked. They were rotten, stupid, self-centered and irritating! She would never get involved with another one again. Period.

Reaching the edge of the little island, Adara looked back one last time. Palma was a beautiful city on a beautiful island.

She had wanted this to be home to her, but now it would never feel the same. She doubted she would ever be able to return. She didn't think she could hurt much more, but having to leave the one place she loved made the pain ten times worse inside her chest.

She needed open spaces, a vast area where she could set herself free into the waters. She could always visit her sisters, would probably contact them once she settled down. They would find Jace and make him regret ever being born. That is, if there was anything left of him after her father got a hold of him. She could have easily done something herself, but leaving was for the best.

Adara stripped and stepped into the sea, where instantly her lower half flexed with blue and silver scales. The water felt wonderful upon her skin as it welcomed her into its embrace. It was cool today; perfect to douse the flames she had created by getting angry with Jace.

Diving into the sea, Adara cut a path in the water and headed toward the Strait of Gibraltar. Ships passed overhead, but she remained far below the water so they wouldn't see her. Siren's had such a bad reputation for luring fisherman to their deaths with their voices. Adara laughed. She couldn't remember anyone doing such a thing. Although her little sister might try it just for fun.

Adara let the thought of her family fill her mind as the blue-green of the water cut across her flesh, calming her emotions with its tranquility. She didn't have to go up for air too often and the strength in her fin was amazing as she pushed her way forward.

She knew instantly when she had crossed into the Atlantic Ocean. The current was swift, so she had to focus on not getting swept away. Her anger was finally dissipating, but she couldn't help feeling sad. Jace had showed such promising signs of being someone she could settle down with. He wasn't persuaded too much by her voice and that only built her attraction to him more. She knew she could make him obey her if she tried, but Adara would never do that to someone she loved.

An especially strong current kicked her around, but she pushed through it hoping to find a little less turbulent area. With each push of her fin, the water propelled her harder. A whirlpool whipped up around her, but she fought with it until it released her. Being spun around for just that small moment had made her slightly off kilter.

Swimming to the surface, Adara tried to get her bearings, but couldn't. More of the ocean yanked at her, pulling her down further and further. Her fin pushed her up to the surface and she used her arms to help as well. This wasn't good. She needed to figure out where she was before something worse happened.

Just as she broke the surface a loud crack of thunder rent the air around her. She screamed and plunged below.

What the hell was going on?

She looked up to the surface. The water there rose and dropped in massive waves she could feel all the way below. As Adara pushed her way to the top once again the wind blew her wet hair around her face, the water spraying in wild streams. She could tell the current had pushed her much

further out into the ocean than she thought. She couldn't see anything around her of course, but she couldn't feel the vibration from the land.

Then she heard something. It could have been thunder, but she hadn't seen a crack of lightning preceding it. She listened harder and the sound grew louder and louder around her. It was a deep rumble of air that she could feel in her chest. It didn't stop or slow, but instead grew in intensity over the beat of the rain hitting the surface.

Adara turned around—wishing at once she hadn't. She was in the middle of a hurricane. The monster before her was dark and menacing as it made its way towards her. It was blocking her path, her way home. She could escape below the water, but even there, things would be affected. The roar grew deeper, dangerous.

Her heart beat wildly in her chest, sent blood rushing through her veins. Her stomach knotted and if she had had anything to eat, she knew it would now be coming up. With her fin keeping her upright, she watched as a huge wave, more like a tsunami, rose from the ocean. It was alive in its dance to reach the sky. This was it for her. She would die never having been truly loved.

The wave picked her up as it made its race toward land. Wherever that might be. Something hit her on the shoulder and she looked over to see a small, unconscious animal being tossed about in the waves. She wanted to reach out and comfort it, but the storm quickly pulled it away. Another unfortunate victim.

The hurricane was fully upon her now, kicking her this way and that. The water swirled like a giant drain and Adara could do nothing in the face of its power. She was tired and scared. A piece of wood rushed by her and she grabbed on to it, hoping it would keep her afloat for just a little while longer. But the storm continued to escalate. Time seemed to go on forever. The clouds became dark and she couldn't tell when night had fallen and when day had begun.

She rode the hurricane for what seemed like days until finally she could feel it weakening. Adara hoped this was it. She would finally be let go from this monster.

The water rose, higher and higher, creating a massive wave. Not like the one a day or two ago, but almost as large. This one picked her up and carried her forward. The water churned underneath her. It felt as if it created hands that caressed the scales of her lower half as it wrapped around her, pushing her onward. The water now felt warm and she knew that somewhere, somehow, she had traveled far indeed. It appeared she was now in the Gulf of Mexico, if she could rely on her senses, but even her brain felt weary and worn out. She needed to rest soon.

The wind whipped her hair around her head as she fought to stay on top of the water, but the force was wild. All her control had been given over to the storm.

Finally, as the water rushed over land, she hit something hard. knocking the breath from her body.

Please just let it stop. Let the hurricane die down so I can rest my arms and legs.

She just needed rest.

The water pushed her further, the weight of her body forcing her down, down below the wet surface. She couldn't fight back. Her eyes felt heavy, her breathing was shallow. She just wanted to rest.

As the storm calmed down, she noticed she had not moved. Her body hit something hard and stopped her dead. She held on with the little bit of strength she had until finally the storm slowly, deliberately, died away. With half open eyes, she realized she had landed in someone's pool. She would be safe. For now.

Night had fallen as she clung to the side. Adara laid her head on the cool concrete on the lip of the edge and wrapped her arms around the metal ladder. Her eyelids drifted down. The night was heavy against her exposed flesh, and even her fin felt leaded as it swooshed through the dirty water. In the morning she would have to figure out where she was and hopefully find a place where she could be safe.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Chapter Two

Jack Boswell's breath came hard and fast, in little gasps that wouldn't cease. The rain pelted his face and the howling wind tore through his clothes. The hurricane was worse than anyone expected. Even though he was warned earlier, nothing had prepared him for this magnitude of destruction.

His strength waned as he pushed his way through the fierce storm. He just needed to get home. His house was constructed to withstand any hurricane, so he knew it would be there. Jack thought he would have been home hours before the main part of the storm hit, but getting all the animals to safety at the Aquarium had taken longer than he expected. Now he just needed to get home safely himself. It was a good thing he didn't live far, because there was no way he could have driven in this mess. He had to use his powers at the Aquarium more than once to get them all to safety.

He hated using them, because with any little burst of magic, he had to worry that his father would find him. The demon King would be brutal if he found out his only son had been living above the underworld. And he would stroke out, if he knew he had been working with fish.

Fish of all things.

The King hated those creatures that lived in the ocean. Jack didn't know why, didn't really care. He just knew the Aquarium would be the last place his father would look for him.

Finally at home he went to the front door, but a large tree blocked his entrance.

"Damn it!"

Going around the side of his one story house, he flipped the latch on his wooden fence to go into the backyard. The wind had weakened, finally, and he was able to check out the damage done to his trees.

It was going to be a pain in the ass to clean up this shit.

Looking his yard over quickly, he happened to skim across his pool. A form close to the edge caught his attention as he moved closer.

His heart pounded in his chest.

Everything ceased to move or make noise.

A dark silhouette lay against the edge of the pool.

His instinct kicked in and he bent down to pull the limp form from the water.

Falling on his ass, he dragged the unmoving body until it lay resting on top of him. Getting up on his unsteady legs with the wind now blowing again at his back, Jack found it difficult to keep his balance as he picked up the small creature in his arms.

Something felt slippery along the skin of his arm, but he didn't think about it. He just needed to get this woman inside.

What was she doing out in this weather? He risked a look down. Hell, she was naked! He stumbled as his eyes traced down her body to rest upon her breasts. The dark areolas captured his attention, the nipples firm and hard in the chilly air.

With his energy renewed, Jack moved through the obstacles in the yard until he made it to the back door. He was relieved when he turned the knob and it gave easily. Pushing inside, he slammed the door with his foot and quickly went to his room with his burden clutched tight to his chest. He needed to get her warm.

Something moved across his arm and he looked down at her legs, but—there were no legs!

Instead, tiny scales adorned her lower half.

Jack smiled. His charge was finally here.

He had no idea why Zeus chose to deliver this beauty to him in a hurricane, but he would take it. She was his responsibility now. He would make sure she didn't put the Gods in danger any longer. According to Zeus, Adara's need to tell her secret was a danger to them all.

Taking her to his room, he lowered her to the bed. Jack looked down at her and sighed. He wished the God had prepared him for her beauty. He now realized how the Sirens had gotten such a reputation. He could see how they lured people to their death.

Jack glanced at her pale skin. Her dark hair curled around her shoulder and rested just above her right breast. Her skin was flawless and appeared to glow against his dark blue comforter.

"What have you done to anger the God?" He whispered to her.

Jack turned, grabbed a blanket, and with reluctance, he covered her body. She turned and pulled the cover up higher, but never fully woke up.

Looking down at his pants, Jack noted just how much this woman, this creature, was affecting him. His cock pushed against his wet clothes. Reaching down, he cupped it and squeezed, only making his need stronger as he looked at her sleeping form on the bed. His body's reaction was probably due to his lack of action as of late. He hadn't felt sexual in a while, but for some reason, this woman reached inside him. He didn't feel the clawing fear of his father finding him. He was able to once again think about something different. Her beauty was extraordinary, almost hypnotizing.

"Ridiculous!"

Turning abruptly, he went into the bathroom to shed his own clothes and contact Zeus.

* * * *

With the door closed behind him, he started to undress. Jack lit a small candle upon entering to create a soft glow. Suddenly, a flash of bright light lit up the small room. The flame blew out as Zeus appeared.

"Hello Nalameir—"

"Don't call me that. I am no longer that person. I am Jack now. Don't forget it, *God*."

Zeus smiled wide. "You cannot leave your past behind you, dark one."

"Whatever. You have delivered her to me. Now what?" Jack removed a towel from a shelf and wrapped it around his waist. "Do you want me to kill her?"

Zeus rubbed his chin as he thought. Jack took in a deep breath, betraying his boredom with the God. He hated that he

still owed Zeus for helping him to escape his father. The demon lord wanted Jack to rise to his full power and work along side him as he brought evil to earth. Although working with Zeus wasn't a walk in the park, the God wasn't nearly as depraved as his demon father. And truly, all Jack wanted was to be left alone to live his life in the best way he could as a demon.

"No, I do not want Adara dead. That would surely anger Poseidon, and I don't want all that drama." Zeus walked the length of the bathroom and turned. "I want you to see if she will tell you what she is. Record it. I want to have proof of just how much a danger his daughters are to our world. I know she told someone already, but I wasn't expecting it. No proof. But this time, I will have all the necessary information."

"You just need me to get her to tell me what she is?" Jack's brows furrowed. It couldn't be that easy.

"Yes. That is it. Do not kill her, do not maim her. Just get her to speak of her heritage. Once her father realizes I'm right, he'll take care of things himself."

"Well. Okay. Sounds easy enough."

"Good, good. Now go to her. Keep her close and make her reveal all." With that statement, Zeus laughed and raised his hand. A bright light flashed upon the God's exit, causing Jack to cringe. Damn the God and his powers.

After a quick shower and thankful the water still worked, he moved back into the bedroom. Adara lay curled up on her side with the blanket pulled close under her chin. She shivered.

He looked around for more blankets and gathered what he could. It would be a cool night without the heat and lights. Covering his new charge with another blanket, Jack studied her again. Her hair, now almost dry, lay across the pillows in a dark, wavy shadow. His chest tightened as he looked upon her pale face. Why did the God feel she was such a threat? Like anyone would believe that Gods and Goddesses still walked the earth.

Feeling the weight of his day finally settling in, Jack fell onto the bed beside her. The wind whooshed against his house, the rain pelted down on the roof and the soft sigh of his bed partner lulled him to sleep.

Tomorrow was going to be full of excitement when Adara realized she was stuck with him.

Jack smiled. His life had just gotten a lot more interesting.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Chapter Three

What the hell was that smell?

Something sweet permeated her senses, drawing her further into consciousness. Adara kept her eyes closed for a little longer, letting the scent draw deeper into her lungs. It smelled so nice. It made her want to rub her face against it and wallow around until her body was completely covered. Nothing had ever made her feel like that.

Turning over in the bed, the scent stirred. It was not only sweet, but now it mixed with a light musk, making her body tingle all over with unexpected pleasure. Gods, more, she wanted more.

Without opening her eyes, she searched the bed, scooting around, searching. She ran into something solid, yes, there it was. She rubbed her nose against it. It was soft, yet hard. Reaching up with her hands, she rubbed against skin, stirring the hypnotic scent again. She moaned and just as she feared she'd do, began to rub her cheek next to the skin much like a cat. Adara needed to open her eyes, she did, but she knew the fantasy would be gone then, and the scent would disappear.

A large hand cupped her head, the fingers buried deep into her hair, gently massaging her scalp. It felt so good. The tingling focused right where the fingertips touched.

"Mmmmm." She couldn't help the little sound that escaped.

The arm she rested her cheek against flexed. The muscle was large, jerking beneath her. Her eyes opened and she followed the dark skin up a large rounded shoulder, over a collarbone, a very naked collarbone, then up a thick neck. Her eyes lingered at the square jaw that showed a hint of stubble, then her eyes moved up over a well defined cheek until she was looking into eyes so deep it felt as if they pulled her in.

Adara was lost. The scent grew in the room, saturating her senses while lingering on her skin. Moisture gathered between her thighs. Squeezing her legs together, she tamped down her siren urge to take what she wanted. No, she was half human and she needed to remember that. For now.

"Who are you?" Her voice was deep, sleepy. It sounded husky, a bit sexy. Would he get the wrong idea?

His hand rose. It came at her slowly until he ran a finger down the side of her face. She fought to close her eyes and let the gentle caress sooth her.

"I'm Jack. I found you in my pool. There wasn't any way to contact the authorities, with the hurricane damage and all. I checked you over and you didn't have any injuries so I brought you up here to let you rest."

Adara wiggled her toes to make sure everything was the way it should be. Had he seen her tail? He didn't act like anything was out of the ordinary, so she played along.

He pulled his hand back and moved his body away from her. The loss of his touch sent a coldness barreling through her. It almost felt like being burned by ice instead of heat. Even though it hurt, she allowed him to move away. He was a stranger, after all, and she needed to remember to keep her

siren needs in check. Yes, in check, and she had to remember she swore off men entirely. Yet looking at this figure in front of her, she had absolutely no desire to walk away from him and every desire to take another chance with a man.

Damn her body and, well, her mind too, because it wasn't screaming for her to run.

She pulled the blanket up higher on her body.

"My name is Adara. I guess I should thank you for saving my life."

Jack turned away. Sitting on the edge of the bed, his head lowered to his hands while he looked at the carpet, and she wondered what was going through his mind.

"No big deal. I would have done it for anyone. I guess it's not every day a beautiful woman shows up in your pool—completely naked."

He laughed. The sound felt like tiny fingers dancing across her skin. Holy, this man was something. Being in his presence she couldn't understand this strong urge to throw him on the bed and ride him until they both fell limp. Her inner muscles twitched.

"Well I appreciate you coming out. If you hadn't I might of drowned."

"Yeah," he said. Jack still didn't look at her. Yet, she also noticed that her voice hadn't affected him. Instead he acted as if looking at her was horrible. Actually she probably did look atrocious. She had, after all, just ridden a hurricane a few thousand miles through the ocean.

She laughed.

"What's so funny?"

She laughed a little harder as she reached up and felt the wildness of her hair.

"Oh, I must look like a witch."

He turned suddenly, startling her. Her laugh died as his eyes pierced her with anger.

"No, you don't. I would hate for you to ever think of yourself in such a manner." Then he turned and looked once again at the floor.

She hadn't meant anything by her comment, yet she felt like she had said something obscene, if his reaction was anything to go by.

"I ... uh ... just meant my hair must look horrible."

He sighed and Adara watched the wide expanse of his back rise and fall. Her eyes were glued to his well-sculptured backside. Her fingers itched to trace each ridge and crest. Giving in, she reached across the bed and lightly ran her finger down his spine. He stiffened instantly and pulled away, turning to glare at her.

"What are you doing?"

"I'm sorry." She pulled her hand into her chest and looked away from him. She would have to control herself or this man may wish he'd left her in the pool. Then again, her mind said, why not have some fun?

* * * *

What the hell was he doing? Why in the world did he ever think he would be able to pull this off? The Siren was behind him, wrapped up in his sheets, and Gods, her smell. He was so hard right now he would have to escape in the bathroom

soon. Yeah that's what he would do, then he might be able to face her.

Something shot down his back like a white-hot poker and he jerked away. Looking behind him, he saw her pull her hand into her chest. Had she just touched him?

Yes, he would definitely have to go to the bathroom now. Right now, before he unwrapped the beautiful siren from the blankets and buried his cock deep within her. He groaned and she said something, but his mind was raging and he couldn't hear a word. The blood was so thick and hot and was making his cock stand painfully at attention.

"Excuse me."

He lifted from the bed and moved quickly to the bathroom. He heard her say something else, but the door cut off her sweet voice. He didn't think Siren's had an effect on demons. But, hell, this one sure did.

Jack turned the shower on, hopefully to drown out his moans. Then he quickly palmed his cock and stroked. It wouldn't take long, because not only did he have the usual morning hard-on, this one was aroused to the highest degree. Damn, her scent still lingered on him. On his arm where she had rubbed against him. It was so erotic, like a cat marking its territory. And that thought sent his cock swelling even more. Her territory. He pumped with the image of Adara in his mind. Her hair spread across his pillows and her naked nipples pressed tightly against his blankets. The same blankets he slept under every night naked.

He pumped until he started to feel the tingle in his sac. His balls tightened and he moaned. His knees almost gave out on

him as the sweet wave of climax rushed up his cock and shot out onto his hand, dripping on the floor of the shower.

He wished it had been in her warm body, but no, that wouldn't happen. No way in hell, or on earth, for that matter.

Cleaning up, he turned the shower off and pulled on a pair of boxers. As soon as he opened the door, he saw Adara laying on the bed and lord help him she was playing with herself. Her head was thrown back and her beautiful full lips were parted on a sigh. He felt himself stir again. Her scent before had been overwhelming, but now he got a full fledged whiff of ocean and air.

Adara turned her head, her eyes drifting open. He didn't think she was embarrassed; instead she looked sated.

He could only wish he had been the one between her legs.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Chapter Four

Adara couldn't believe she'd gotten caught. Damn her body and her raging desires. She could hear his breath flow fast from his lungs, almost sending ripples of wind across her body.

Having just pleased herself, her body warmed. Should she invite him into bed? How would the human handle such a request from the person he saved?

She giggled. His lips quirked up at the edge, making his features appear a little boyish. A dimple appeared on his left cheek, drawing her full attention to the small indentation. It was damn arousing if she did say so herself. Power pulsed from this human, taking her attention away from his features and focusing it on the total package in front of her.

She didn't feel the electrical charge in the air like she had before. His raw masculinity had drawn her attention now. And he was definitely masculine. Her eyes drifted across his unclothed body, taking in the dips and curves of his muscles. Damn if her body didn't try to heat up again.

"Um ... sorry." She didn't know what else to say to distract her raging hormones. Something needed to be said. "Are you done in the shower?"

His blue eyes sparkled as he stepped away from the door and gestured for her to enter at her convenience. "I'm all yours ... oh uh ... I mean ... the bathroom is all yours."

He turned his back to her but Adara wasn't fooled. A mirror stood at his side against the wall. At his angle, he'd be

able to see every gesture as she moved from the bed to the bathroom. A normal human female would feel shy and wouldn't move from the bed until properly covered. Well, Adara was not a normal human female. Her Siren tendencies always seemed to flare whenever a delectable piece of male flesh was close by. She stepped from the bed completely naked. He must have gotten an eye full when he carried her from outside, but she was about to give him more.

"Thank you. I'll be out in a moment."

"Take your time. I left a candle burning in there for you so it's not too dark."

Focusing on her walk from the bed to the bathroom, she wanted to make sure he got the full view of her form.

"Oh, I'm not scared of the dark, but thank you."

She wouldn't be here long, and what would a little sex hurt anyway? She needed to add new memories and get Jace completely out of her mind.

The bastard.

Her step faltered a moment before she made it into the bathroom. She turned just a bit and caught a glimpse of his gaze in the mirror. The look on his face set her loins on fire. He was a man whose body she would worship. And she felt like worshipping it now, but forced herself through the bathroom door, closing her in and him out.

* * * *

Jack let out a breath he didn't realize he'd been holding. Stepping to the mirror, his skin shimmered black, red, and then grey. A black tattoo across the left side of his face

flickered into existence. His eyes, normally ice blue, darkened into a flash of onyx.

Squeezing his eyes shut, he leaned on the dresser in front of the mirror and growled low.

"Her body, her flesh, her eyes, her hair. Tell me this isn't what I think it is?" Asking no one in particular, he let the question go unanswered. He was afraid of the reply anyway.

The water turned on in the bathroom. His body tightened, his cock hardened to an impossible point. His grip caused the wood of the dresser to groan under the pressure. It splintered, cracked. The sound echoed in the room and Jack's eyes snapped open. The edges of the dresser now showed distinctive imprints of his hands.

Damn.

Quickly he grabbed a small sheet, folded it and placed it over the marks.

This woman was not for him. His flesh rippled, bringing his human color and shape back to view. His eyes were once again ice blue. He could feel his power ripple across his skin, just waiting for the opportunity to lose control again. It would happen, yet, he couldn't allow it. He was a demon of the highest ranking. His body would obey him.

"I've got to get a handle on this. Remember what my father said."

The image of his father standing over him, when he was still called Nalameir, came to the surface of his mind.

The stench of the dungeon permeated the air. Feces and urine and old food. Nalameir's nose crinkled at the disgust. The ropes binding him to the wall cut painfully into his wrists.

He could feel the blood oozing down his arms, down his side to pool in the waistband of his pants.

A young demon, but royalty, Nalameir tried not to cringe with every lash of the whip. His father was determined to beat out any emotion on the poor demon's body.

"Control will win you what you desire, Nalameir! Carelessness will only get you killed! Don't forget these words, young one."

Crack!

The sound of the whip cutting through the air got to his ears long before the sting of the leather.

"Yes, father." Nalameir tried to speak.

"You could have been killed today going to the surface."

Crack!

"Nalamier, you will learn to heed my warning."

Crack!

"You are the prince. We do not play games with humans. We are never careless!"

Crack!

The last lash cut across a fresh wound, making Nalameir jerk.

The feeling made him quickly dispersed the painful image in his mind. Jack found himself breathing hard as the memory slowly faded. His back ached anew, even though it has been many centuries since that particular lesson had been taught. Although his emotions were more controlled, his father couldn't beat them completely gone.

His body now well and truly back under control, Jack found his clothes and got dressed.

As he looped the final tie on his shoe, the bathroom door opened. Once again Jack was struck almost blind by the beauty that walked through the steam billowing from the doorway. His throat closed and his breath ceased. The steam followed her out as if it too couldn't get enough of her.

Adara's shoulders glistened with water droplets. He felt the need to lick off each tiny little drop.

Her head was lowered, but he could just make out a shy smile.

"Um, Jack?"

Then he noticed she was twirling her fingers indicating he needed to turn around.

Well, damn.

Hell help him, he didn't want to look at her. He wanted to be the evil bastard everyone thought he was. Erotic thoughts corralled in his mind before he spoke.

"Oh yeah, sorry. Sure I'll ... just turn around now. Better yet, I'll go and find you some clothes."

"Clothes would be great. I hope your ... wife won't mind."

Jack laughed, finally meeting her gaze. He couldn't help it. He read her expectant look. Did she hope he had a wife, or not? Even after she had woken up beside him naked in his bed.

"No wife. Sister. She comes to stay with me sometimes. You're about her size."

She pulled the towel tighter, making the cloth slit at her legs gape open, drawing his attention. Demons help him, the smooth creamy skin called to him. The flash of flesh beneath that tiny piece of cloth almost shredded what was left of his

control. He could use his powers if he wanted. Make the towel fall from her. His fingers itched to do just that.

"Oh. Your sister. Well then, I hope she doesn't mind. I'll reimburse her once I get back home."

Adara fidgeted under his gaze, her eyes never once leaving his. What did she think about the blatant way he admired her?

Feeling his eyes start their reformation, he turned away, giving her his back once again.

Control! Control!

Jack stalked to the door and left her. But his desire could not be so easily ignored.

* * * *

When he returned with her clothes, the bathroom door was shut again. He could hear her moving around. He picked out a green, form fitting t-shirt and a pair of jeans from his sister's closet. He even found socks and shoes. Still hearing a rustle or two in the bathroom, he laid the clothes on the bed and fought his need to break down the door to get to her.

Get to her?

The door would be no obstacle. A flimsy piece of wood could not stand in his way. Did she think that would stop him from taking her right there on the tile floor? From taking what belonged to him?

Abruptly, Jack stopped. He noticed he was standing at the door, clutching the handle.

What belonged to him?

Taking a deep breath, Jack knocked on the door.

"Adara, I'll be downstairs. I left clothes on the bed. Do you drink coffee or anything?"

He heard a muffled, "yes."

Not wanting to leave, he continued to talk through the door.

"The stove and the water heater run on gas, so we should be okay in the coffee department for a while."

She laughed, making him grip the handle harder. The sound danced over his body and made him shiver. The need to go inside pressed against him.

"No!" he whispered to himself.

"What did you say?" He heard her closer to the door. So close.

Please no. Don't let her open the door.

"Nothing. I'll see you downstairs."

"Okay."

Jack fled the room. He needed to get as far away from her bewitching self as he could. How on earth was he going to stand her long enough get her to admit what she was to him?

As he rounded the corner he was struck by a bright ray of light. He cringed as he made his way to the blinds. The sun overflowed into his kitchen, mocking him.

The child of darkness. Evil to the core. Or so he had always believed.

Lowering the blinds, the room dimmed. Looking over at his laptop, he remembered the generator downstairs. He needed to find out all he could about Sirens, and the Internet would be a prime source of information. Could she have put some

kind of spell on him already? Her Siren voice should not have any effect on him.

After starting the generator he booted up his laptop, completely forgetting about starting the coffee. The information he found on the Internet was nothing he didn't already know. Siren's could lure men with their looks and bind them with their voice. Their presence in the oceans was blamed for many disappearing fishermen. Had Adara lured men to her before? A hot spike of jealousy shot through him, creating a tingle across his skin.

He dispelled the thought to fight off the change. His own body was turning against him. Adara was a means to an end. The woman who would help him, even if against her will, to break the bond from his father. Zeus would see to it that Jack was set up nicely somewhere. Or hell, Zeus was powerful; he might even get rid of his father and give the underworld over to Jack. Yeah, that would be the ideal. The lower demons would be able to pursue the lives they longed for.

Seeing the different articles listed on the screen, Jack was soon consumed with information. Before to long, nothing else distracted him as he hungrily absorbed Siren facts.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Chapter Five

Adara opened the bathroom door and half expected to see Jack waiting against the wall with his arms crossed over his chest. Relief, or was it disappointment, washed over her. Oh well, she'd get over it. Now she just needed to figure out how to get out of here.

Seeing the clothes laid across the bed, Adara quickly dressed and was surprised at the comfort of the items Jack had left for her. As she tied the string of the last shoe, a prickle raced down her spine. Standing up straight, Adara looked around the room, half expecting one of the Gods to burst into sight.

Nothing. All was quiet as she scanned the room. Speaking of popping in Gods, why hadn't her father flashed in to check on her? Reaching out with her mind, she fought for the line leading to his mind.

It was empty. The signal was barren, as if it has abruptly been cut. Jack had mentioned a powerful hurricane. Maybe it had rattled her more than what she thought.

Leaving the room, Adara closed the door behind her, making her way over to the stairs. Before she could make it down the first step, a woman appeared right in front of her. Her black hair flew around her face. Bright red streaks stood out among the darker strands like lights to beckon men forth. Her eyes were round with dark pupils that narrowed as she studied Adara. Adara's eyes narrowed right back.

"And who the hell are you!" The woman shrieked. "Where is Nalameir?" The woman looked around Adara's body as if Nalameir, whoever that was, was going to just pop into the room like she did.

Maybe he would. Uneasiness churned in Adara's stomach.

"Who are you? Well, it doesn't matter. You've seen me teleport so you must die now. Nighty-night, chicky!" The strange woman lifted a finger and Adara saw the tip of her bright red finger nails begin to glow in the low light of the hallway.

"Wait!" Adara held up her hands. "You can't kill me. At least, not yet. I didn't see anything, really. I was ... I was ... looking down at the ground. Yes, I ran right into you when you stepped from that room."

Pasting on a smile and doing her best to lie, Adara prayed this woman would believe her.

"Didn't see me huh?" Propping her leg up on the banister, the woman's dark muscular legs flexed as she studied her beautifully manicured nails.

"You lie. But you know," swinging her foot off the banister, making it land hard on the carpeted floor, the woman stepped closer to Adara. Her hot breath brushed across Adara's cheek. "I don't have time to waste on you right now. Where is my brother?"

"I have no idea who you are talking about."

"Yes you do. You know exactly who I'm talking about. Has he finally decided to do his duty and take a mate, then take his place as King?" She didn't really seem to be talking to

Adara, but she listened intently anyway. Who could this strange woman be talking about?

"Nalameir!" The name bounced off the walls of the house as if searching out their intended target. Adara thought she could even see the vocal waves ricochet off the hard surface, seeking something else to launch it into the air.

Then, Jack stepped around the corner at the bottom of the stairs.

"Ra, what are you doing here?"

Ra turned away from Adara and bounded down the stairs toward Jack. When she reached him, she pulled him into a huge hug. What an odd woman Ra was turning out to be. Adara followed down the steps.

"Nal you must leave. Leave this place immediately! The hurricane has brought father's interest here. He knew it wasn't natural and thought you must have finally gotten angry enough to create such weather havoc."

"Whoa, whoa. Calm down. Tell me what has happened."

"It's just awful." Ra ran her fingers through her streaked hair, causing it to spike up in the oddest shape. The strands seemed almost alive. Adara felt hypnotized by the tiny hairs as they slowly, as if they were more like tentacles than hair, lay flat once again.

"Father has lost his mind, Nal. He wants you there beside him so badly, he has sent out hunters to find you and bring you home."

Adara looked at Ra and then back at Jack.

His beautiful features were tight, strained as he began to pace the length of the tiny entranceway. The light spilling

through the glass on the door showed that it was late in the day. Adara couldn't believe she had slept so long, but then again, she was tired and had somehow fallen down a rabbit hole. That was the only way to explain all this strangeness.

The woman, Ra, paced beside Jack—or rather, Nal. The leather of her tight fitting outfit brushing together as she paced was the only sound to be heard. Well, except the deep breaths Nal was pushing from his lungs. Adara stood back and watched the myriad of emotions play across his face.

"You know I can't go back now, Ra. He would surely ruin what little humanity I have left."

Ra stopped him, pulling him by his shoulders until she faced him. She was about two inches shorter, but Adara could feel the power push out from her body. What exactly was she dealing with, being involved with these people? Obviously, they were not normal humans, but then again, she wasn't all that normal either.

The door beckoned her. Maybe if she slipped by them while they were engrossed in their conversation, she could get out and find somewhere to go. Although, the outside was probably ten times more worse to deal with than these foreign beings.

Thinking for a second, Adara decided to go for it and began to make her way slowly around the room until the door was just a few feet away from her. Luckily, up until that point, neither Nal nor Ra had paid her any attention, but just as she reached the door, Ra turned, pinning her with a glare.

"Where do you think your going little missy?"

Adara couldn't help it. The comment completely rankled her nerves. "Missy? Look here, Red, I don't care who or what you both are. I am getting the hell out of here."

As Adara lunged for the door, it burst open from the outside sending shards of glass and wood flying throughout the room.

Ra ducked to the floor, Nal jumped through the air until his body landed squarely on her back, bringing her down to the ground. Adara's breath left her in a rush and lights danced before her eyes.

Oh no, I will not pass out.

She gripped Nal's arm tightly as the room exploded with loud noise, screaming and hollering and gut wrenching growls. What came through the busted doorway made Adara's blood run like ice. The beings were gruesome, frightening beyond belief.

Their large eyes were set at different angles on their twisted faces. Their was the greenish-hue of seasickness. Their noses were tiny with huge holes to breathe through. Their lips, God their lips, were deformed and awful looking. In their hands they carried long rods with pointed tips.

Adara tried to remember to breathe, but it was if her lungs would rather have her suffocate than be subject to the monsters.

"Shhhh." Nal whispered in her ear. His warm breath was a welcome calming agent a contrast to her pounding heart. "They are my father's warriors, Drakas."

The leader of the Draka's scanned the damage his men created, then his ugly, bald head turned and spotted them

instantly. His menacing smile showed his sharp, jagged teeth. Spittle dripped down the side of his mouth.

Adara cringed.

"Ahhh. There you are, little prince," the creature hissed. "Seems daddy has finally called you home. Come now, so there will be no blood shed." His voice wasn't smooth at all, but more like sharp knives cutting through the air.

Nal's arms tightened, pulling her further into his embrace.

"Adara, we must leave immediately, I'm sorry."

Before she had a chance to think about what he was saying, she felt his face burrow into her neck, his body aligned with her as best it could as they crouched on the floor. Heat washed down her side where he held them close together. With a pop, she felt a heavy weight push and pull against her skin.

Adara wanted to scream, not in pain, but from the foreign feel of what was going on. A rainbow of colors sparkled around them, bright beyond anything she had ever seen before. The rancid smell of sulfur and burning ash almost caused her to choke. The air became thick, filling her lungs until she thought they would burst as they hurtled through some sort of portal.

As the seizures moved over her body, warm lips covered her mouth. Shocked, Adara tried to pull away, but the soft lips were firm, demanding her attention. Nal's lips coaxed and teased until she opened for him. A rush of fresh air filled her lungs. She gripped him tighter, pulling him closer. She ate at his lips, wanting more, needing the velvety soft comfort they provided.

Siren's Song [A Siren Sisters Anthology]
by Melinda Barron, Midnyte Dupree, Jade Buchanan

With her eyes closed, lights sparked behind her lids. They were still moving, where or how, she didn't know, but Nal kept her attention on him. Soon his hands began to wander down her body as she kept their connection by holding him tight.

He felt so good. It didn't matter now how the air felt around her, Nal was air, and she needed it to stay alive. She needed him.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Chapter Six

The crushing pressure dissipated slowly around her. Something soft pushed against her back, making her realize she had finally landed. As Nal's lips pulled away from her, she looked up into his eyes—dark eyes that seemed to swirl with an essence all their own. His beautiful mouth curled slightly at the corners.

"Sorry I had to do that."

Adara's mind was completely muddled. She couldn't think past the darkness of his irises.

"What?" she whispered.

"I'm sorry I had to transport us that way. I know this is probably very strange and you have a lot of questions."

Did she have questions? She couldn't remember. She was still trying to get past the way his kiss had felt like the life sustaining oxygen her body needed.

Oh wait, yes, she remembered now.

"Oh my gods! What the hell are you?"

Nal pushed away from her body, taking the warmth with him. The air felt much hotter than what she anticipated. Then she noticed how dry everything was around her.

Oh no! This wasn't good. She needed water. Lots of water. Humidity to be exact. She could suffocate without it.

"Whoa, whoa, Adara. Calm down." Nal once again pulled her into his body thinking that her sudden panic attack had to do with the way he transported them, she guessed.

"Adara, are you okay? I promise, I'm not going to hurt you." He grabbed her shoulders and pulled her away from his chest where she had burrowed her head. He forced her to look at him.

"Take deep breaths and I'll tell you everything. I'm so sorry you got involved in this. It was never supposed to happen this way."

"Jack—Nal—what the hell do I call you?" Adara was finally calming down enough to realize that yes, the air was amazingly dry, and if she didn't stay long she would be okay. She just needed to make sure this little trip to wherever didn't take up too much of her time.

"You might as well call me by my real name, Nalameir, or Nal."

"Where are we? I can't stay here. The air is making it hard to breath."

Nal pulled away from her again. Adara felt his departure deep in her chest. She enjoyed being wrapped in his embrace, the feel of his large arms holding her close. Wanting to pull him back, she forced her hands not to reach for him.

"Talk to me, Nal. Please tell me, what is going on?"

Nal paced the small room. The dark panels highlighted his light casual clothes. He looked like a prince pacing to determine the future of his servants.

Adara shook the thought away. A prince? How silly. Then again, she was a siren so really anything was possible, right?

Nal stopped and sat down beside her on the large bed. He grabbed her hands and Adara felt electricity race from their

conjoined flesh. She fought against the urge to pull away, instead, letting his warm hand rest in hers.

"Adara, I know this may sound a little crazy to you, being human and all, but I am from the underworld. My father is looking for me and right now I can't let him find me. Not until I'm ready."

What should she do? Should she continue to act the human or tell him the truth? Telling him she was a Siren might not be the best idea. If he was from the underworld, he might kill her or do something worse to keep his secret. He would probably do that anyway. Adara felt her breath speed up and instantly Nal was there, holding her again. It amazed her how being wrapped up with him felt so incredibly right.

"Adara, please. Don't freak out on me. This isn't that bad. I'm not going to hurt you. Do you understand?"

He was holding her so close she felt his breath upon her cheek. The heat raced inside her body straight to her core, where her muscles clenched together. He was a being of the underworld and where that alone should scare the shit out of her, she was excited instead. Her mind wondered how he would be in bed. Could he bring magic into their lovemaking? She had never lain with a demon before.

"You are a demon?"

He lightly kissed her cheek. His hands rubbed her back.

"Yes. I am. I'm not necessarily an evil demon, though. I've been trying to break away from my father. Unfortunately, you can't run from destiny."

Nal kissed her cheek again and this time, she turned her head until his lips touched hers.

When earlier at his touch, she felt sparks, now with his lips touching hers, the world ceased to exist around her. Before when he kissed her, it was like he supplied her with oxygen. Now he was taking away all that she had breathed.

And still she wanted more of him.

Nal's kiss was passionate, light, then soft. His tongue teased her, and all she could do was welcome him.

Adara grabbed his shoulders and pulled him forward into her body. His chest was muscular and strong as he leaned into her, pressing against her distended nipples. The bed called to her to lay him down and ride him until the Siren in her consumed him for all he was worth. Flames licked her skin, yet she beckoned their heat because it fueled their desire higher.

She hadn't known Nal for that long, but now she was in his world, a world where she should be scared half out of her mind, yet with him close to her, she feared nothing. No one. Not even the demon king who wanted his son.

Adara sank further into his chest as Nal trailed kisses over her cheek, down her neck, to where he licked along her pulse point. He scraped his teeth along her skin sending shards of excitement straight down to her pussy. Damn, the Siren within. She wanted this man, wanted him right now with all their adrenaline pumping inside their veins with the fear that at any moment someone, especially his father, could find them. Did she care?

Nope, not at the moment.

"Adara," he whispered.

Her name upon his lips sent a fresh wave of need exploding through her. Moisture seeped between her thighs.

"There is every reason why we shouldn't be doing this. I know there is, but damn," he said, still kissing and sucking the skin of her neck. He was driving her wild. Her hands now clutched him at the waist, her fingers slowing working under his shirt.

"Adara, I want you. I want you now before anything else happens." He lifted his hand towards the door and an audible click sounded. Adara looked over to see the door had latched closed and the heaviness of the wood would make it extremely difficult for anyone to get inside. They were not about to be disturbed and that knowledge fed her desires.

"Nal, I want this too. Gods, I want this."

Nalamier captured her lips and pushed her back into the bed. She moaned, feeling his weight fall upon her. He felt like heaven, and that thought made her smile. Should she say he felt like hell then, considering he was a demon? His hand brushed her mound, chasing all thought from her mind. She had to focus on what he was doing.

Nal looked into her eyes, his dark irises swirled with red, almost like flames licking inside them. It turned her on even more. She should never let a demon into her body. Never should she allow this evil within her, but by Gods, she would not deny him.

As if he read her mind and understood her acceptance, he pulled her shirt off, kissing and licking every exposed inch of flesh. Her hands pulled the material covering his body away as well, and even though she had seen him fresh from the

shower, viewing his body took her breath away all over again. Muscles rippled and corded across his chest, calling to her to taste, to lick, to bite.

When their clothes were finally gone Nal pulled away and looked at her. Flames still danced in his eyes, but now she saw more. Could it only be lust? Did her gaze reflect that same look?

"You are so beautiful, Adara."

She propped herself up on the lush silk pillows and opened her arms to him.

"Come, Nal."

He started to move towards her, but he hesitated. His brows furrowed.

"You don't care that I'm a demon?"

"Everyone has secrets, Nal. Of course being a demon is a little scary. But there are many more things in this world that are a lot scarier."

His lips turned up at the corners, the smile transforming his features. She liked she could make him smile and found she wanted to do that forever.

Whoa, where did that come from? Forever?

No, Nal was for right now. Nothing more. It could never be anything more.

* * * *

Nal couldn't believe the gift spread out on the bed before him. Where her skin had looked pale before, now he could see the almost silvery blue finish that came through. Did she even realize that her skin changed colors when she was aroused?

Her beautiful breasts thrust forward as she lay propped up on her arms. A smile played upon her lips, making him forget everything else. Even the control on his form.

His skin shimmered and he was revealed for what he was. Everything demon in him came out. Adara's eyes widened. Was it fear?

He wanted to turn away, but he knew it was just his skin that was different. Everything else was the same.

"Oh Nalameir. You're beautiful." Her soft whispered gripped his chest.

If his skin wasn't already a shade of red and black, he knew he would probably blush at her words. He never imagined someone would think him beautiful, or how those simple words would affect him. If he hadn't known before, now he was certain. Adara was his. His forever. He would have to make her his Queen, once they defeated his father.

"Come, let me touch you, Nal."

He couldn't hesitate any longer. He moved to cover her body. Flesh against flesh. Fire against the cool feel of water. That was exactly how she felt to him. Smooth, silky, moist, refreshing.

Capturing her lips, he let his hard cock lay against her thigh. Her hand reached down. Anticipating her touch, Nalameir held his breath. Adara wrapped her little hands around his harden shaft, causing the breath to rush out quick from his lungs. The contrast of her skin and his sent him flying.

Slowly, she pumped him as he claimed her mouth, her neck, then pulled away so he could move lower to capture her beautiful breasts.

The dark nipples begged for attention. He was all too eager to give them exactly what they needed. His tongue swirled around the tips, his teeth bit down until he heard her groan. With her hands now in his hair, Adara held him close, urging his exploration.

Her scent called to him. Traveling down her torso until he reached her bare mound, Nal shivered inside as he saw the bounty before him. He rubbed two fingers between her slick folds until he found her hardened clit. Adara's body arched off the bed as she cried out in a mini orgasm. Nal smiled, knowing his touch had brought her to that small height. He planned to take her higher.

Dipping his head, he skirted his tongue over her hardened nub, making her writhe and moan. He didn't think his cock could get any harder, and he wasn't sure how long he could handle tasting her before he would give in.

Her taste was sweet on his tongue. A salty ocean just for his pleasure. He nipped and sucked on her clit, dipping his tongue into her depths and bringing it back out. The awaiting orgasm crashed over her, and she screamed his name.

Pushing up from the bed, she whimpered at the loss of him at her core, but Nal knew it would only be a short while. He covered her body with his cock positioned just where he wanted it.

"Look at me, Adara. Look at me for what I am. *You are mine.*"

He didn't have time to think about her startled look before he pushed inside her tight channel. Total ecstasy engulfed him. He bit his lip to keep from coming from one that thrust inside her.

"Adara."

"Nalamier!"

He pumped into her welcoming core, felt her muscles flex and moisten for his entry. Nothing on this earth had ever prepared him for the feel of this woman's body. He thought he had slept with many women, but no one, not a single soul could ever compare to her. He knew he would never get to heaven, but now he didn't feel the need. Because he already had heaven, right here with Adara.

Her nails scrapped down his back, bringing blood, but he didn't care. The feel of her claiming sent him higher as he thrust in and out of her. He held her hips as she bucked. With each push, it sent him further inside her. Each in and out slide sent tingles bursting inside him. They centered on his balls until he felt them draw up and his seed fly forth on the most amazing orgasm of his life.

Adara's pussy gripped him tighter, until she too flew with him to the stars.

Breathing heavy and completely sated, Nal rolled to the side, slipping from her body and pulling her close.

Now he could handle anything.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Chapter Seven

Adara sat up, pulling the blankets over her body as she looked over to her new lover. Nal was amazing. He had touched her in places she never imagined her body held, bringing waves of unimaginable sensation.

Damn he was good. Who would have ever thought, a demon could make love with such tenderness?

"Where are we, Nal?" She hoped he would answer her. Although her curiosity had been diverted by their mutual lust, now with her body sated and her mind languid, she was eager to learn where he had taken her.

"We are in my home. Well, one of them. This one is in the middle of the demon village. It's part of the lower dredges." Nal turned onto his side, draping his arm over her bare middle. His touch scorched her flesh, sending a flash of electricity racing through her. Her body began to respond again to his touch.

As if he knew exactly what he was doing, a devilish smile quirked his lips, but he didn't press his advantage. She was grateful, because she really wanted to figure out her situation.

"Who exactly are you, Nal and where did your sister go?"

Nal cocked his head to the side as if listening for something before he turned his gaze back on her. Now his eyes had lost their darkness and cool blue stared back at her.

"I am the prince of the underworld. Ra is my sister."

Shaking her head, Adara couldn't help but laugh a little.
"You're telling me I am involved with the Prince of Darkness?"

Nal rolled his eyes and pinched her nipple. The sharp intimate pain made her lower muscles moisten.

"No. Not the Prince of Darkness. I'm not Satan or anything. Geesh. Humans read too much. Demons are different than true evil."

Turning on her side, Adara couldn't keep her fingers to herself, slowly outlining the ridge of muscle on his chest. At her touch, Nal sucked in a breath and covered her hand with his.

"Don't stop touching me, Adara. You soothe me."

Adara found she didn't want to stop touching him anymore than he wanted her to. Just a day or so before she had sworn off men, but now, looking at Nalameir, she felt she had finally found the one being that truly made her complete. But how would she tell him what she was? Could she even trust him with her true identity?

No.

She couldn't live beneath the earth, away from the beautiful oceans of her life. She couldn't be away from her sisters or father.

His touch upon her cheek brought her eyes to his.

"Why such a serious look up on your face? Regretting it already?"

"No. Not regretting anything at all. I was ... just thinking. That's all. So, are we stuck in this house forever, or is there anyway you can show me more?"

With a quick kiss on the lips Nal pulled away and left the bed.

"Get dressed and we'll go exploring. This is the last place my father will look for me, so we've bought a little bit of time. Are you interested in seeing part of the underworld?" After he pulled his pants up, he rubbed his hands together in a gesture that almost made Adara worry. But his lips betrayed his true nature just before he let out a deep laugh.

"Nothing is going to happen to you, Adara. Trust me."

Shaking her head, not really sure she was doing the right thing, Adara let him pull her from the bed. Unfortunately, he didn't pull her into his chest like she hoped. Instead, once she was balanced, he stepped away and grabbed his shirt to finish dressing.

Damn her luck.

Adara quickly followed suit, and together they left the room.

* * * *

The house was nothing like what Adara expected from a demon prince. It wasn't extravagant or lavish, but rather simple in its construction. When they stepped from the door, Adara instantly felt the heat permeate around her. It seemed to attach to her skin and seek out any drop of water it could find. There was a light, but not from any sun Adara could see. Instead of all the beautiful colors from the mortal realm, the underworld was overcast with gray. The trees were dark and leafless. The grass was not green, but a deep dark black.

Adara almost expected a mist to hover over the ground. But the air was surprisingly clear.

"My goodness, Nal. This place is so desolate."

He grabbed her hand. As his fingers entwined with hers, she felt his presence storm through her. Power, so much power, held back. Did he even realize his potential?

"It's home. It is a shame we don't have the bright and vivid colors of the mortal realm. But we've come to accept this. It isn't all bad. Come, I'll show you our town here."

He pulled her forward, and Adara was overwhelmed with all the different shades of gray and black. The different houses, which were more like cottages, appeared to be much like everyday normal homes.

"I can't believe this is a place where evil dwells."

Nal laughed. "Yeah, well. Demons have a different level of evil just like humans do. The truly evil are with my father at the Kingdom. These demons here are just demons in name, really. They don't seek out people in order to hurt them."

A noise grew up ahead, drawing Adara's attention. Tents lined the street against a wall of dark trees behind them. A whiff of something sweet made her mouth water. Her stomach growled.

"Ahh, you smell the vada fruit pie." Nal smiled big and gripped her hand tighter as he led her toward a group of tents. Other demons stood around the striped tent biting into a piece of red pie. It was strange how much the piece of pie stood out among the absence of other colors around them.

"Vada fruit? I've never heard of it before."

"Our fruit is unique here. The vada fruit is a mixture of an apple and peach from the human world. It's delicious. Full of juice. Juice which I'm sure you'll enjoy greatly. Come. Let's get a piece."

The demon behind the makeshift counter eyed Adara wearily before handing two pieces of the pie to Nal. Nal accepted the pieces and handed over two gold coins.

"Thank you, my prince." The demon remarked and bowed his head.

"You're welcome, Jaer. I know it will be wonderful as always."

"I hope your lady friend enjoys it as well."

Nal handed her the small plate and grabbed forks from the counter.

The way the man looked at her sent chills down her spine. His features were different than Nalameir's. Instead of the black and red marks, his were mostly black and a deep blue. His eyes swirled with gold as he gazed at her.

Fear, plain and simple, rushed across her skin.

She forced herself to look away. Where was Nal? She had to get close to him. Although he said these people were not as evil as those at the kingdom, Adara would not think for a second that they were actually good.

"Take a bite." Nal urged.

Forgetting her unease, Adara cut the small piece of pie and brought it to her lips. As the warm gooey inside rushed across her taste buds, she closed her eyes.

"Mmmm. This is amazing." Bringing the fork out of her mouth, she felt air rush across her lips. Opening her eyes,

she saw that Nal was close to her lips. Just millimeters away. Swallowing her bite, she waited to see what he would do.

His tongue came out and licked the side of her lips—a long, slow, lazy lick that sent fire straight to her pussy. Her knees wanted to buckle at just that moment.

"You're right. It is delicious. Just like you. With your eyes closed like that, moaning. I couldn't help myself. I had to taste you."

His words sent a strange, melting sensation throughout her body.

"You're a naughty man."

Nal pulled away, his eyes light with laughter. "Well, yes. I guess I am."

They ate their pie, discarding the plates once they finished. Nal showed her many of the different talents these demons held. She was surprised to see how much their art resembled that of the Greeks. She imagined since they were both immortal beings, it was only normal that their art would parallel one another.

Each vendor looked at Adara with interest when they approached. She figured they knew she was not another demon, but could they somehow know what she was? No, probably not considering Nalameir hadn't figured it out.

Adara angled her eyes over at him, caught by how handsome he was. He had changed back to his human form now. But for a minute Adara wished he hadn't. He looked so powerful with all his black and red markings. The way his blue eyes changed to obsidian when he felt some supercharged emotion made her body warm.

"Look up there in the distance. Do you see it?" Nal stepped up behind her, putting his arms around her waist pulling her back to his chest. The move was possessive. Adara melted into him, allowing him to encircle her in his arms.

She squinted. "I see something set up there on that mountain."

"That's the kingdom. That's where my father lives."

"Are you sure he doesn't know where you are?"

"I'm not positive, but I think we've got a few hours before he decides to hunt in the city. He hates coming here, so I imagine he'll save it for last."

They walked further down the road, leaving the tents behind.

"We aren't going up there are we?"

"No, no. Not yet."

"Nal! Nal! Nalameir, wait up!" His sister came barreling down the street towards them. Adara couldn't believe the way the tall female demon rushed forward with such a lack of grace. Her mane of multicolored hair flew out behind her. This time, Adara could see the red streaks entwined with purple now. She probably colored her hair to bring color to her life.

"Nal, you must be careful. Dad's creatures are hot on your tail. I've tried to send them off in a different direction, but you know how they are about hunting people down. They are good."

"Ra, calm down."

"Calm down? Calm down? I've just been all over the damned earth trying to send those jerks off your tale so you could cuddle with little miss thing here. Hell, what do you see

in humans anyway?" Ra stormed off, going back in the direction of the tents just as a whoosh cut through the air.

Adara looked up just in time to see large wings cast a shadow over them. She immediately went to Nal's side. He pulled her close into this body as he looked up into the sky.

"Shh. Shh. It's okay. It's just my friend Gasby."

A large demon dropped in front of them, folding his wings behind him as he landed. Gasby was a handsome man. His muscular shoulders flexed as he stood up from his crouch on the ground. His eyes shimmered gold as they bore into Adara. She could tell he was a warrior by the leather he wore and the sword on his side.

"Prince, you have brought an outsider to our realm. A God has spoken to the King. He said you had a deal and now have something that belongs to him."

Ra came back then, walking up with her hands on her hips as she faced down Gasby. Adara didn't miss the way his eyes coolly draped over her body. Ra shifted in her stance, but didn't back down.

"How dare you come here, you big brute, and threaten, Nalameir? He's done more for you than you're precious King has ever done."

Gasby's eyebrow rose as he stared at Ra, then he shifted his gaze over her shoulder to address Nal. Adara almost laughed at the outright dismissal. Ra stomped her foot and swung her head around to look at Nal.

"Your friend really knows how to piss me off."

Gasby smiled then. His bright teeth made Adara think the sun had finally penetrated this dark place. Nal pulled her

closer into his arms as Gasby stepped around to Ra, lifting her chin with his finger.

"I only live to piss you off, Ra." Then he turned his back on her, leaving her to growl at him under her breath.

"Now tell me what you have that belongs to a God, my young prince."

Gasby and Nal clasped arms in a warrior greeting then stepped away. Adara was relieved that Gasby wasn't another one of the King's minions out to kill them. She'd seriously had enough of that.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Chapter Eight

Nal couldn't believe Zeus had come to the underworld. Did he really think he was taking Adara away from him? It wasn't that he wanted to anger a God. He had his father's wrath to deal with, and he didn't really want to add to that. But he couldn't just hand Adara over to Zeus. His feelings for her were confusing, but there was something there he definitely wanted to explore.

Looking at the object of his affection and hearing Gasby fight with Ra, Nal doubted he would ever be able to hand Adara over. He hated that she hadn't yet told him what she was. Now that she knew he was a demon and not a mere human, surely she would want to share with him what she truly was. Wouldn't she?

Gasby's deep voice drew Nal's attention back to his friends.

"Nal, your sister needs to be put in her place. She should not question a King's guard."

Ra blew out an agitated breath, crossing her arms across her chest.

"Nal is not my keeper, Gasby. I'm a grown demon with a mind of my own." The rest of what she said she grumbled. Nal saw Gasby's eyes widen as if he heard her words, then turned away from her with a frown. Nal wanted to laugh.

"Prince, I have come to warn you. The village is a place the King intends to search. You don't have much time. Take your woman and flee."

Flee?

The word rankled. When put so bluntly he didn't like the feeling when Gasby said the word. Flee. No. He could not flee now.

A rush of renewed power flowed through him. Adara clung to his side as if sensing his change. Her touch infused him, causing some link, some connection to snap into place.

"I will not flee, Gasby. I suppose it's time I face my father."

Adara stepped away from him. Her eyes glowed with life and something else. Admiration? Yeah, maybe. And he liked it.

"Nal? Are you sure?"

"Shh. It really is about time Adara. I'm sorry I pulled you into this."

She ran her hand down his arms. When she looked into his eyes, she smiled. He knew then he would do anything for her. Protect her from anyone.

As he started to tell her how much he was willing to do for her, dark shadows, darker than anything else around them, stepped from the tree line.

A deep chuckle sounded from behind him and Nal turned. He pulled Adara behind him to block her from any assault.

"What a lovely sight. The King will be most displeased, Gasby. His favorite warrior, a secret friend to his son." The creature laughed, sending spittle through the air. Nal hated those foul creatures, even though they were great fighters. Nal wished the Draka's had another realm to call home other than his own.

With a wave of his hand the creature pulled Adara from Nal's grasp and into the arms of another creature, Adafo, who had one eye and a horn at the top of his head. The creature held Adara close, bent his head and inhaled. Adara cringed in his hold. Nal wanted to run to her and yank her free.

The closeness of the creature to Adara's smooth skin sent his anger higher. Turning into his true demon form, Nal took on the persona of the regal man he was. He was a Prince and they should all remember that.

"Gasby is a loyal servant to the King, Dalagar. You may run along now and report back to his highness." The sarcasm dripped from his voice.

"I will do no such thing, Prince. The King informed me to return you," Dalagar looked pointedly at Adara, "and whatever else I think might interest him. She could be reason the God is here."

Adara stopped fighting with her captor for a moment. Her eyes widened in horror before he saw her clear them. Then she began to struggle within Adafo's hold once more. Did she know that Zeus what out to get her?

She turned her head to whisper in Adafo's ear. The warrior's eyes glossed over. His features softened, his grip on Adara slowly slid away. Nal couldn't believe what he was seeing.

"Cover your ears, Nal, Gasby, Ra!" she demanded.

Quickly he covered his ears, seeing the other two do the same, but the warriors turned to her voice. Just before he obeyed her warning, he heard her voice drop. Deep, musical, hypnotic.

He held his hands to his ears knowing she was doing something magical, using her Siren gifts.

Even with his ears plugged he could feel the pull of the Siren.

She spoke of sunlight, colors, and happiness. Everything the Underworld was not. All around them the Drakas dropped their weapons and walked to her with eyes glazed, mouths open, drool dripping from their foul lips.

Nal saw each one obey Adara's suggestion to tie the other up until only Dalgar remained. His eyes too were unfocused, but Nal could see the battle within him. Not many could escape a Siren's song. He knew that now. And although her voice did not penetrate through his hands, he knew it could if Adara wished it.

Her exposure like this was exactly what he needed to give to the God. She had shown herself for what she truly was, what he knew she was from the beginning.

With this new information, Zeus would help him defeat his father. But was that what Nal wanted?

No.

The answer was simple. But he knew nothing else would be simple from here on out.

As Adara spoke her magical words, she became even more beautiful to him. Her dark hair flowed down her back in waves that sparkled with gold magic. The ends swirled against a breeze he could not feel. No fear clouded her vision. He found that very arousing. His cock jerked inside his pants as he recalled the smooth feel of her silken depths.

Her stance was alert, yet relaxed. Adara was a woman who knew how to use her gift. Her voice died away. Still the Drakas all looked on her as if seeing a vision of heaven. Adara motioned to them to uncover their ears.

Ra and Gasby stared hard at her. Then they looked around them at the tied up creatures. All still looked upon her as if waiting for her to bestow a wonderful gift. Yeah, Nal could just imagine what kind of gift they wanted.

When he looked at Adara, his heart clenched. Her head hung low. Her eyes refused to look around her. Nal went to her feeling a strange pull in his chest.

"Adara? What is wrong?"

Nal felt Gasby and Ra approach at his sides.

"I didn't know what else to do. I knew he wanted to kill me. I could feel his evil. Instincts kicked in."

Nal wanted to hold her, tell her it was all going to be okay.

"You did a great job." Just as he was about to step to her, Gasby put his hand out to keep him from going to her.

"What are you? No mere human can do such a thing." Gasby's voice was cruel and hard. Then he turned his gaze on Nal. "What have you brought to our realm, Prince? She's dangerous to our ways."

Gasby grabbed her then, placing one arm around her waist the other over her mouth.

"Let her go, Gasby. Now!"

"I cannot. She is a weapon. I wanted to help you against your father, my Prince. I had no idea you would bring such danger to us."

"Gasby!" Ra chastised. "You will let her go now. If she had wanted to hurt us she would have. She didn't have to warn us. My brother did not bring her here as a weapon. We'll figure things out. Just let her go for now."

Nal didn't like being questioned, but he understood Gasby's concerns. "I had to teleport us somewhere when the Drakas appeared in my home on earth."

Adara's eyes found his. He saw shame and sadness within their depths. It pulled at him. He wanted to do anything and everything for her if he could.

"Let her go, Gasby. Adara has no place in this fight with my father." Nal tried not to look into her eyes again. Otherwise, he would want to hurt his friend for laying a hand on her.

Adara pulled at Gasby's hands, wanting to get her mouth free. Nal wondered if she would use her voice on them now as well. He wouldn't blame her.

Gasby's hands held her tight. "I have to take her to the King. They know she is here now anyway."

Gasby looked to the sky and Nal felt his heart skip a beat. What light there was, was now consumed by the darkness of the flying figures that littered the backdrop. More Drakas. These in full battle gear.

Their leader incapacitated, of course, they would have felt that.

Damn!

"Hurry, let her go Gasby. I can transport us somewhere else." Nal held out his hand. He was shocked when Adara

reached out to him, having given up the fight to free herself from Gasby.

Gasby pulled her closer into his chest. Nal growled low in his throat, his demon pushing to the front of his personality. It wanted to rip out the throat of the one who held what was his. Nal knew his eyes were glowing and his claws were lengthening. The warrior's eyes widened. The fire blazed inside him, licking upon his mind. Nal raised his hand and immediately Adara was pulled from the warriors hold. Gasby stumbled back. Surprise registered on his features until he bent to one knee, lowering his gaze to the ground.

"You're powers have grown, my prince. I am and will always be your loyal servant. Tell me what you wish and I will obey."

Nal looked to his sister. Her eyes held shock as well, but her lips curved into a pleased smile before she too lowered to her knee.

"As am I," she stated.

Power washed over and through him as he watched his sister and his friend bowing down to him. They were accepting of his place. It was something he hoped for, but never sought. It felt good to have their loyalty and their friendship so firmly on display.

The noise of the approaching Drakas filled the air, their wings batting against the nonexistent wind. Nal pulled Adara to his body. Her silence surprised him, but pleased him as well. She, too, would obey for now. He didn't fool himself into thinking she was scared though, because he gathered, not much scared a Siren.

As the Drakas began to touch down beside them, Nal told Gasby and Ra to scatter, but meet at the The House. They would know exactly what he meant.

The House was more like a mansion. But this mansion had a natural protective covering. Half was set inside a wall of a mountain. Not many knew of The House. Ra and Gasby were among the few who would know exactly where it was located.

Before he transported them he leaned close to Adara's ear. Her fresh ocean scent consumed him, making his body yearn for what it had possessed earlier. He wanted more. So much more.

"I will keep you safe, Adara. Trust me." She nodded her acceptance, then stiffened in his arms the moment the world around them burst into darkness as he transported them to The House.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Chapter Nine

Adara once again felt his smooth lips cover hers as they flew through space to wherever this mysterious House was. She was so tired of this. Her body was meant to push through waves of water, not waves of time. Surely she would soon feel the effects of the heat around her. The heat was bound to dehydrate her. She needed something stable. Damn, her mind felt so muddled as her body softened in Nal's hold.

Now there was something stable, the feel of his muscles against her body as he held her tight, making her feel safe. Nal was a demon, but just in the short time she'd known him, there was something more pushing at her. A deep feeling that told her they were meant to meet and be together.

Her mind jumbled with all sorts of thoughts. One in particular jumped out at her. Dalagar had mentioned a God in the underworld. Just for the briefest of moments she felt Zeus. But what would Zeus, of all Gods, be going down there. Was he trying to find her? She doubted that very much. What would he want?

Nal's lips coaxed her mind in a different direction. A much better direction, if she did say so herself. He was sin in the flesh. The way he worked his lips across hers felt like magic. She could breathe cool air through him. Adara was grateful. She knew she would suffocate without the exchange.

Nal's body felt naked against hers. His hands slid across her flesh, under her shirt until skin met skin. One hand came

around her front until he cupped her breast. She arched into him letting her body fly.

If she wasn't careful, his kiss alone would send her sailing over the edge of a climax.

With a small thump they landed on solid ground. Adara swayed as Nal held her close and pulled his lips from hers. Looking in her eyes, she saw the blue of his iris twinkle. It reminded her of the sea. Pulling from his gaze, Adara steadied herself before she stepped away from him.

Large trees loomed over her as if they could bend and snatch her away. She shivered at the thought. What a horrible image. But she was in the underworld. Who was to say those trees didn't come to life. Turning her eyes away from the creepy trees, Adara could see the shape of a castle in the distance just past the tree line. A dark fog hung heavily around it. She could make out some activity going on around the large fortress.

"Welcome to my home away from home, Adara." His voice skittered across the skin of her neck as he held her shoulders. With one hand he gestured to what could no doubt be The House. The massive structure set into the side of mountain leered over her. Columns the same color of the rock stretched high to support an arched roof. It was almost like a temple she had seen many times in Greece.

Closing her gaping mouth, Adara stared in awe.

"It's fantastic, Nal. I can't wait to see inside."

Nal grabbed her hand, which slid easily within his, and guided her forward. The inside of the house turned out to be a lot more modern than what she thought it would be.

Beautiful couches set neatly in an L shape over a carpet full of colorful pictures. Nal brushed his hand down her arm, sending the familiar jolts through her body. He pulled her back to his chest.

"Do you like it?"

All Adara could do was nod as she relaxed into him. Going from the drab grey outside to the rich full colors inside was a little overwhelming, but she love it!

Shivering, she reached around and pulled Nal's arms more tightly around her.

"Are you cold? Surely not in this heat?" When he laughed, she felt a small fissure of happiness. Images began to form in her mind of the two of them in the wonderful home, happy and loving as a small, laughing child ran between their legs. Quickly she shook her head to clear the picture.

"I'm fine. It's been a long day."

"I understand, Adara. I'm sorry for getting you so caught up in everything. Come. Let's get settled. Gasby and Ra should be along shortly."

Nal guided her away from the main room up a winding marble staircase where he took her into another vast room. A bedroom from the looks of it. A large, heavy four-poster bed sat in the middle of the room, as if it were there for all to watch the couple upon it. She could feel like a queen there, she had no doubt. Dark red curtains were pulled back to the sides making Adara wonder what it would be like to be within when they were pulled all the way closed.

"You can freshen up in here." Nal opened a door on the far side of the room allowing Adara a glimpse inside. She thought

she had gone to Siren heaven. A deep pool was filled with clear sparkling water. Steam danced across the top, beckoning her inside.

"I know you're tired, sweetheart. You deserve a moment to relax. I need to speak with my men to see what we can do before I go see my father tomorrow."

Adara heard Nal, but not really. The water was magnetic as it pulled her forward. Her hand went to her mouth to stifle a scream of excitement.

"Oh my goodness, Nal. This is the most beautiful bathroom ever." The pool was in the shape of a strange design. The magic snapped and popped in the room.

"It's a symbol. A demon symbol to renew power and life." Nal said coming up behind her. The need to step back and feel him was strong. Where these feelings were coming from, she didn't know, but now seeing his home, imagining it as her home, drove her emotions higher.

Adara shivered.

"I don't think it will effect you," he whispered next to her ear, sending the warmth of his breath flitting across her skin. "And if it does, you'll just feel a slight tingle throughout your body. It won't hurt,"

She turned to him, to see his eyes. What reflected back at her made her breath catch in her throat. Lust darkened his irises. Her own passion spiked and the pool no longer held the same appeal. Oh she still wanted to sink into it, but now her thoughts turned to another type of sinking within.

"We cannot now, Adara. As much as my body calls to yours, I have to discuss strategy with my men. We must be

prepared for my meeting with my father." He bent forward. His lips met hers with the slightest caress. She knew he had only wanted to give her a small comforting peck, but when she opened her lips to him, he covered hers more thoroughly. His tongue dipped inside, rubbing next to hers.

Finally he pulled away, leaving her feeling bereft.

"Nal."

"No, Adara. Not now. We also have much to discuss."

Reminded about her incident earlier, she turned away from him. His arms dropped away from her. All she wanted to do was turn to him and make him take her again. She wanted to experience his body inside hers again and again ... and again. She didn't want to have to answer questions about what she was or what effect it would have on his people. She didn't want to destroy them or hurt anyone in anyway.

Her arousal now gone, she felt the sting of his rejection, but tried to push it aside.

"Go, then."

"Don't be that way, Adara. I'll be back shortly. We'll talk then. Okay?"

Keeping her gaze averted, she nodded. She heard his footsteps across the floor, then the door opened and closed softly behind him.

What was she going to do? She had told herself she would never allow another man to know her true nature, and now, not only a human but a demon knew what she was.

Stupid, stupid, stupid.

The water sparkled, drawing her attention back to it. How could she have forgotten such a pleasure?

It would serve many purposes for her tonight. She needed water to re-hydrate. Already her skin was not as soft as usual. Stripping off her clothes, she slipped into the warm water.

Like a hot spring, the water instantly rejuvenated her body. Her legs shifted into her blue shimmering tail. She flopped it once, twice before she lowered into the deep water. Maybe it was the design that made her feel better, or maybe it was the water, she didn't know. All she could think about was how good the waves brushing across her skin felt. It was like tiny fingers playing across her skin. Like Nal, touching her, bringing her to new heights. It seemed so long ago he had walked out of his bathroom in the human realm and caught her pleasuring herself.

She should have been embarrassed, but even then she'd felt something for him. Fate had played her hand now and it was up to her and Nal to see what they made of it. Granted, with the added fear of his father and the God's visit to the underworld hanging over their heads, she wasn't sure how any relationship would turn out, but she wanted to try. Nal was special.

Sleepy now, Adara pulled herself out of the water. Going into the bedroom, she found one of Nal's shirts and slipped it on before she pulled the covers back on the bed and slid beneath. She was half tempted to drop the curtains, but decided against it. Sleep called her.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Chapter Ten

Nal knew that the time had come. His life was no longer in the human realm, but down here, below, in the underworld. Looking at Adara's sleeping form tucked within the covers of his bed, his cock twitched. If he could, he would slip in the bed with her and love her like he longed to do, without all the stress of his father, and now Zeus.

Damn, Zeus. Why couldn't the God have waited until he was ready to come to him? There was no way now he would turn Adara's information over to him. She had become precious with her unusual gift and her large eyes that could melt his heart in an instant. He would fight the God if it came down to it.

Things were beginning to fall into place. Everything changed; even the underworld was susceptible to it. His father would surely see that, even though they'd never seen eye to eye.

Turning from Adara's sleeping form, Nal went to his window. The small opening was cut from the rock, but barely noticeable by anyone who might pass by. It was high off the ground and overlooked the forest. The dim moon cast its light over everything, highlighting the kingdom where his father lived.

A gentle breeze blew through the trees outside, rattling the leaves together in a sound that both comforted him and sent a shiver down his spine. For some reason the night reminded him of earth's fall season; yet it was significantly warmer

here. He didn't realize how much he'd missed being away from all this. The underworld had a strange beauty; dark, gothic, and stark, yet somehow appealing.

Looking beyond the trees, Nal focused on his father's fortress. Zeus was probably spilling his guts to the king. Damn, he wished he'd never struck the deal with the God.

Then again, if he hadn't, he wouldn't have met Adara.

Nal went back to the bed and crawled inside. Weary after hours of discussing strategy with his men, Nal was glad to feel Adara at his side. Her smooth skin brushed along his. If she would stay with him, he'd create a pool where she'd be able to swim and stretch her fins.

God, he loved her.

Nal stiffened.

Love?

Letting the thought bounce around for a bit, he realized, yes, he did love her.

As the new revelation zinged in his mind, Nal drifted to sleep with Adara snuggled against him, her breath hot on his naked chest.

* * * *

Zeus couldn't believe the fool king! How could he allow his son to live knowing that Nal had conspired against him?

"Zeus, I'm grateful you told me of Nalameir's plans. It would never have come to that. I want him to rule. I have sent my warriors, not to kill him, but to bring him home."

The fool!

With Zeus' help, Nalameir would have ruled the underworld anyway and the King would be dead.

"He wants you dead, Keranos," he spat out, disgusted at the King's lack of concern.

Keranos waved his hand as if his words meant nothing.

"Zeus, I will deal with my son's ambitions. You may go now."

If he could, he'd strike the smug bastard with a lightening bolt, but even Zeus new better than to mess with the demon King. Zeus continued to pace in front of Keranos' throne.

"He has information I need, Keranos. Information I plan to extract from him."

"You know? I'm quiet pleased with my son actually. He has shown courage—or perhaps stupidity, but I choose to believe its courage—by risking the anger of a God with his plans." Keranos' smile sent Zeus' anger soaring.

If the King didn't want to take his son in hand, he'd do it himself. With a flash, Zeus left Keranos and zeroed in on the little siren.

* * * *

Keranos watched as his demon warriors relaxed now that the God was gone. Even in his presence, Keranos had felt no fear. Zeus was powerful, but put head to head, Keranos wondered who would actually win. It would be a tight fight he was sure.

As for his son, the errant child would be in his rightful place soon. As a father, he had always hoped his son would rule after him. Keranos hated that Nalameir had

misinterpreted his warriors when he sent for him. Although Dalagar could be a royal pain in the ass, he certainly hadn't been sent on a mission to kill Nalameir. Keranos chuckled thinking of what had happened to Dalagar and his men. Interesting that his son had found a Siren of all things.

Even though Nalameir's belief that demons could live among the mortals was a crazy idea, Keranos had to acknowledge that perhaps it was time for a change.

Since Nalameir's short time back in the underworld, Keranos felt his son's growing powers. And the Siren ... well, she'd make a good mate for his son. The underworld would never be the same.

A grin spread over his lips at the thought. In one thousand years, change was bound to happen sooner or later. Now once the stuff with the God passed, which Keranos had no doubt it would, then he would tell his son it was time for him to take over.

Sitting back in his chair, Keranos laced his fingers over his chest. Yes, a vacation would be nice. He heard it was quite warm in the Bahamas.

He would fit right in.

* * * *

The heat was almost too hot to bear as Adara slowly came awake. Was she sleeping in the furnace?

When she rolled to her side her arm brushed against smooth flesh. The scent of wood and earth drifted to her, bringing Nal's sexy image to her mind. So it hadn't all been a dream? She smiled. With all the craziness going on around

her, Adara felt a strange sense of peace. Snuggling closer, Nal wrapped his arm around her and pulled her closer before he kissed her temple.

Two days now she had woken in his arms.

"Good morning," she whispered.

"It is good, right now. How I would love to lock the world out so I could explore you further, Adara."

His words sent a curious shiver from the top of her head to her toes. Nal maneuvered them both until he lay on top of her. His rigid cock pushed against her leg. Leaning in, he captured her lips. He kissed her like a man starved.

Adara reveled in his possession. She rubbed his shoulders, his back before grabbing his hips to fit him where she wanted him. His hardened penis pushed against her panties, the action causing moisture to seep between her legs, readying her body for his invasion.

"Please, Nal."

He nipped her lips as he flexed his hips in a sensual imitation of lovemaking.

Adara imagined his thickness sliding between her wet folds. Gods! She wanted him.

"Nal, stop torturing me."

"Mmmm." He moaned against her neck, but he did not try to enter her. His lips traveled lower before finding on peaked nipple. He sucked it hard, sending her body arching towards him.

"Nal!"

"Adara, Adara, Adara," he whispered.

Looking up from his spot at her breast, something glittered in the depths of his dark demon eyes. "The things you do to me, Adara." He nipped her nipple again. "I want to taste you all damned day."

Yes! Yes! Her mind beckoned. She wanted him to forget whatever he needed to do with his father. She wanted him to make love to her again.

As if he agreed, Nal slipped her panties off. Then he settled his cock at her wet needy entrance. Wrapping her legs around his waist, she pulled him forward until he entered her in one smooth stroke.

They both groaned and tensed as the feel of coming together washed over them.

Nal lay still for a moment, but Adara was having none of that. She arched her hips, pulling him out a little, then thrust upward, bringing him even deeper than before.

"Adara!" he groaned, then he took over their lovemaking. He grabbed her hands and held them out the side as he kissed and licked her breast, her neck, before returning to her lips.

Adara made little sounds of pleasure as she urged him on. She loved his confidence, his domination. A girl could seriously get use to this.

His driving force quickened as he rubbed the spot to send her higher. Tiny jolts of electricity ricocheted throughout her body, centering where he pushed in and out.

Nal let go of her hands, which allowed her to feel his flesh. Every sensation pushed them on and on, reaching for their crest of pleasure. She sank her nails deep in his flesh as she

felt his body stiffen. His climax brought hers as they soared together.

As they lay tangled together, their breathing slowing returning to normal, Adara realized she wanted this demon for all time. Before she got a chance to tell him, he gave her a quick peck on the cheek and he rose from the bed.

"We have a lot to do this morning. I must prepare a few loyal warriors just in case my father does something stupid. I think I may be able to talk to him and let him know I don't want to fight him. Hell, Adara. He's my father." Nal gripped the bridge of his nose. Adara wanted to go to him for comfort, but wasn't at all sure how she would be received. Yes they had just made love, but what if he didn't share her feelings?

Shutting down the need to go to him, Adara filled her eyes with his well-defined form. He was a handsome man, just having come from the bed after they made love. His eyes, now closed, but she knew they had turned back to his human blue. When he turned to her, she saw hope waiting there. Hope for what, she wasn't sure, but she hoped it would be for them, after this crazy fight with his father was done.

"Why are you fighting your father, anyway?"

Nal had started to put on his clothes, but stopped and turned to her.

"My father and I have always had different visions of our world. I wanted a semblance of freedom to move about the mortal world. He wanted us to stay well and truly hidden away." Once again he started to dress. "I don't hate my father and I don't want to kill him, I just want him to

understand that my desire to be with humans does not make me weak."

Adara left the bed to act on her earlier desire to go to him. When she reached him, she wrapped her arms around him and pressed her cheek to his chest. At first he didn't move, then finally he pulled his arms around her.

"Maybe your father will see reason when you speak to him."

Nal stepped out of her embrace. Adara dropped her arms, feeling the sting of his rejection.

"My father is set in his ways." Nal yanked on the rest of his clothes. "You'd better get dressed too. I'll wait and we'll go down together."

A loud banging on the door interrupted them.

"Sir!" Someone called loudly. "You must come quickly. The God! The God is waiting for you downstairs!"

Nal's eyes flashed to black as he looked at her. Her pulse quickened. Who could it be? Maybe her father?

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Chapter Eleven

Adara saw Nal's body stiffen.

"Nal, what is going on?"

"Get dressed." He ordered. She hurriedly pulled on her clothes. Curious at who had come, Adara tried to reach out with her mind to find that connection she had with the Gods and Goddesses.

She encountered nothing but emptiness.

She didn't have time to analyze it before Nal was rushing her out the door.

Together they strode down the stairs into the mass of hysterical people. Loud voices echoed off the rock walls bringing the tension in the air higher. She could feel it like a heavy blanket.

Four warriors, including Gasby, stood around Zeus with their massive swords drawn and pointing in this direction. Zeus stood above seven feet tall and looked down at all the demons. A smile curved the corners of his lips.

"Tell your men to back off, Nalameir. I have to collect the information you have gathered for me."

Adara gasped as Zeus stood in the middle of the warriors with his large arms crossed over his chest and his penetrating gaze aimed at Nal. Nal looked back at the God with hate-filled eyes.

Zeus' white tunic hung loosely around his body, but Adara knew it would not hinder him in any fight. Gold leaves

adorned his waist, making him appear every bit the God everyone knew he was.

Panic now set in her veins as she watched the anger flash from Nal to Zeus and back again. She quickly sought out the connection to her sisters, but again she came up with nothing. Even being in the underworld she should be able to contact them. Only another God could block their paths. She tried again, this time harder, seeking some connection, any connection to the human world.

Nothing!

She pushed her way through the crowd to reach the God in the center of the room. Why would he block her? There seemed to be dozens of bodies all of sudden blocking her path, but she pushed on, determined to get to him and ask him why?

When finally she worked her way closer, Zeus' eyes glowed as they caught her gaze. He bowed his head slightly.

Nal came up behind her. His arms settled on her shoulders before he spoke. She sought his calm and made it her own. It was hard to do in a room full of frantic people. But with their arrival, the people had calmed down some.

"I don't have what you need Zeus." Nal said through gritted teeth. His hold on her shoulders tightened.

Zeus moved his gaze away from her landing it on Nal. They flashed silver then narrowed.

"Don't you, Nalameir? Don't you have the information I sought? Should I tell the pretty siren what you bargained for my help?

Adara stiffened at his blatant claim of what she was. The room took in a giant breath at his declaration. She turned to Nal.

"What is he talking about? Why would I care what you bargained with?"

"No. I do not need your help any longer and I can not deliver what you need." His grip on her shoulders felt comforting, yet she knew he was holding something back, something that might devastate her.

"Ahhh, so you haven't told her. Well, I'm sure you've got what you need whether you say you do or not. She's bound to have shown her true colors in this world. Why would she hide? Especially in the face of your charms." Zeus laughed shaking the walls.

Confusion clouded her mind. What was Zeus saying? Looking into Nal's eyes, she saw the pain evident there now. His hands had dropped away from her shoulders. The loss of his touch allowed her skin to cool.

"I don't have the proof you need. Now go from my realm, God! Be gone, now!" The echo of Nal's words bounced around the room, but it did nothing to Zeus. His silver gaze bore into Nal's body, making Adara physically aware and worried for her lover. Not remembering her link to her sisters severed, she reached out again. This time she got a faint reply, but she couldn't understand them before it was once again broken away.

"You will have no contact, Adara!" Zeus' voice boomed. "I have made sure of it now. Ask your boyfriend what it is I need from him."

Not wanting to, but knowing she had to, Adara sought out Nal's eyes. She barely noticed the people now filing out of the room, leaving only the guards taking up posts by the walls.

Just as his mouth started open, Zeus interrupted.

"He knew from the beginning you were a Siren, Adara. He needed to you to admit you were one. But he got even better proof. You worked your power in front of many demons. Now the underworld knows of your kind. They do not look kindly on something so powerful coming into their world. They will kill you, Adara."

As he spoke, Adara knew the ache in her chest was her heart slowly breaking. The pain was like a spear into an already open wound. Twice in such a short time. Only Nal's betrayal hurt ten times more than Jace's.

Jace.

He had cheated on her, but he had not hung her out to dry. He did not betray what she was.

Zeus was now at her ear, his breath foul across her skin.

"He does not deny it, Adara. He was going to use you to gain the power to take over the underworld."

"Don't listen to him, Adara." The pain clear in his Nal's voice broke her heart even more as her eyes sought him out.

Her body shivered, with rage or hurt, she couldn't tell, but she shook all over. Nal's demon eyes locked on her own, not allowing her to look away. She wanted to turn away, to flee this man who had healed her heart in such a short time only to rip it apart.

"Nal?"

Please deny it, she begged in her mind. Deny that you used me.

"I love you, Adara. I was never going to give him the information." He reached out to her making her realize she had moved away from him. Her mind wishing her legs would move so she could run away from the pain.

His words stopped everything.

He loved her?

As if Zeus knew those words would help ease her anger, he stood tall and roared into the room. His fists clenched, his head arched back. Chunks of rocks rained down on them.

"Nooooo! You idiot! You were going to allow—"

Adara felt the magic engulf the room just before lightening flashed bright in the room. Nal turned completely into his demon form. The marks across his face shimmered with light. Adara couldn't help being aroused at seeing his true form. What he was he did not have to hide, like she did. He was power in demon form, and knowing that sent her body in to hypersensitive mode.

His obsidian eyes turned to her. He stood a few feet taller now and could look at Zeus, eye to eye.

"Adara, Believe me. I would never have allowed him to harm you. I do love you!"

Out of the corner of her eye, she saw the God pull back his arm readying for a strike. It was too late when she cried out Nal's name.

"Nal!"

Zeus threw a lightening bolt about that time, striking Nal in the shoulder. The blow knocked Nal back a few steps, but

only made the demon turn his black gaze on the God. He gave no sign that the bolt hurt him. Her stomach clenched wanting to go to him anyway, to make sure he was okay.

Nalameir put his hands close together, allowing a small space of air in between. A dark red orb appeared in the middle before he aimed it at the God and let it fly.

It was all so quick, Zeus had a moment to think, but the orb still managed to hit his thigh, causing a black spot to form on his tunic.

"I love you, Adara and I. Will. Not. Let. Him. Harm. You!" Nalameir shot another orb, hitting the God again.

Zeus returned another lightening bolt just missing Nalameir. Adara screamed at the explosion hitting the wall close to where she stood. As she looked at the destruction on the wall, dark red eyes glowed from the shadows, catching her attention.

Adara put her hand over her mouth to keep from screaming again. The eyes moved closer as if disconnected from any sort of body. A foot away from her a dark image began to form. The mist slowly turned into a male form.

The man standing in front of her held confidence and authority. She wasn't sure how she knew, but this was the Demon King. Nalameir's father.

Great.

Just great.

"So you are the Siren."

Adara nodded.

"My son stated to the God he loved you. Do you feel the same for him?"

Although Adara knew she should be shaking in her boots, she did not feel truly threatened in the King's presence.

"Yes. I do love him too."

His eyes softened, and a smile formed on his full lips.

"Excellent. He is a strong warrior."

Adara could still hear the fighting between Nal and Zeus, but the man before her demanded all her attention.

"I do not want to kill him. I just want him to come home. If he had spoken to me, he would have realized that." The King turned to the fight. Adara saw longing and pain etched in his features. He loved his son. He missed his son.

"But your men, the ones who you sent for us in the town, they acted as if you wanted him so you could kill him."

"No. I don't want him dead. I'm tired Adara. I'm tired of the emptiness of not having my only son share in my rule of the underworld. He needs to take his rightful place."

Although this was the demon King, she heard the loneliness in his voice.

"What about the Drakas? They didn't act as if they would follow him."

The King stepped up beside her as a loud crash rumbled through the room. She looked out and saw the amount of damage Nal and Zeus were creating, but both seemed to be handling the fight well. Zeus had a small cut on his head and Nal had one on his other shoulder now. It was taking everything not to go to him to make them stop this craziness.

"The Drakas have served me for many years. It will be hard on them at first, but with my backing they will have to

except this change. It appears change happens and even a demon King cannot stop it."

Finally the fighting stopped. Adara feared looking to see who still stood. Zeus and Nal both stood tall, a little out of breath, but both still remained standing.

"You have not heard the last from Nalameir. I will find another way to get the Siren. Count on it!"

With a flash to rival the sun, Zeus disappeared from the House.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Chapter Twelve

The warriors by the walls instantly relaxed. The swords were put away, but they remained alert just in case the God returned for revenge.

Adara rushed to Nal's aide. He dropped to his knees, now back to his normal height. Wrapping her arms around him, she felt the pounding of his heartbeat through his veins as she pulled him as close to her as possible.

"Adara?" He reached up cupped her face. His ran his thumb across her cheek and she felt the moisture there. She hadn't realized she had been crying. But she wasn't at all surprised.

"I would not have turned the information over to him, Adara. I think from the moment I walked out of the bathroom and saw you sprawled across my bed, I knew then that I wasn't going to be able to give him what he wanted. I hope you believe me, but if you don't I will try for the rest of my life to make it up to you."

Her heart pounded.

"Nal what are you saying?"

"I'm saying ... I want you to be a part of my life. My life here, now. Do you think you can handle that, Adara? I will build you a sparkling pool, I will give you anything you need or desire. Just stay with me."

His thumb continued to stroke her cheek sending pleasure jolts dancing through her.

She couldn't seem to speak. Her mind raced with images of them living in the fortress where his father lived. He didn't know yet, what his father wanted. How would he handle that?

His father stepped up to them.

"Nal?"

Nalameir quickly got to his feet and faced his father. Adara worried for him. He didn't know his father didn't want to kill him. Instantly, his body stiffened and he pushed her behind him.

"Stay back, Adara."

"No, Nal, you don't understand." But he pushed her behind him further.

"Hello father."

"Nal, I think there has been a small misunderstanding." The King's lips turned up at the edges. "I don't want to kill you, son. I am ready to hand my kingdom over to you. And after your display tonight with the God, I realize I am doing the right thing."

Adara couldn't believe the exchange between father and son. Two proud men standing eye to eye. She could tell that Nal would be a wonderful ruler.

Nal rubbed his chin as if in thought. "I didn't think you liked the way I wanted to do things."

"Well, son, I have realized with you being away for so long, that you are right. Change isn't so bad, and if you believe the demons can go exist with the humans then we'll give it a try. But remember, we are demons for a reason. There will be some who will misuse the humans."

"Yes, sir. I realize that and I don't expect to open the realm right away. There will have to be rules set, and for those who do not follow rules, strict punishments."

The King laughed. "Oh yes, my son. You will make an excellent King."

Adara moved from around Nal and stood at his side. The King's attention went instantly to her.

"Well, my dear Siren. You will definitely make things interesting around her. I hope we do not have to worry about your little gifts being used on us?" His eyes flashed a warning.

"Oh, no sir. You don't have to worry about that."

"Well then I hope to be invited to the wedding. Come visit me later, Nalameir. We have much to discuss." With a misty gray fog, the King disappeared.

The guards had all gone except for Gasby who stood off to the side. He watched them curiously and waited. Ra had come from the other room and stood next to him. Something was definitely there between them two, Adara thought.

Nal grabbed her and pulled her into his embrace. Before she knew it, he covered her lips with his. His tongue slipped inside and caressed hers. His taste exploded along her taste buds making her moan. As he pulled away, she noticed the room had changed and they were once again in his bedroom.

"I'll do whatever you ask, Adara. We don't have to be married right away, but I want you to stay her with me. I want us to explore these feelings deeper. I want to be able to give you everything you desire."

As Adara looked upon his beautiful form, her heart slowly began to mend. Love and devotion were mirrored in his eyes.

All she wanted to do was return it. She would have never met him, if he hadn't struck that bargain with Zeus, so how could she be angry with him for that?

"I don't know if I can stay here, Nal. My family, my sisters and father, will miss me. I'm sure they do already."

He cut her off, "I'll let you visit them anytime you wish. You can go to the human realm whenever your heart desires. Or they can come here." He cupped her jaw as he leaned in and placed tiny kisses next to her mouth working his way to her ear.

"We're fantastic together, Adara. No other has ever made me feel what you've made me feel."

And she felt the same for him.

"Yes. Nal. I will stay with you and see where this fantastical ride will take us."

Nal smiled and laughed. He yanked her close, covering her lips, her neck with kisses that soon turned into deep passionate embraces. Soon he had tumbled her to the bed.

She had needed to feel wanted and loved, had despaired of every obtaining these things. But now she had. And though Adara never would have guessed that her needs would be filled by a demon, she could not be sorry for it.

Things were definitely looking up.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Siren's Song [A Siren Sisters Anthology]
by Melinda Barron, Midnyte Dupree, Jade Buchanan

Aella

By

Jade Buchanan

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Dedication

Thanks to my fellow Sirens, Mel and Midnyte. It sure was a pleasure plotting this out with the two of you! I couldn't have asked for two better people to work with

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Chapter One

Aella paused, catching sight of a small face peaking out from the entrance to the cave ahead of her. He was covered in a black woolly coat, a white patch on his belly. She smiled, ducking quickly behind the outcropping beside her. She swished her coppery green tail—silently counting to ten—idly flicking her tail back and forth.

Tilting her head, she waited another five counts. The rock against her back was silky smooth in the water. She pressed against it, waiting for the right moment. Darting out, she gave a heave of her tail, powering through the waters toward the small body. He reared back, moving his flippers to sink into the cave. Giving chase, she squeezed her body through the opening, wincing at the pull on her hip where it scraped against the wall. She flexed her muscles, bending and twisting to follow the small, black body through the narrow passageway.

Reaching forward, her fingers grazed his backside, just missing him. She laughed, her voice ringing out inside the cave. He turned his head to look back at her, flitting away when she made to grab him again. Aella shook her head, determined to catch him this time. She was going to catch him—if it was the last thing she did.

The cave walls rushed past her. The ledges and crags would normally capture her attention, but she had different prey on her mind today.

He flicked his tail at her, mocking her attempts. She laughed again. A bright, cheerful sound. He twisted around to watch her for a moment. She knew he was always drawn to the sound of her voice. She would have him in a minute; the path opened up ahead of them, and her bigger body would have the advantage.

Suddenly, she sensed a larger presence in front of them. She looked up, crying out a warning seconds too late. He slammed into the figure in front of him, his small body taking the brunt of the impact.

She swam toward him, reaching him in seconds, running her hands down his fragile body. She ignored the large male hands that tried to get her to let go of her bounty.

"Easy, easy now," the man crooned.

"Is he hurt? Oh gods, my father is going to be so mad at me if he finds out we were playing tag in the caves."

"He's fine, just a little stunned."

Aella stroked the body of Phocas, crooning softly to him. He couldn't be injured; she didn't know what she would do without her little seal.

Phocas jerked, blinking his large, soulful eyes. She cried out, hugging him tighter to her. He wriggled and she set him loose.

"I apologize, I didn't see him until he was already upon me."

Aella finally dragged her attention from Phocas and directed it at the man in front of her. She barely managed to stifle her gasp. He was gorgeous! Tall and leanly muscled, he towered over her. His chest was chiseled, his arms corded

with muscles. His raven hair was pulled back from his face with a tie, the style highlighting prominent cheekbones and a narrow, aquiline nose. He should have been intimidating, but she couldn't stop looking at him. Every new feature was like another piece of a puzzle, fitting into an altogether breathtaking picture.

His lips curved, and she finally noticed that he had been making his own leisurely perusal of her. Her cheeks heated. Against her will, she raised her arm, bringing it up to cover her breasts. He chuckled darkly, and she ducked her head in embarrassment. She should have just stayed still. Now she looked like an innocent.

His tail was larger than her own, covered in silvery black scales. The rest of his body was deeply tanned. He held out his hand, waiting until she placed her slender, milky-white fingers within his own.

"You haven't accepted my apology yet, my lady. Was it not acceptable?"

"Oh no, I just ... I accept your apology, of course," she stuttered. "Do you have a name to go along with it?"

He grinned, showing off even, white teeth.

"Only if you share your name with me. And who is this little one here?" He smiled at the small body that had crept back up to his side. Phocas peered up at him, moving closer to rub against the man's scales.

"This is Phocus, and I'm Aella. Your turn now," she teased.

"My name is Damon, and the man behind you is Pythias."

Aella tried to turn, suddenly hampered by a set of powerful arms that wrapped around her waist. She caught a glimpse of

a strong profile, before Pythias lowered his head. Dark, chestnut brown hair wafted over her shoulder, mixing with her coppery red strands.

He rubbed his cheek along her sensitive skin, tightening his hold around her waist. His arm brushed against her own where she had it wrapped around her breast. She shivered. He smoothed his palm down her side, brushing against the scrape on her hip. She winced when he probed the area with gentle fingers.

"You should be more careful with such delicate skin. It seems a shame to mar it," he rumbled.

Pythias released her slowly, caressing her body. Her mouth opened, she tried to speak but her mind was blank. Who were these men?

"I don't think you are supposed to be here," she said. "If you leave now, I won't mention it to my father."

She was trying to regain the upper hand. She had no idea how the tables had been turned so neatly on her. This was her home. She shouldn't let them intimidate her.

"And why should we be afraid of your father? Did you think we didn't know who you were, daughter of Poseidon?" Pythias' deep voice vibrated the waters around them.

These men weren't normal. They seemed too powerful to be normal. She shivered again, trying to move away imperceptibly. Too bad Phocas—the traitor—chose that moment to brush up against Damon again, wriggling in pleasure when Damon stroked him with one strong hand. She tried to squash the thought that she wouldn't be so mad if only he would stroke her like that.

"My father could eat the two of you for breakfast. You should be afraid of him."

The two men shared a glance, Damon with a smile and Pythias with a fierce frown.

"Careful, little one, you don't know who you are playing with," Damon replied with a grin.

"We aren't afraid of your father, and yes, we do know him personally," Pythias added.

Aella sniffed, entirely unimpressed despite her attraction for them. They may be incredibly appealing, but she wasn't going to be threatened. She was the daughter of Poseidon, and her father would do anything to make sure she was happy.

Phocas swam up to her, placing his nose close to her own. With a snort, he jerked his head up.

She lifted her chin. "I need to go to the surface with Phocas. He's afraid of the humans around here and doesn't like to be alone."

Pythias nodded, moving back to allow her more room. She caught a glimpse of his scales. They were a deep chocolate brown, highlighted with rusty accents. They glistened under the water.

Damon moved in front of her, swishing his tail to glide forward. Phocas immediately abandoned her, swimming beside Damon. With a huff, she followed him.

"How is it that you swim with a monk seal? I was under the impression that they are nearing extinction." Pythias appeared beside her.

She glanced over at him, sensing his interest. Looking ahead again, she answered him.

"Monk seals were placed under the protection of my father centuries ago. Poseidon favored them because of their love for the sea and the sun. I don't think he knew how much they would be hunted and decimated. There are less than five hundred where there were once thousands in antiquity. Father asked me to take care of them, and so I do."

He nodded, lost in thought. She glanced over at him, puzzled by the frown on his face.

"What, you didn't think I had a brain in my body? I may seem flighty sometimes, and I may be a dreamer but that doesn't mean that I'm not passionate about things."

He mumbled something under his breath. It sounded a bit like, "I'll give you something to be passionate about" but she couldn't be sure. Shaking her head, she swam for the surface, following the silvery black tail in front of her.

"You never did answer my question," she said. "What exactly are you doing here?"

She knew her sisters would kill her if they found out she was swimming with two men she knew nothing about. They always said she acted before thinking.

They broke the surface, entering the small pool deep within the labyrinth of caves. It was highly unlikely that any human would be able to enter this pool unless they could breathe underwater, although it was still possible that they could enter it from above if they were exploring along the Island.

With that thought, she glanced above her, raising her face to the sun shining down on them. Phocas swam circles around her, dancing in the waters. In front of her, the two men stayed silent, floating with the help of their tails moving under the water. It was time to get some answers. Who were these men, and what were they doing in her home?

"Technically, it wasn't a question, it was a statement. And it doesn't matter what we are doing here, Aella," Damon said with a smirk.

Pythias swam up behind her, pulling her into his arms again. She squirmed to get free. She would never admit it, but she loved the feel of his arms around her. She had been a tad sheltered growing up—between her sisters and their father, she never got to do anything.

"But that does bring up a new question." Pythias breathed in her ear. "Now that we are here, what are we to do with you, little one?"

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Chapter Two

Aella wriggled in place, attempting to dislodge the strong arms from around her waist. His hot breath blew in her ear, freezing her for a moment, before he bit down—ever so lightly—on her earlobe.

She couldn't hide the moan, her body tensing. Pythias chuckled darkly, tightening his arms and holding her closer. She closed her eyes, unable to keep them open.

Pythias released her ear, nibbling down her neck. She couldn't stop herself from arching toward him to allow easier access. He placed his mouth firmly against her neck, sucking up what was sure to be a mark against her pale skin. She shouldn't be doing this; she knew she should tell him to get his hands off. Unfortunately, the minute he touched her with his lips, she was lost.

The sun shone brightly down on her face, providing a crimson tint beneath her eyelids. Her lips curved and she relaxed back into his arms. Suddenly, the bright light was muted, and she sensed a presence in front of her.

How could she be so stupid, forgetting about Damon? Her eyelids popped open. She peered up at Damon so close to her. He didn't say anything, just watched while Pythias licked a path along her shoulder.

"Wait..." she gasped.

"I don't really think that's what you want, Aella," Damon replied, a smile finally curving his full lips.

Pythias slid his hands up, covering her breasts with his palms. Damon moved to grasp her hips, holding her in place. Two very clever thumbs brushed over her nipples, causing them to peak—hard.

"Stop ... I need to ... oh God, I don't even kn-know you," she panted, pressing back into Pythias despite her words. "I-I think we should just talk..."

She broke off, moaning when both men brushed the lengths of their tails against her. The feel of the slick scales caressing her body was enough to send her crawling closer to an orgasm.

What are they doing to me?

She panted, lost to the feeling. Damon growled, snapping her out of her haze.

"I need to know how you know my father," she said, resolute.

"If she can still think, you aren't doing your job, Pyth," The words were a low murmur.

Pythias snarled softly in her ear, pinching her nipples hard. "I'll have to rectify that mistake."

She arched up, crying out.

He bumped into something behind him, jarring Aella in his hold.

He must have hit the edge of the pool.

With a powerful heave, he hoisted himself out of the water, bringing her up to land in his lap.

Her backside tingled, heating for a moment, before two tanned legs appeared to either side of her tail. She flicked her fin, concentrating to bring up the image of legs in her mind. It

took longer than usual, she couldn't concentrate when Pythias kept running his fingers over her breasts and down her stomach. He stroked the spot where her skin melded into scales and she twitched in his arms.

Finally, she managed to hold the image in her mind. Looking down, she watched the coppery emerald scales dull in color, shrinking and splitting until she was looking at milky-white skin. She wiggled her toes, dropping her head back at the exquisite feel of Pythias' muscled legs along her own.

Damon heaved himself up beside them, the muscles in his forearms tensing and bulging in the most interesting ways. He had already shifted, his own tail replaced with powerful legs. This close to them, she saw that Damon was larger than Pythias. Not by much, but enough that it was noticeable. She figured if they were standing up, he would probably be a few inches taller, but she couldn't tell for sure.

Damon leaned in close to them, bringing his right arm around to effectively trap her in Pythias' arms. He sniffed at her neck, unerringly finding the spot that Pythias had been mouthing earlier. It was still sensitive, the skin just shy of bruising. He licked along the mark, opening his mouth to scrape his teeth along her skin.

Aella gasped, opening her mouth but unable to form any words. She was trapped in place, but strangely, she didn't want to be released any time soon. They could keep doing whatever they wanted if they kept making her feel this way.

"Do you still have questions you want us to answer, precious?" Pythias whispered in her ear, before grazing his lips along the opposite side of her neck.

She panted, blinking to bring the cavern into focus. *Wait ... focus? Phocas!* Where was Phocas?

She whimpered, trying to shift her mind. Damon was smoothed his palms along her hips, dipping between her thighs to tickle along her sensitive flesh. She was completely bare, open to his perusal when he looked down to where his fingers played. Teasing touches danced above her clit, so achingly close but not quite there. She shifted in place, trying to beg wordlessly for him to touch her where she ached.

Aella moaned, tilting her hips, pressing into Damon's hand. Pythias was intimately close to her below. She squirmed in his lap, causing him to groan.

"Yeah, I think she's into it now, Damon," Pythias grunted.

Damon lifted his head, staring past her to look at Pythias behind her. He lifted his free hand, bringing it past her head.

Turning to the side, she shifted to keep them in focus, Damon's hand playing so close to her clit forgotten for the moment. Damon had placed his other hand behind Pythias' head, the two men staring intimately at each other. They locked eyes, both men panting harshly. They didn't make any other moves, obviously content to stare deeply at each other. She was sure they were communicating in their minds; they had a look of deep concentration. What were they saying that they didn't want her to hear?

Aella wrinkled her brow, jarred from her sexual haze. She didn't know any thing about these men, and here she was, letting them touch her. They hadn't even answered her questions. What was wrong with her?

She looked up to the opening of the cavern, blinking quickly to clear her mind. She must have made some kind of noise because Damon started, turning his head to look at her.

"Hey, hey, what's wrong? What just happened here?"

Damon backed up, letting both Pythias and her go. Pythias froze beneath her. She didn't know what to do. Should she move off of him? Would that be awkward?

Snorting inelegantly, she realized that things couldn't get any more awkward than they already were.

Phocas chose that moment to surface beside them, peaking his little nose above the water to study her.

Well, looks like I was wrong.

She huffed. Things definitely could get more awkward. Phocas was way too much like a little brother for her, and there were certain things that she wasn't exactly comfortable having him see.

A second and third head popped up beside him, two of the other monk seals. Aella struggled to shift off Pythias, but he held her in place. Heat flushed up her neck, blooming on her cheeks. She was ready to bury her face in her hands when Damon stopped her.

"There's something wrong with them," he said, his voice tight.

"What?"

"The seals with Phocas. Look at them. They don't look right," he clarified.

Aella wiggled forward, ignoring the long, drawn out groan from Pythias. Studying the little faces beside Phocas, she

realized he was right. There was something off about the seals.

Pythias grabbed her around the hips, thrusting her into the water, following her in. She treaded water, clumsily trying to move her legs. With a grunt, she shifted her lower body, bringing back the vibrant scales.

Aella studied the seal closest to Phocas. He looked sick, his skin dull and almost lifeless. Concerned, she threw out her hand, grasping the fingers that reached out to meet her. Glancing to the side, she realized that Damon had grabbed her hand. He squeezed, comforting her with his presence.

"What's wrong with them? Phocas has been here the whole time."

Damon studied her. "Not quite. He left after we arrived. You mustn't have noticed."

She turned her face, feeling the blush heat her cheeks. Of course she hadn't noticed. She'd been crawling all over them at the time.

"I need to know what happened to them."

"We'll find out what happened, Aella. Together," Pythias murmured, brushing aside her hair.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Chapter Three

"Where would they have gone?" Damon asked, staring at the little ones in front of them.

The seals in question were bobbing in the water, blinking large, soulful eyes at Aella and the two men.

"I don't know," she whispered, moving away from Pythias and Damon to swim closer to the small creatures. "Where did you find them, Phocas? Where are the rest of them? Can you show me?"

Phocas blinked, a long and slumberous movement, strangely quiet. He nodded his head, diving under the water. She immediately followed him under, conscious of the men's larger bodies behind her. This had nothing to do with them, but she was glad they were there. If she had been alone ... well, it didn't bear thinking about.

She had never seen the seals like this. Their coats were dull and they seemed so listless, hardly moving at all. This wasn't how they normally acted. There had to be something wrong with them. What should she do?

It wasn't that she didn't know how to handle issues when they came up, but she was more used to having her father and sisters take care of her. She wasn't sure she wanted Poseidon to pop in here when she was with both Damon and Pythias, though. He may have his share of women, but Aella was still his baby. He'd never approved of any man she'd even thought about being close to.

One of her sisters could help her though. She brought up an image of her eldest sister in her mind.

Iaha? Are you there? I need to talk to you.

She continued swimming behind Phocas, waiting for her sister's voice to answer her. Iaha would know what to do. She had a quick mind and would be able to figure out what was wrong with the seals. Aella tilted her head to the side, curious when she was greeted with silence, instead of familiar tones.

Iaha, please ... this is really important. I need to talk to you.

Huffing out a breath, twitching her tail in agitation, she tried to figure out why Iaha would ignore her. Maybe she was busy with something and didn't want to be interrupted.

Closing her eyes briefly, she tried to think what Adara would be doing at this moment. If Iaha wouldn't be able to help her, Adara might be able to offer some suggestions. Hopefully she wasn't with that jackass, Jace. It wasn't that there was anything in particular wrong with the guy, but Aella didn't trust him. He seemed shifty. Nope, she didn't like him at all.

Besides, Adara deserved better.

Adara?

Silence was her only answer.

Adara, come on, I need to talk to you. There's something wrong with the seals and I need to ask your opinion. I can't get hold of Iaha.

Why weren't they answering her? Had she done something wrong? She tried to think back and see if she had missed something important. Was it someone's birthday? No, she

tended to be flighty on occasion, but she wouldn't have missed something that important. Besides, they were used to her by now.

Should she call her father after all? She really didn't want to talk to him about this. He had entrusted the care of the monk seals to her. If she couldn't do this without his help, he might decide to take them away from her.

Fine, you two can ignore me all you want, but just know that I'm in the presence of two gorgeous men who want to fuck me all night. Did you hear that? Two! Two men! Wanting to do all sorts of nasty things with your baby sister.

She frowned, huffing when they remained silent.

You're being jerks! I need your help. Please ... this is really important. I need you.

Nothing. Absolutely nothing from either one of them.

What was going on here?

"If you huff any harder, you're going to blow yourself out of the water," Damon commented, swimming up beside her. "What's the matter now?"

"Nothing," she replied, trying to smooth out her features.

"It sounds like more than nothing. Don't keep secrets from us, Princess," Pythias grumbled.

"Don't call me that!" She returned, throwing a glare in his direction.

"Then tell us what's wrong."

"I can't reach either of my sisters. They've never ignored me when I've called to them before. I wanted to ask their help with the seals, but they won't answer me. I don't know what I did wrong."

The two men halted, Damon throwing his arm out to stop her in place. They exchanged a glance, full of hidden secrets.

"What makes you think you did something wrong?" he asked, watching Pythias closely.

"Well, why else would they be ignoring me? I must have done something or they would be answering me. They always help me out when I need something."

"Have you tried contacting your father?"

"I'm not calling my father just because I've messed up with the seals. It wouldn't take much for him to come in here thinking he was riding to my rescue. Trust me, Poseidon would take over everything in a matter of minutes and he'd never let me leave my room again. I'd be locked up forever, and he would say he couldn't trust me outside. Besides, there's the little matter of the two mermen who'd he probably try to kill just for looking at me naked."

Pythias frowned, looking off to the side. He looked back at the two of them, shaking his head.

"I can't reach anyone, Damon. There's something else going on here."

Damon closed his eyes, obviously trying to send a mental call.

"Fuck. I was afraid this would happen."

"What? You were afraid what would happen?" she asked, confused.

Pythias shook his head, pointing their attention back to the seals. "We don't have time to figure this out right now. One thing at a time, okay."

"No, it's not okay," she said, resolutely. "What did you think was going to happen?"

"There's more going on here than you realize. When the gods are involved, things are never as easy as they appear. When we were sent to come here and see you, we knew this was a possibility. We knew we could get caught up in something bigger."

"What're you saying? That this has something to do with my father? Why would he block the three of us? And what do you mean you were sent?" She swished her tail, furious, as she stared Pythias down.

Damon sighed heavily, moving off to the side, watching Pythias and her square off. She just hoped they didn't notice how hot the exchange was making her. She'd never had anyone try to challenge her before, but then again, she'd only ever been attracted to men who already knew who she was. She'd never been interested in human men the way her sisters were. Most demigods were too afraid of angering Poseidon to handle Aella the way she wanted to be.

She wanted these two men, men who actually had the gall to stand up to her, to put their hands on her. Aella couldn't believe how much that though excited her. Even if they were acting like jerks by hiding the truth from her. There was something bigger going on here, and she'd eventually get to the bottom of it. Adara always said she could needle a god into giving up their immortality just to get her to shut up.

"You do know that we're all on the same side, right? Why don't we just figure out what's going on and then you two can

go at it," Damon said, rolling his eyes when Pythias sent a glare in his direction.

"I'm not going to sit around and listen to the two of you. For all I know, you're the one who's blocking me."

"You know that's not true," Pythias gritted out between clenched teeth.

"Do I? Prove it," she shot back, flicking her coppery green tail back and forth. She was playing with fire, but she desperately wanted one of them to make the first move. If they kept up this bantering back and forth she might just give in and bend over for one of them. Gods, they were driving her crazy. Good thing she had a tail at the moment. They'd surely be able to tell how wet she was if they saw the telltale clenching of human thighs.

A growl rumbled up from Pythias' chest. He threw back his head, the chestnut strands fanning out in the water. He looked like an avenging angel come down to capture her. She hesitated, her heart catching in her throat.

He reached forward, pulling her close to his body with one arm. She went willingly, meeting his lips when he took her mouth in a searing kiss. Someone moaned, she had no idea who. She shifted, the scales flowing down her fin and splitting into two legs. She wrapped them around his hips, arching her pelvis until she was pressed flushed against him.

Damon came up behind her, surrounding her with his heat, pushing her hair to the side so he had full access to her neck. He bit down on the sensitive tendon there, pressing his teeth deep into her skin. Whimpering, Aella ground her pussy into the slick scales along Pythias' tail. Heat blossomed along her

groin, Pythias shifting his scales just enough to expose his thick shaft. He lifted his tail, supporting her comfortably.

She didn't want to be comfortable. She wanted to be fucked. Fast and furious ... right now.

"Now, please Pythias. Don't make me wait." She bit down into the plump flesh of his lower lip.

He growled, a fierce animalistic sound. The head of his cock bumped her clit, causing her to throw her head back. Damon was there to meet her, capturing her lips with his own, swallowing her gasp when Pythias began to fit his thick length into her. He stretched her, filling her with every inch of his shaft. He rocked his hips in the water, steadily, back and forth. Driving her mad. Aella wound her arms around his shoulders, digging furrows into his back with her nails.

"Fuck, I won't last long, Damon. She's so damn tight I can't stand it."

She whimpered, caught up in her own headlong flight, she needed to come. Her body flushed, so close...

Damon palmed her breasts, squeezing the two globes and adding another sensation to her overloaded senses. He ground himself into her back, the hard press of him insistent against her flesh. He moaned into her mouth, pinching her nipples between thumb and forefinger. His lips moved languidly, so at odds with the rough treatment of her breasts. She gasped, the noise swallowed by Damon.

Pythias kept a firm hold on her hips, keeping her in place for his hard thrusts. She peaked, crying out her orgasm into Damon's mouth, whimpering when she clamped down on Pythias, milking him with her contractions.

Damon and Pythias both cried out, releasing their seed seconds apart. She was held tight between them, held securely in place.

When she was able to think, she realized she still had Pythias' hard shaft inside of her. He hadn't even gone soft. She froze, unable to believe she'd actually had sex with two men she'd just met. Oh, God, Iaha was going to kill her. She winced, her involuntary motion surprising the two men still holding her close. Pythias withdrew, lazily kissing her shoulder, licking along her neck and tonguing Damon's bite mark.

She whimpered again, hating the betraying noise, but wanting more from both of them. Her pussy spasmed, aftershocks running through her. She needed to think. Backing up, she managed to wiggle out of Damon's hold, evading both men while she concentrated and released her tail again. She couldn't look at them, couldn't believe she'd just done that. What was wrong with her? She'd never acted this way before. She didn't have sex on the first date. Technically this couldn't even be called a date, since she'd only met them hours ago.

Oh, gods, she had it bad.

Damon reached out a hand, halting when Phocas threw himself between them. Shaking his head, he butted his nose against Damon's chest twice in rapid succession. She pulled Phocas to her gratefully, hiding behind the small body.

"This isn't over," Pythias growled. "Don't even bother trying to ignore what just happened."

She sniffed, swimming around his large frame. Following Phocas, she ignored the two men, unbearably conscious of their massive presence behind her again. She wasn't a fool, despite what just happened. It was just hormones, lots and lots of yummy hormones that were crying out for more. It didn't change the fact that she knew nothing about them.

Turning the corner, the view in front of her was obstructed at first. The walls of the tunnel turned around on themselves, creating interesting paths normally, but now it was just frustrating.

The view opened up, the crystal clear waters of the Mediterranean showcasing everything within its depths in one terrifying glance.

She screamed, crying out, unable to believe what was in front of her. The passion that was still infusing her limbs abruptly faded. Pythias immediately grabbed her close to his chest, bringing his strong, comforting arms around her. She burrowed back into him, closing her eyes briefly.

"What happened here?" Damon whispered, a thread of rage evident in his voice.

She shook her head, her chest heaving within Pythias' hold. He was whispering to her, so low she couldn't make out the words. He lifted one hand, bringing it up to smooth along her hair, tangling in the red strands.

"Shh, it's okay. It's going to be okay," Damon crooned, coming to block her front. He pressed himself close, trapping his friend's arms between his body and hers.

"It's never going to be okay," she sobbed, unable to get the sight out of her mind. Shaking, she opened her eyes,

Siren's Song [A Siren Sisters Anthology]
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meeting the concern in Damon's gaze head on. His face was blurry until she blinked away the tears filling her vision. Sniffing once, she straightened her shoulders, looking behind him to the devastation.

Over a dozen bodies floated within the small cavern, the dead seals laid out in their watery grave.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Chapter Four

Damon snarled, his gaze moving past the diminutive figure in his arms to land on his closest friend.

This can't be happening. Pythias' furious voice rang out inside his head.

The sea god was right, Linos must be back. We have to stop him this time, Pyth.

I know that! Pythias tightened his hold on Aella.

The two men had her bound between them, refusing to let go. Damon would never forget the sight of her face when she spied the seals. These were more than her friends. They were her charges, her children. He would have given anything to spare her that.

Damon had never expected the depth of his emotions when he was first shown an image of Aella. She'd called to him, even through the mirror. He knew he would have her, from his first glimpse of her mischievous face.

Her nose was pert, tilted up at the end ever so slightly over wide, full lips. Her eyes really defined her, though. They were as bright and open as the wide seas, a greenish blue that hinted at untold depths. She couldn't hide her emotions there; they were plain for anyone to see.

I felt the same, Damon. She is meant to be ours. After all these years, we have been blessed. I won't let anything stop us from claiming what is ours.

He studied Pythias, considering the other man. They'd been together for centuries, since they were children. They'd

been through a lot in the long years they'd been together, and nothing and no one would ever get between them. It was only fitting that they would share a mate. They would have it no other way.

Pythias nodded, silently confirming Damon's thoughts.

Aella stirred between them. "I-I have to contact my father. I don't know what to do. What do I do?" She sounded so uncertain, so fragile. So unlike the beguiling sprite she'd been when they first met.

He met her gaze, staring into her watery green eyes. The tender skin around the orbs was red and blotchy—her nose too, had a spot of red—but she'd never been more beautiful in his eyes.

She closed her eyes, furrowing her brow. He noticed she hadn't moved from their embrace, and a fierce pride filled him, despite the horrible surroundings. She was still clinging to them. She hadn't denied them outright.

Within moments, she shook her head, the frustration evident in her gaze. "He isn't answering me."

He closed his own eyes, reaching inside himself for his connection to Poseidon.

Poseidon? Your youngest needs you now. Please answer her call. Linos has returned. It is as you feared.

Tensing, Damon waited for the god to answer him.

Nothing.

What was going on?

"He's not answering me either. Something is definitely blocking our communication."

Aella tensed, wriggling out from between them. Pythias frowned, but Damon nodded for his friend to let her go easily. He didn't want to overwhelm her.

"What exactly do you mean, you can't contact him? Why would you be contacting my father? Who are you?"

Pyth growled. "Don't you think it's a little late for questions? You know who we are, our history isn't as important as the essence of what you already know. You're backing away from us and I won't allow it."

Damon shook his head, rolling his eyes at Pyth. Great, like that wasn't guaranteed to put her back up.

What would you have me do? I won't let her refuse our bond.

I know, Pyth, but she still needs time to figure out her feelings. She's young.

She's old enough, so don't even try to make excuses for her. She knows what she's feeling. She's just scared and wants to ignore it.

"Enough! I know you're talking to each other and you can stop that right now. I won't have you treating me like a child by leaving me out of whatever discussion is going on. Either you include me or you can just march your tails down that cave and disappear. I won't be ignored."

Aella had her hands on her hips, her coppery green tail swishing madly. She was churning up the sea around her, and if they hadn't been immortal—and immune, thanks to Poseidon—they'd definitely be affected by her siren voice. She was unbelievably appealing with her eyes snapping fire at them.

He tried to reach for her again, chuckling when she evaded his outstretched arms. "We weren't trying to exclude you, we are just used to talking to each other. We've never had another to concern ourselves with. Forgive us?"

She sniffed, obviously trying to hold on to her anger. Turning her back to them, she stopped when she was faced with the bodies in the water. Pythias swam up behind her, pulling her into his arms once more. She let him, leaning back into his embrace.

Damon smiled his thanks, turning his attention to the figures. Swimming closer to them, he studied the bodies. They'd obviously been poisoned by some means, they were pale and their soft fur was muted in color, as if the very life had been drained from them. What could cause such a thing?

I don't know how he did it, but it had to be Linos. You know it as well as I. Pythias met his gaze over Aella's head.

I know it. We have to tell her.

Damon sighed. This wasn't going to be easy.

"We have to leave them here, Aella. I'm sorry for even suggesting such a thing, but we don't know if the poison originated in the water or in their food. We should get out of here until we can contact your father to collect their bodies and send their spirits on."

She nodded, meeting his gaze briefly. Phocas approached her once more, rubbing his head against her belly. She raised one hand to run it along the side of the small seal. The other two survivors came close, pushing in to butt against her.

With a last, longing glance, Aella motioned the seals to move forward. It was in silence that they retraced their path,

coming once more to the juncture where they'd first met. Aella continued on to the opening, sliding her body through.

Exchanging pained glances with Pythias, Damon approached the opening, squeezing his larger frame through the cave entrance. His shoulders scraped against the rock wall but he refrained from commenting. Pythias followed him out, cursing quietly.

She did that on purpose. Pythias snarled in his mind.
Probably.

Damon glanced up to where she'd surfaced above them. The seals bobbed in the sea beside her, staying close. He flicked his tail, cutting powerfully through the water, emerging beside her to study the island in front of them.

Pythias slicked back his hair, running his hands along the chestnut strands. "Is it a coincidence that you make your home at the Siren Rocks?"

"What do you think? Father gets a kick out of it. Said he loved it when our older sisters used to crash the ships here by singing sailors to their deaths. All except for Odysseus, but he's another story for another day." Aella studied them both, flicking her gaze back and forth. "Is it time for that explanation?"

"I don't believe we have any other option. You need to know what's going on here." Damon nodded to Pythias, motioning for him to swim to the small craft anchored nearby. The words *Whirlwind* were printed on the side in bold, blocky letters. He snorted. It was an apt description for the small siren beside him.

Pythias shifted his tail into strong legs once more, lifting himself out of the water and into the boat. Reaching down to grab the hand Aella held up, he hauled her up beside him. Damon quickly shifted his own tail, surging up to land on the deck.

Aella moved around, picking up towels and throwing them at the two men. He gazed out over the water, watching for nearby boats. They were alone for now, but he knew there was no telling when another craft would approach. It wasn't exactly empty water around here. It was a miracle that Aella had never been seen by a human while in the waters before now. She took entirely too many risks swimming as a mermaid so close to shore. The residents of Foca on the mainland of Turkey were always out fishing in these parts and the tourists flocked to the beautiful waters almost year round.

He reluctantly wrapped the towel around his waist, sitting down on one of the bench seats. Pythias sprawled beside him, unashamedly nude, placing his own towel on the seat to his left. Aella perched across from them, wrapped shoulder to calf in a thick terry cloth robe. Damon had an insane urge to rip it off her body, but they had a few things that needed to be taken care of first.

Rolling his shoulders, he tried to figure out where to start. As usual, Pythias grew tired of the wait, and forged ahead. He'd always been the more impatient of the two. Damon had always preferred to think things through before acting, looking at it from all angles.

Pythias had a different way.

"We believe that one of our common enemies has set his sights on you. We feared that he might be after you and that is why we're here. It's—"

"Pythias, perhaps we should start at the beginning."
Damon shook his head, studying the confused expression on Aella's face. She nodded, twisting her hands in her lap.

Damon took a deep breath. This was going to be hard for her to believe, but she was the daughter of Poseidon after all. She would have to be open minded to be able to deal with learning she was a mermaid and the daughter of a Greek god. This wasn't all that different. "Have you ever heard the legend of Damon and Pythias?"

"Is that a joke?" Aella frowned, wrinkling her nose. Damn, they'd been blessed with her. She was adorable, although she'd probably hurt him if he actually said that out loud.

Get to the story, and stop mooning after our mate. Pythias snorted, his amusement evident.

"Please," Damon said. "I'm serious."

She sighed, rolling her eyes. "There was a story told back in the day, when the majority of people actually believed in my father, about two men called Damon and Pythias. Everyone's heard the legend."

"Humor me. Tell me what you've heard."

"Let me guess, you two were named after the men and you were destined to be as good of friends as them?"

"Aella, unless you want to be turned over my knee, would you just tell the story."

Her eyes widened and her gaze fell to his lap. Licking her bottom lip, she definitely looked interested. He swallowed his

groan, shifting to relieve the sudden pressure of his towel. Glancing to the side, he noticed Pyth had a similar problem, although his hard on wasn't hidden by the folds of a towel. No, it was jutting proudly in front of him. Damon grinned wickedly, meeting his friend's gaze.

"Uh, right," Aella stammered. "The legend. Umm, Damon and Pythias were friends. They did something to anger Dionysius the first in Syracuse. He was apparently so angry that he sentenced one of them to death. I can never remember which one it was. Anyway, the man asked to be allowed to return home to say goodbye to his family and Dionysius only let him go when the other friend asked to be held in his place. He told them both that if the one didn't return by a certain time, his friend would be put to death instead.

"Anyway, the appointed time came and went, and Dionysius was furious. He was about to kill the friend when the first man suddenly appeared at the last minute. He'd been stopped on the way—depending on who's telling the story it's always a different reason for why he was stopped—but he had only just made it back. He'd practically gone through hell to get back in time to save his friend. The story goes that Dionysius was so touched by the lengths the two friends went to try and save each other that he let them both go."

"Close, but not quite what actually happened." Pythias lowered his head, studying the floor.

The gentle lapping of the waves against the hull of the boat, coupled with the sweet tones of Aella's voice, had

almost made Damon become lost in his memories of that time. He'd been prepared to die for Pyth. He still was.

"I was the one sentenced to die, and Damon was the one who asked to be kept in my place while I returned home. But, the legend doesn't tell the whole tale. Dionysius had a man on his council at the time, a man who went by the name Linos. Linos was fascinated by power and he desperately wanted as much as he could accumulate. Damon and I weren't powerful men in Syracuse but we had friends in high places.

"We grew up on the shores, and fished in the waters around Syracuse for many years. When we were young men we chose to pray to Poseidon since he had always blessed us with good catches in our nets. We traveled to the closest temple, the sanctuary of Poseidon on the Isthmus of Corinth, to give sacrifice to the sea god."

Aella leaned forward, absorbed in the tale. Damon's gaze was drawn to the gap in her robe and the shadows within. Another few inches and he'd be able to see the creamy globe of her breast.

Shaking his head, Damon took up Pythias' story. "We came home exuberant. We'd gone to the temple and come back renewed men, dedicated to Poseidon. When we reached the shores, Linos was waiting for us. It appeared that Dionysius has promised Syracuse to Zeus in order to help him defeat the Carthaginians, and so he was angry with us for turning to Poseidon instead. When Linos confronted us, he tried to have his men take us into custody. Pythias struck out, hitting one of the men in defense.

"Linos had Pythias arrested, and sentenced to die. I begged to take his place. Pythias was the faster sailor and I knew if I stalled for time, he'd be able to return to Isthmus and beg Poseidon to intervene. It was our only hope. Linos somehow got word of what we planned and he set out after Pythias, attacking him at sea."

Pythias shifted in place, distracting Damon. His friend smiled wryly, placing his hand on Damon's forearm.

"I was almost killed. With my ship sinking around me, I cried out for the sea god to save me, not for myself, but so that I could return to Syracuse and save Damon. I didn't want him to die in my place. Your father saw fit to save me that day and returned me to Syracuse in time to save Damon. When Dionysius learned that I had been saved by the sea god, he let us both go, afraid of angering him further. We were cast out instead, unable to return to our land again."

Damon shared a haunted look with his friend, both men reliving the events.

"What we didn't realize," Damon continued, "was that Zeus was furious that he'd been thwarted, and Linos was none-too-happy that he'd been unsuccessful in killing Pythias. Linos paid him tribute, promised his services in whatever way the god wanted him. Zeus offered Linos immortality in exchange for extracting his revenge on Poseidon."

Aella held up her hand, stopping them. "I don't understand, you're saying that Zeus tried to harm my father?"

"We were eventually followed by Linos. With Zeus' aid, Linos was able to penetrate Poseidon's protection at the

temple at Isthmus, and he attacked us. Zeus had given him a weapon, a spear that threw true, even if the person wielding it lacked the skills to use it. Linos wasn't a fighter. He shouldn't have been able to defeat us both. Poseidon was too late to detect the threat, and Linos mortally wounded us both. We would have died if your father hadn't intervened once more. He swore that Linos would try again, and so he changed us into what we are now."

"What are you, exactly, now?"

"We are the protectors of Isthmus, and we are warriors dedicated to Poseidon and all that belongs to him. He's changed many humans into merpeople before, we had heard the stories, and we gladly accepted what he offered."

Aella stood up, pacing. Damon held his breath. He had a feeling that he knew what was coming, but he still flinched when she exploded.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Chapter Five

"All that belongs to him? My father sent you to me? This was all part of your duty? And what, fucking one of the daughters of Poseidon was just a benefit of the job?"

Aella dragged in deep, gulping breaths of salty air. She felt lightheaded.

So stupid!

She'd been torn up inside over her instant attraction to the two men, even in the midst of her seals dying, and they'd only been doing their job.

Apparently, her father trusted her less than she thought. She couldn't believe he'd sent men after her. To protect her?

This wasn't fair. Just once, she wanted a man who wanted her for herself, not because of who her father was. No wonder they hadn't been afraid to stand up to her and put her in her place, they probably outranked her in the damn hierarchy among those dedicated to her father. She was half-human, even if she was the daughter of Poseidon, but these were ancients who had served her father for centuries. Yep, they definitely outranked her.

Gods be damned!

"Why would this Linos be after me? I really don't understand why he'd attack my seals. His fight is with you, not me."

She turned, pacing from one end of the small boat to the other. The sky around them was darkening, the sun almost set. It made the surrounding almost surreal, casting a dark

gloom over all of them. Damon and Pythias' faces were shadowed, making it hard to see their expressions.

Damon shifted in place, brining her attention to him. The white towel stood out against his swarthy skin. At least he'd bothered to put it on. She was desperately trying to keep her gaze from going to Pythias beside him. All that glorious flesh on display was distracting her. She couldn't afford to be distracted right now.

Damon met her gaze, standing up before her. He towered over her, and she had to tilt her head back to keep him in view. It was a mistake. Pythias immediately surged up to her side, grabbing her around her waist with one strong arm. He pulled her close to them, Damon surrounding her on the other side.

It was stupid to try to get away, but that didn't stop her from bucking in Pythias' hold.

"Stay still," he growled, bending low to whisper the words in her ear. His hot breath wafted along the sensitive skin of her neck, causing her to shiver.

The betraying movement didn't go unnoticed. Damon crowded her on her other side, bending his own head to nuzzle her cheek, bringing up one hand to smooth along her back.

Aella whimpered, straining in their hold.

"Your father suspected that Linos would try something different this time. He received word from one of his people that Linos had been spotted near this area. We don't know what he's doing here. He's managed to escape us for centuries, with Zeus' aid. It makes no sense that he would

come here. If he were acting on his own, he would come after Pythias and I, or attempt to approach the sea god himself. Our home is on Isthmus, far from here and everyone knows the sea god can hide in any waters. Poseidon was worried for you, he didn't want you to catch Linos' attention but he feared you would rush headlong into danger if he told you about the man close to your home."

Aella frowned, listening to the smooth tenor of Damon's voice. He seemed to be the diplomat between the two men, the more levelheaded one.

"You make it sound like I'm an idiot, acting without thinking first. I do have a brain inside my head, you know."

She tried to infuse a note of calm in her voice. She felt anything but at the moment, but she really didn't want to sound like she was sulking. She wasn't sulking, she was just ... thinking about things.

Aella bit her bottom lip, terrified for a moment that she may have been pouting.

Pythias groaned, leaning down to run his tongue along the seam of her lips. She parted them without thought, giving him the access he seemed to want. Without any hesitation at all, he thrust his tongue into her mouth, clouding her mind with the taste of him. She was going to go crazy if she wasn't careful. These two men got to her faster than anyone else ever had.

Releasing her slowly, Pythias drew back. Damon immediately surged in to take his place, slanting his mouth over hers. He pulled away to bite gently into her lower lip,

placing his teeth where her own had been only moments before.

Words hovered at the edge of her mind, a conversation taking place close enough that she could almost hear it. With a mental push, she followed the link, connecting to the two men.

Gods, Pyth, she tastes like heaven.

How would you know? You've never even seen the Elysian Fields.

Aella reared back, away from Damon.

What just happened? She'd connected with them. She'd never connected with another person outside of her father and sisters. Not even with some of the other gods. Oh, she knew Iaha could, and Adara could probably talk to more people than Aella, but she had never really attempted it before.

"I heard you," she gasped.

Damon frowned. "What are you talking about?"

"Just now, I heard you talking. About the Elysian Fields. How is that even possible?"

Studying her, Pythias narrowed his eyes. *Can you hear this?*

Suddenly she was reminded of that stupid commercial that annoyed the hell out of her. *Can you hear me now?*

She snorted. "I heard you. Loud and clear. What's going on?"

"Have you never been able to connect to anyone outside your family before?" Damon looked intrigued at the thought.

"Never. I've only ever wanted to talk to father and my sisters. I've hardly said two words to some of the other gods with my mind. I never saw the need to do it before."

"Hmmm, interesting."

"What's that supposed to mean?"

Damon shrugged. "Nothing. I just find it interesting that so many things have come together over the past day. It almost seems like divine intervention." He looked at Pythias.

Aella turned her head from one man to the other. They both had similar expressions on their faces. "You think my father had something to do with this?"

"Poseidon has hundreds of followers at his disposal, yet he sent us to you when he could have sent someone else. Yes, Linos is after us, but he didn't send us to track Linos, he sent us to watch you. I don't like thinking he manipulated us in some way."

You think he noticed how affected we were by her image?
Pythias' voice was contemplative.

Aella swung toward him, catching the betraying thought. "My image?"

Pythias shook his head, sighing. "We were shown an image of you in Poseidon's mirror when he first brought up the subject. He mentioned that Linos had finally returned to the area, after escaping him for so long. He was suspicious that something else was afoot, so he asked us to investigate."

"That still doesn't explain why he went after my seals."

"Maybe it wasn't an attack against you. Yes, you're their keeper, but the Monk seals have always been favored animals of Poseidon. You said it yourself. They were placed under your

father's protection centuries ago. Maybe this was an attack to show Poseidon that nothing that belongs to him is safe. Your presence was probably just an added bonus. If he meant you harm, Linos would have attacked you directly."

Damon laughed, "I wouldn't put anything past Linos but he was never really all that smart. He's a born follower, always has been. He needs someone pulling his strings in order to feel useful. He may crave power, but it's always been the power that comes from being an advisor to someone even more powerful, the feeling that he controls the ruler. He may feel that way with Zeus. Lino's probably thinks he's the one in charge."

"He's an idiot if he thinks he's controlling Zeus," Aella said. "My uncle doesn't do anything without a reason, and he can be a sneaky bastard. Half the time you don't even realize you've been manipulated until it's too late. Trust me, I've seen him do it more than once."

"That still leaves us with a problem. We need to find Linos, and figure out what he's doing. He must have an ulterior motive for killing the seals, unless it really is as simple as Pythias suggested and he did it to show your father he could."

"So, what do we do now?" Aella looked from one man to the other, blinking up at them.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Chapter Six

Aella stood on the balcony, looking out at the night sky above her. She sent out a prayer to Nyx, asking her relative to protect them until daylight came.

The waves crashed against the land below her, a constant reminder of her heritage. She could never escape it, but then again, she didn't really want to. She'd always felt drawn to the sea, she'd always known who she was. Her mother had come from Ireland years ago to settle along the coast here. She'd met Poseidon, fallen for him, and lain with him for a single night. She knew who he was, although she couldn't explain it to herself at the time. Even years later, when she'd asked her mother how she knew he was a god, she couldn't answer.

Aella shook her head, drawing her mind from the past. It was called the past for a reason. She needed to focus on the here and now. There was something brewing, and she didn't like it one bit. Still reeling from the discovery that she couldn't contact her family, Aella wasn't sure what her next move was supposed to be.

The two men hadn't shared their thoughts with her on that subject. When she asked them what they were supposed to do now, it had been Damon who suggested retiring for the night. She'd brought them to her home on the outskirts of Foca, not knowing what else to do. They needed to sleep, rest for the coming battle.

And there definitely was a battle looming. She didn't like the sound of what had happened to them in their youth. Never mind the fact that they literally worked for her father, but they obviously were on Zeus' bad side. You didn't want to get in the way of the god when he was angry. Yeah, it was possible to defeat him temporarily, but he was the supreme ruler for a reason. She didn't even want to know what would happen if he lost control of Olympus. Life as she knew it would be over, and chaos would more than likely reign again.

Chaos was the primordial mass from which the first gods had emerged at the beginning of time. Without Zeus, what would happen to the Olympians?

Who was this Linos and what exactly did he have planned? She wasn't as eager to dismiss him as Pythias and Damon appeared to be. They may think he was simply following the orders of her uncle, but she had her own doubts. She wasn't going to blindly follow along and let him slip through and harm one of her men.

Her men.

She sighed, leaning on the railing overlooking the sea. They were her men, despite everything that had happened. They may be working for her father—and she'd definitely take that up with him when she saw him again—but they did something to her.

It wasn't merely about sex, either. She wasn't sure what it was. But, for the first time in her life she was leaning on someone other than her father and sisters. These two men had her trust, completely and utterly. She trusted them to guide them through this mess.

She still couldn't get over the way they'd acted when they found her seals. They were probably only doing their job, but she felt safe around them.

Father? Please, I need you to talk to me. I'm not mad about you sending Damon and Pythias to me. But I need you here. The seals have been attacked. You always swore to me that you would interfere if they were harmed. Please talk to me?

"He's still not answering?"

Aella turned her head, watching Damon move toward her. He'd finally dressed when they arrived at her home, pulling on a pair of loose cotton trousers. His chest was bare, and so were his feet. Black strands framed his face, escaping from the tie in his hair.

He leaned against the railing to her left, looking out to the sea.

"Where's Pythias?"

"What? Not content with just my company?" Damon softened the words with a slight smile.

Aella blushed, turning to hide her face. Moist breath fanned against her cheek before Damon pressed a chaste kiss to her skin. He lingered, inhaling her scent, breathing deeply.

She turned in his embrace, curling her body into his larger frame. She wasn't going to fight her feelings anymore. She was confused enough as it was without making things even more complicated.

They did something to her, made her feel in a way she had never thought she would feel. Gods, she couldn't stop

thinking about their hands on her body, their mouths moving down her skin. Learning her, possessing her.

Aella shivered.

"Cold?"

She shook her head, burrowing her face into his wide chest.

"Ah, then you must be hot?" He chuckled darkly.

Placing a kiss against his chest an inch above his nipple, Aella gave him his answer. His nipple beaded, puckering. He groaned.

Without warning, he picked her up, striding toward her room inside the house. She wound her arms around his neck, letting him lead. Placing her lips against his skin, she let her tongue trace the vein throbbing there.

She was lowered to the bed, placed carefully in the center. She wasn't even jarred. Aella sprawled, tilting her head to watch him under lowered lids. Damon stood beside the bed, studying her.

Not content to just lie there waiting, Aella slowly brought up her hand, toying with the top button on her tunic. She teased him, drawing it out as she carefully unbuttoned first one, then two of the small circles. His gaze followed her movement, his nostrils flaring. A muscle ticked at the side of his mouth, and her lips curved with pleasure.

When she had four buttons undone, she reached in, stroking her fingers, whisper-soft, against her breast. Letting the material fall to the side, she revealed her actions to him, running the pad of one finger around and around her areole.

A throaty growl sounded in the doorway, pulling her attention away from Damon beside her. Pythias was watching her intently, his dark gaze devouring her. He was still gloriously nude, oblivious to any discomfort she might have had in the presence of his muscular body.

She decided to tease them both, see how far she could push this.

Unhurriedly, she released the remaining buttons, allowing her shirt to fall open carelessly. Arching her back, she showed her breasts to them, daring them to come closer. When they remained in place, she simply smiled.

Closing her eyes, she brought her other hand down, sliding it around the waistband of her loose trousers. Pulling on the drawstring to give her more room, she then let her fingers slip under the material.

Bare skin greeted her questing hand. Tilting her hips, she let her fingers touch the wetness between her thighs, allowing a small moan to escape her throat. It was answered by another throaty growl, this time a hell of a lot closer. She had to fight to keep her eyes closed. She knew what she was doing, and she wouldn't be the first to break.

Inserting the tip of her index finger up to the first knuckle, she fucked herself slowly, moving her hips in a gentle rhythm. Her pussy spasmed, the need almost unbearable. She needed something more.

Hands were suddenly on her ankles, holding her in place. They were firm but they weren't hurting her. She kept her eyes closed, even when he started to gather the material of her pants, pulling them down her legs. She lifted her hips

again, letting the parting material reveal her actions to their gazes.

She had no idea where he threw her trousers, but the hands suddenly returned, smoothing along her calves, touching the tender skin behind her knees. Without her sight, her other senses were even more finely tuned. His callused palms were raspy against her smooth skin, alighting every nerve ending he came across.

She had no idea which one of them touched her, but suddenly his partner was at her head, plunging his own hands into her hair. She inhaled, scenting the salty brine of the ocean, coupled with the slightest hint of Notus, the south wind that brought the wild autumn storms. Pythias.

"Open your eyes, sweets." Even his voice was wild, hungry.

Aella complied, meeting Pythias' penetrating gaze. He jerked his head, and she followed his gaze to Damon, patiently waiting below them. He had his eyes locked to her hand between her thighs, his own hands smoothing above her knees. Damon moved between her legs, his wide shoulders just brushing her ankles.

She parted her legs, giving him more room. He looked up with a wicked glint, running his palms even closer to her now still hand. She couldn't tear her gaze away, helped in part by the strong hold Pythias had in her hair. It was just enough to remind her of his presence beside the bed, but wasn't quite enough to call her attention away from Damon between her thighs. She mewled, arching her hips.

"Please..."

"Not yet," Pythias replied. She rolled her eyes up, studying him for a moment. With a frown, Pythias directed her gaze back to Damon.

"Now, watch."

He didn't have to tell her twice. Panting now, she turned back to Damon, watching as he slowly—so fucking slowly—brought his left hand up beside hers. Drawing her hand away, he sucked her fingers into his mouth, enveloping them within the moist cavern. He nipped her fingers, soothing the sting with his tongue, ensuring he got every last taste of her.

Aella squirmed beneath him.

"Please, Damon. I need..."

Damon grinned, leaning forward to blow a puff of air against her sensitive flesh. Her pussy spasmed again, almost painfully. She cried out, trying to clench her thighs. He stopped her with a firm grip on either thigh, holding her open to his gaze.

"Please!"

Now, Damon. Give her what she wants. Pythias' voice was a demanding presence in her mind.

Damon looked up above her head, smiling wickedly at Pythias. Holding the other man's gaze, Damon lowered his face, sliding his tongue along her slit. She bucked in his grip, straining to get closer. Harsh pants and gasps filled the room, accompanied by the sounds of Damon feasting on her. His mouth was magical, his tongue finding every secret sensitive bit of flesh between her thighs. He circled her clit with the tip of his tongue, drawing it into his mouth to suck hard.

"Oh, gods ... please ... I-I, oh, Damon..."

She tried to toss her head, hampered by Pythias' strong hold. Rolling her eyes, she pleaded with him. He released her suddenly, sliding onto the bed beside her. The movement placed his cock inches from her face. She stretched her neck, nuzzling the hard shaft with the side of her cheek.

Pythias grabbed her hair again, fisting the red strands with one hand. His mouth was open, deep, gulping breaths escaping him.

"Suck me, Princess. Please."

She complied readily, bucking into Damon's mouth even as she took Pythias within her own. The burst of flavor on her tongue instantly went to her head. He tasted of the sea, salty and powerful.

She moaned around his cock, running her tongue along the edge at the top of his thick shaft. She tried to take more of him within her mouth, but she could only take so much without choking. He was too thick. Not that she was complaining. She had loved the feel of that heavy shaft inside her earlier.

Instead, she suckled just the tip, tilting her head so that she could watch his face. It wouldn't be a comfortable position for long, but she was hoping she wouldn't have to wait long before she got the taste of him she was hoping for.

Damon surged above her, pushing her thighs up and holding her in place. His cock brushed against her quivering flesh and she gasped around Pythias. He reacted by tightening his hold on her hair, bucking into her mouth before he got himself under control again.

They were all hanging onto their control by a thread. It would only take a single movement and she would lose herself in these men. She wasn't sure if she should fear it or embrace it with everything in her.

Damon slowly pushed into her, fitting their bodies together. Aella tossed her head, Pyth's cock slipping from her mouth. She cried out, overwhelmed by the sensations.

Every nerve in her body was on fire, all centered on the quivering flesh between her legs. Damon's cock was massive, stretching her body, straining the walls of her sex. She gasped, unable to move until his pelvis bumped into hers.

Pythias tapped the head of his cock against her lips.

"Please, Princess."

She opened her lips, licking the drop of precome that was weeping from his slit. Swallowing, she licked along the head, moving down the shaft.

Damon groaned, tucking his head against the side of her face, drawing deep breaths.

"Gods, you feel good. Tight and wet. I'm not going to last long."

I do remember saying the same thing not a few hours ago. Pythias' smug voice was loud in her head.

Smiling to herself, Aella sucked up the skin at the base of his shaft, bringing up one hand to cup his sac.

Enough talking, boys. Fuck me, now.

Damon snapped his hips, pulling out and driving deep within her. She couldn't concentrate. Gasping for breath, she tossed her head again. Keeping her hand on Pythias, she stroked his shaft, desperate to give him some kind of

pleasure. She didn't want him to be left out. It wouldn't be long before she lost it entirely and she wanted both men with her when she went. She was close...

Pythias' hand joined hers, his thumb running over the hole at the tip of his cock, gathering moisture and slicking it back over his shaft. She gasped, her eyes drawn to the sight.

Damon surged into her again, crying out.

Oh, gods, soon.

Aella tensed, deep contractions starting in her belly. Her pussy clamped down hard on Damon, hampering his powerful strokes. She screamed out her pleasure, tightening her grip on Pythias. He groaned, bending forward, swallowing her cries with his mouth on hers.

She felt the splash of heat on her hand a second before Damon tensed, jerking once more, releasing his seed within her.

Aella let her head drop to the pillow beneath her, sucking weakly at Pyth's tongue. He released her mouth, sitting up. The sounds of hard panting echoed around the room. Damon pulled out, sliding up to lay on his back to her right. Pythias maneuvered her until she was draped across Damon's chest. He followed her down, curling his arms around her and resting his face against her shoulder.

Her brain was muddled, clouded with passion.

What had just happened? She hadn't been expecting that ... that level of intensity.

Sighing, Aella burrowed deeper into Damon. Her throat closed up and her eyes watered. She was suddenly afraid that she couldn't give up these men. They'd touched her deeply.

Siren's Song [A Siren Sisters Anthology]
by Melinda Barron, Midnyte Dupree, Jade Buchanan

But they worked for her father. There was no hope of a future with them. Their duty wasn't to her, and she wouldn't—couldn't—come between them and one of the most powerful gods in the world.

What was she going to do?

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Chapter Seven

"I don't like this at all." Pythias scowled at her, his arms crossed over his burly chest.

"I don't see that we have much of a choice. Do you really want to wait around until Linos decides to move against you? If we strike first, and set him up in a place where we have control, the two of you can defeat him. I know you can."

They were currently sitting in her dining room, having just eaten breakfast. The sun shone in brightly, lighting the room until it seemed like they were outside.

She'd woken early, with the sudden knowledge that she couldn't afford to wait around, growing more and more attached to these two men. The more time she spent with them, the more she fell in love with them, and if that wasn't crazy enough, she didn't know what to do about it.

They would leave her when this was all over. They were promised to Poseidon, and he wasn't likely to give them up so they could spend time with his daughter. No, the only way she could protect her heart was by forging ahead and helping them to defeat Linos.

Her heart clenched in her chest. Linos would pay for what he did to her seals, but she couldn't afford to dwell on them now. Later, when she was past this threat, she'd probably fall apart. She would miss them terribly. They'd been her constant companions in the last decade. Sure, she was close to her sisters, but the seals were her responsibility. They'd

become her children and she wanted to rip the spleen out of the man who murdered them.

Aella shook her head. She wasn't the type of person who normally condoned bloodshed of any sort, she was more apt to believe in the innocence of every creature until proven guilty. But that was before her babies had been harmed.

Phocas and the other two seals were hidden in her private pool at the moment. They hadn't been happy about being taken out of the sea, but she had no choice. The small colony near Foca had been relatively tiny compared to the colonies established elsewhere around the Mediterranean and West Africa. There had been about twenty of them in this area but she still couldn't believe there were only three survivors. This was almost as bad as when 150 seals off North West Africa had died back in 1997. Within a month, almost half of the seals in the area had passed away because of an algae bloom in their territory.

The seals were extremely sensitive to disturbances in the environment. If it wasn't bad enough that they continually got caught in fishermen's nets, causing the fishermen to shoot them despite their protected status, she didn't need some madman coming after them to enact his personal revenge.

"I see her point, Pyth. If we can lure him to a particular spot, we can even the odds a bit and try to ensure we come out the victors here. I don't trust Linos, he's always had something up his sleeve."

Pythias paced in front of them, scowling. *You risk her life by doing this!*

We risk her life by doing nothing.

Aella ignored them, or at least she tried to. They may care about her in some way but it still didn't change the fact that they were beholden to her father. Poseidon wasn't one to let go of his possessions easily. And that's exactly how he'd see the two men. They had served him for millennia, doing his bidding.

Oh, she knew all about the things her father demanded of his warriors. They were all immortals, some of them were even her siblings. They did a number of duties ranging from spying for him, to killing for him.

Some merely protected his sanctuaries, but she had a feeling her father wouldn't have sent untrained men to watch over her. He was a little too protective of her sisters and her for that. No, he'd send men that he knew would be able to meet any threat. It made her respect the two men even more. For Poseidon to trust them with such a task meant he valued them highly. She knew exactly how hard it was to impress her father.

"Fine. I understand the need to do something now. I'm not exactly happy about the idea of waiting to see what his next move is either." Pythias rotated his shoulders, stopping to look at Damon.

She turned to the other man as well. This might have been her plan but she had no idea how to execute it.

"We have to get him into one of the temples. It's the only place I can think of where we might have the advantage. Even if Zeus tries to help him in any way, we'll still have the advantage of home ground. Poseidon would know the instant we stepped onto one of his temples."

"So it wouldn't matter if Zeus is trying to block us from communicating. Even he can't block another god from hearing what goes on inside his own temple. He doesn't have the power to do that." Pythias grinned. "We may just be able to pull this off after all."

Turning to Aella, Pythias lifted her off her feet, causing her to squeal. He planted a smacking kiss on her mouth, before releasing her to walk out of the room. She touched her lips, staring after him.

Damon laughed. "Don't mind him, he gets like this when he's excited about something. He'll be planning strategies all day, going over them and over them until he has every angle worked out."

She glanced at him, looking away. "So, what do we do now?" She was starting to sound like a damn recording, but she had no clue what step to take next. Ask her to look after animals, or where the best place to get bargain shoes in Athens, and she was your girl. Find and dupe an insane immortal? Not so much.

"We figure out which temple is the best location. Your father has his fair share of places where people came to seek him out, but they aren't all appropriate for what we need. The biggest temples are damn tourist attractions today, and it would be almost impossible to stage anything within them without having the police breathing down our necks within minutes.

"No, it will have to be something small, out of the way, unknown to the general population. Any ideas?"

Aella thought about what he was describing. She hadn't been to all the places dedicated to her father. As Damon had said, there were a hell of a lot of them. But she'd done her fair share of exploring when she went through a phase a while back. She had attempted to learn as much as possible about her father so she could discover where she came from. She supposed it wasn't all that different from the way humans studied their genealogy. Granted, it was a lot easier for her to get information on her immortal family, but there were still places that weren't covered in any history book or website dedicated to Greek mythology.

"One. There's a temple not far from here that isn't on any map you'll ever find. Father took me there once when I tried to get him to tell me more about his past. It's no secret that this area is plagued with deep focused earthquakes. More than one has been the cause of some ancient building disappearing or cities lying in ruins. Well, that's what happened here. The temple was hit by an earthquake before your time, and the entire section of land it was sitting on slid into the sea. It had once been one of Poseidon's favorite spots so he preserved it, letting it sink underwater but not letting it decay as it normally would."

"How far away is it?"

"We can swim there in a few hours. I think. I haven't been in a few years, but I know where it is."

Did you get all that, Pyth?

Got it. We leave in an hour. Make sure the Princess is ready.

"I heard that, you ass." Aella scowled, desperate to hide her smile. Pythias' deep laughter rang out from the next room.

"Little eavesdroppers never hear what they want to."

"I can't help listening in when you're broadcasting so loud."

Damon drew her attention back to him. "I don't like leaving the seals unprotected here but we can't bring them with us. Will Phocas and the others be safe?"

Touched that he'd think of her seals, Aella thought about it. "I have my own protections set up around my home. I don't think anyone short of one of the Olympian gods could enter here and destroy anything. I don't want to leave them either, but we don't have much of a choice. I can't think of anywhere we can put them for the moment and I don't even think I could contact anyone to come and look after them."

"What about your sisters? They live nearby, don't they?"

"I already told you I can't reach them."

"You can't reach them through your mind, but that doesn't stop you from trying to reach them with more modern means. Surely even Zeus won't destroy phone lines."

Aella slapped her forehead, feeling immeasurably dumb. Why hadn't she thought of that? She skipped over to the phone against the wall, quickly dialing Iaha's number.

"She should be home. It's not that early, but sometimes she goes out to the water in the mornings, or she may be in town. I can't believe I didn't ... oh, hello? Iaha?" She paused, listening to the recorded greeting that answered her.

Gods be damned phones.

Why did voice messages always sound like someone real had answered? She constantly felt the fool for speaking as if someone had actually picked up. It had happened more than once.

Hanging up the phone without leaving a message, she bit her lip. Shrugging her shoulders, she tried Adara. Dialing her number in Palma, she listened to the rings. Damon came up behind her, massaging her shoulders with his big hands. She nearly purred.

"Adara?"

Aella paused at the masculine voice that picked up.

"Uh, I'm looking for Adara," she said, confused.

"Obviously, she's not here." The man's voice held a hint of contempt. A dial tone sounded in her ear.

"Well that was rude." Aella put down the receiver, frowning.

Kissing the side of her neck, Damon gave her one last pat on her shoulder. "I take it you couldn't get a hold of either sister."

"No, and now I'm even more worried about them. It's probably nothing, but I can't help but think Zeus is meddling again."

"Trust me, if Zeus is meddling, there isn't a whole lot you can do about it. Your sisters are smart, if there is something wrong, I'm sure they can handle themselves. Besides, your father isn't likely to leave them to face his brother alone."

"What if they're trying to reach me? They must be worried by now. I mean, we don't talk all the time, but every once in

awhile we check in with each other. I'm sure one of them must have tried by now."

"What if they're being blocked like we are?"

Aella paused, frozen by the thought. "If they are, then it's even more important that we stop Zeus and Linos."

Pythias returned, throwing a small bundle to Damon. "We should leave now, to make sure we don't tip him off. It won't take long to get to the temple but still, I don't like leaving anything to chance."

She angled her head, trying to see what Damon now held but he turned it away from her. *Hmph.*

Aella led the way down to the shoreline. She would have loved to take her boat partway, but the *Whirlwind* was too noticeable, and if anyone watched them, they'd be able to follow easily. She wasn't sure what powers this Linos had after living for centuries but she figured she would be able to out swim him any day. This was her territory.

Looking around for any surprise visitors in the area—it wasn't unheard of for fishermen to set up nets near her home—Aella quickly shed the robe she had donned this morning. She walked into the waves, quickly moving through them until she was chest deep. Here, she dove under, swimming under the sea and calling forth her tail.

Before long, two powerful shapes shadowed her on either side. They were letting her lead them but Damon and Pythias were definitely in protector mode. There were no smiles or teasing glances being sent her way. They were utterly focused.

Now, why did that serve to make her hot? Gods, she was starting to act like a sex-starved ninny. Absolutely everything was making her wet these days.

Pythias cracked a smile at that, turning to pierce her with smoldering eyes. He'd obviously caught that thought. She ducked her head, embarrassed. His dark chuckle surrounded her for a moment, joined by the smoky tenor of Damon.

I can see things will never get dull around you. Damon whispered to her.

Enough of that. We have a madman to catch. She shot out, flicking her tail and daring them to catch her.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Chapter Eight

Studying the pile of rocks in front of them, Pythias considered the idea that his little Princess was lost.

"I'm not lost, and stop calling me Princess!"

He smiled, turning his head so she couldn't see his amusement. He loved riling her; she was so damn cute when she got agitated. He wouldn't grow tired of her, that was for sure.

Damon looked at him, obviously catching the tail end of his thought. They'd been together for so long that sometimes they didn't even need to communicate in their minds to understand what the other was thinking. Right now, they were both thinking the same thing.

They'd challenge Poseidon himself to stay with Aella. There wasn't anything that could stand in the way of claiming their mate.

Pythias could hardly believe it, but he couldn't imagine a world without her in it. Within a matter of days, she'd squeezed her way into his heart—the gods damned organ that he previously thought only had room for Damon. The love the two men shared was a product of centuries spent together, of trusting only each other through rough times. He sometimes thought he knew Damon better than he knew himself. It was certain that Damon knew *him* better than Pythias did.

Poseidon once accused them of sharing one mind because they so often shared the same opinion. It had been no different when they saw Aella through Poseidon's mirror. He'd

known instantly she would be his and Damon's. He'd known when his body had hardened, his cock stiff enough to drill through solid rock. He'd never been so affected in all his years.

She was different, special, and he wanted her. As stupid as it sounded to a man accustomed to being alone with only Damon for company, he wanted to wake up beside her for eternity.

He wanted to smell the sweet fragrance of her hair, watch the play of emotions across her face, and see the joy as she raced through tunnels chasing after a seal. He wanted to see the rapture on her face as she came for them, over and over again.

He just didn't know how to tell Aella. He wasn't any good at emotional stuff. He usually relied on Damon when it came to talking about the important things. He didn't have the way with words his friend had been born with.

Aella swam back and forth in front of them, studying the rocks. "I know the entrance is around here somewhere. Father buried it so curious divers wouldn't happen upon it by accident."

She tapped her chin, wrinkling her nose in thought. Damon waited patiently, flicking his tail occasionally to stay in place. Pythias angled his neck, trying to relax his tense shoulders.

"Here it is!" Aella crowed with glee, rushing headlong toward a crack set near the bottom of the rocks. Pythias immediately thrust forward, putting his larger body in front of hers. Damon came up behind him, holding Aella by the hips while Pythias explored the crack, studying it.

"Pyth?"

"I don't think anyone's here. It's possible Zeus knows where we're headed but he isn't here yet. Give me a minute, I'll check out the inside. Keep an eye out for trouble."

Not giving them a chance to argue, Pythias wiggled through the small opening. It was just large enough to let his shoulder through. Lucky for him, although he'd had no fear he'd be able to make it in. Poseidon wasn't exactly a small man.

The crack widened up ahead. Squeezing his way through the opening he found himself in crystal clear waters. He swam to the surface, peering at the temple in front of him. It was definitely impressive. Made him remember the old days. It looked almost exactly as it would have centuries ago when it was first built. There was no decay here. Everything was pristine, right down to the burning fires set along the path leading up to the columns. They would guide him right to the central hall of the temple.

Pythias swam toward the columns, shifting his tail for legs to walk up the steps. At the first fire, he bent to one knee.

"Poseidon, watch over us. We are here at your bidding. Protect your daughter within these walls, I pray to you."

He stood up, grabbing the dagger he'd placed at his waist this morning. Glancing around, he studied the surroundings, looking for anything out of the ordinary. He finally shrugged, turning and diving back into the water. In no time, he was back through the crack and motioning for Damon and Aella to follow him in.

They followed him past the columns toward the main hall. It was a windowless, rectangular room set in the very centre. Reaching the doorway, Aella gasped at the sight of her father's massive stone replica. The statue rose up above them, the figure of Poseidon with trident in his hand, positioned as if he would throw the trident at any potential threat.

"I always get a tingle down my spine when I see those. It looks exactly like him," she whispered.

"Not quite. My brother never did throw his trident like that. Too much of a coward to face anyone in battle."

Pythias swung around, facing the figure of Zeus. Damon swore softly, coming beside him and herding Aella back.

"You're not welcome here, Zeus. This is a place of worship. I do believe you're trespassing."

Zeus threw back his head, laughing loudly and shaking the foundation of the temple. "I can go wherever I want. Do you dare to tell *me* what to do?"

All trace of amusement was now gone from his face. He stepped forward, menacingly.

Pythias grabbed his dagger, holding it in front of him.

"Well, well. Looks like the great Damon and Pythias are now the ones without a god to protect them. Where's your precious ruler?" Linos stepped forward, sneering at them.

Pythias' lip curled as she gazed at him. He was a waste of air, small and pale. His hooked nose, and narrow beady eyes were set over a twisted, cocky mouth. Covered by billowing robes, he stepped grandly into the room behind Zeus. The

god must have transported him inside, since he wouldn't have swam in after them.

Pythias wanted dearly to end the man's existence but there were bigger threats in the room. He remained silent, not allowing Linos to bait him.

"What? Can't figure out how to answer me, servant to the sea god? Bet you had enough to say when you found all the dead bodies. That was my idea, by the way. Brilliant, wasn't it? Just the right amount of pathos, but not enough to debilitate you. I bet she cried, didn't she?"

Aella gasped, a small sound full of pain. Damon snarled behind him. Pythias wanted badly to turn around and comfort Aella, but he couldn't take his gaze off Linos. The squirrely man strutted forward, assuming his safety because the god he served was stood nearby.

Fool.

The gods changed allegiances when it suited them. Everyone knew that. To take their protection for granted was beyond foolish.

"Where's your sea god now? I don't see him anywhere, and this all happening in one of his sanctuaries. Tsk, tsk. How sad for you? Perhaps I'll kill his daughter right here in front of his statue, like Zeus took care of her sisters. Must have hurt him, to see his precious half-human children perish and not be able to stop it."

"What are you talking about? My sisters aren't dead. How dare you?"

"Aella, quiet. He's toying with you, don't listen to him," Damon crooned.

Pythias kept his attention on his quarry, studying his moves, his gaze moving from his hands to his sure steps. He'd make a mistake, and Pythias would only have one chance.

"Enough, Linos. You asked to be the one to kill these two and I gave you that. Now, quit wasting my time and get on with it." Zeus yawned, studying his nails.

Linus turned his head to look at his god, exactly the moment Pyth was waiting for. He tensed his legs, moving forward to tackle Linos. He ducked and rolled with the sniveling weasel in his arms, a lightning bolt just barely missing them, crashing into the wall at their back. Rock cracked and smoke billowed around them, hiding and then revealing their surroundings. Zeus' roar shook the room, rumbling the floor beneath them. Ignoring him, Pythias swung hard with his right arm, connecting solidly with Linos' face. The man's head snapped back, blood spurting from his broken nose.

Pythias stood, holding Linos in front of him. He had to practically support the man's full weight, as he couldn't stand on his own.

"If you don't want your servant to die, you'll leave us now." He placed his dagger against Linos' neck, pressing the tip hard into his skin. A drop of blood welled up, joining the river of red that was flowing from his nose.

Zeus faced them, his face mottled with rage.

"You swore you would protect me. You gave me your word. I gave you everything for your protection, my lord god. Please, save me." Linos babbled, trembling in Pythias' hold.

He didn't want to feel sorry for the pitiful creature, but he was seriously pathetic.

Zeus froze, studying them. If it was true and he gave Linos his word of protection, then he'd have to do something to save the man. Pythias was counting on it.

"What would you have me do?" The words were thrust out through gritted teeth.

Pythias didn't hesitate. "Swear the oath of Styx, you will not try to harm us again."

"Do I look like I was born yesterday? I cannot promise something that extreme. You know better, servant to my brother." Zeus sneered at them.

"If you want this to end without bloodshed, you'll swear it." Pythias tightened his hold on Linos, holding the dagger below his trembling chin.

Zeus paused, stroking his own chin. "A century."

"Five."

"Three, my final offer."

"Deal. Now swear to it."

Zeus sighed. "Let the heavens and earth be my witness, and the down-flowing waters of Styx, the greatest and most solemn oath that I myself hold the blessed gods to, I will not try to harm you for three centuries. Happy now?"

Pythias released Linos, pushing him toward the god. "Take your trash and get out of here. Now."

Zeus laughed cruelly. "I tire of him anyway. I saved his life. My word has been upheld. Do what you will." He flashed out of the room, leaving sudden silence in his wake.

"I was only doing his bidding," Linos whined. "I swear it. You have to believe me."

Shaking his head, Pythias considered the sniveling weasel in front of him. He wasn't about to kill a man in front of his bride, she might accept what they were but she was too innocent to be brought into this. He'd have to let the man go, trusting he would leave them alone.

What do you think you're doing? Damon asked him, confusion in his voice. Pythias angled his body, keeping Linos in his line of sight, but able now to see Damon holding Aella close to his chest.

We don't know for sure that he wasn't merely doing the bidding of Zeus. I cannot kill him if he was just a pawn in all of this.

He killed her seals. He made her cry.

Even I won't kill a man just for making Aella cry.

You know this won't end. He's not sane.

Damon, don't ask this of me. I beg you.

Damon paused, nodding his head. *Forgive me, Pyth, I forgot myself. I don't like that he will walk away without any repercussions for his actions.*

"Who said anything about him walking away?"

A bright flash of light entered the room, hitting Linos squarely. The man fried right before their eyes, his expression frozen in fear before his body disintegrated.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Chapter Nine

Aella froze, staring at her father. "What?" She knew she was gaping, but she hadn't expected this turn of events.

"I always hated that whiny little man. Good riddance." Poseidon frowned, lowering his trident.

He turned to Aella, holding open his arms. With a cry of joy, she ran to him, letting him lift her up in a massive bear hug. Leaning back, she studied him.

"Where were you? I tried calling you and calling you, but you wouldn't answer. I can't get a hold of Iaha or Adara either and I just know something's wrong. The seals are dead, that crummy man poisoned them to get back at you for something that happened millennia ago and I've finally found my mates. You won't believe all that's—"

"Breathe, Aella," he interrupted. "I know what's happened."

"How can you possibly know? You haven't even been here."

"Have you forgotten where you're standing? Anything and everything that happens within one of my temples instantly becomes known to me. When you entered, Zeus lost his hold on you and I was able to break the blockage he put in place." Poseidon looked behind her. "It appears you've found my men."

Aella slowly extracted herself from her father's embrace, blushing madly. "Um, yeah."

Pythias appeared on her left, Damon on her right. Both men bowed their heads to Poseidon, remaining silent.

Guess this is all up to me to explain. She bit her lower lip.

We are here with you, do not fear. Damon's voice calmed her and she sent him a grateful smile.

Yeah, we're here with you. Although I'd give anything to be balls deep within you at the moment.

Aella smacked Pythias in the chest, glaring at his smirking face. *My father could have heard that, you moron.*

"You're father did hear that." Poseidon shook his head.

"Kill me now," Aella moaned, burrowing her face in her hands.

"Now, now, you know better than to say things like that in front of a god. I may just take you up on it one of these days if you aren't careful."

"Father," she started. She didn't know how to ask this, or even if it was something the men wanted. But she couldn't let this chance go when he was standing right in front of her. They were his men, but she wanted both Damon and Pythias. She'd risk her father's wrath if it meant being with them. She was in love with the exasperating men.

Her father smiled gently at her. *You don't have to say the words, daughter. I would never refuse your happiness. If you want them, they are free from my service.*

She gasped, unable to form the words.

"My lord god. We have been your loyal men for centuries and I would ask now for a boon." Pythias squared his shoulders, stepping in front of her. She placed her hand on his back, confused.

"Anything you ask will be granted to you." A twinkle appeared in his eye, Poseidon studying the men who looked so serious. What were they doing? Aella stepped back, watching as both Pythias and Damon went down to one knee in front of her father.

"Release us from service. We belong with your daughter, if she will have us." Pythias looked back at her, a hint of vulnerability on his face. She turned her head, bringing her hands up to her face again to touch her heated cheeks. Damon studied her from beside Pythias, a question in his eyes.

Will you be ours?

"Oh, I already am," she cried. Aella stood in place, unable to move for fear that the men were a figment of her imagination, too beautiful to be real.

Pythias grinned broadly, swiveling to look at her father again.

"Granted, my most loyal men. You are free from my service. But, if you harm her in any way, trust that you'll end up like the pile of ash over there that used to be Linos."

Aella laughed, rushing forward to be enveloped by Damon. He lifted her clear off her feet, swinging her around in a circle. When he stopped, Pythias was there, embracing her from behind, both men holding her tight. She breathed deeply, smelling the familiar scent of the ocean coupled with the wild winds that she loved so much. They were hers.

*Always, we'll always be yours. You hold our hearts.
And you hold mine. Both of you.*

We belong together. I knew it from the moment I saw your beautiful face. It has only grown since I've known you. My heart is full.

She sniffed, overcome by the emotion in Pythias' voice.

Hey, I thought you couldn't do the 'emotion crap', as you called it. Way to outshine me, buddy. Damon's voice was full of mirth.

She laughed, peeking past her mates at her father. "I still have one question."

"Shoot."

"Why can't I talk to Iaha or Adara? What's going on with them? Linos' made it sound like—"

Poseidon held out a hand, stopping her. "They are both fine. Iaha and Adara have had their own set of adventures lately. Zeus has been a busy little bee by going after all three of you at once. I had an inkling he might be trying something, so I sent for the best men I could think of to throw in his path." Poseidon preened, obviously proud of himself.

"Are they okay?" She stepped forward and reached for his arm, looking up at him.

"See for yourself."

Poseidon extended his trident, pointing it at the rock wall beside them. A bright flash of light erupted within the room, briefly blinding Aella.

When she could see again, she gasped in surprise.

"Oh, my gods, you're okay!"

She launched herself at Iaha, hugging her sister tightly.

"Hey, what about me?" Adara laughed, coming up to their right and joining the sisterly embrace.

Iaha ran her hand down Aella's arm, smiling. "You two all right?"

Aella nodded, conscious of the two men standing behind her sisters. She wrinkled her nose, studying them. The first man was tall, well built with sandy blond hair. He was frowning, his gaze moving constantly around them. Strangely, he had one hand extended, in a way that was very familiar. He looked like her father right before he was going to attack someone with a bolt.

The other man was stunning. His skin flickered red and black and he stared at them with deep onyx eyes. Demon. He had to be. Obviously these two men thought there was a threat to them within this room.

Aella tensed, stepping away from her sisters and keeping her gaze on the two men. Pythias grabbed her from behind, drawing her into his body, Damon stepping up beside her.

All of a sudden, the testosterone in the room ratcheted up a few notches. Her men were tense, completely still.

"What's going on here?" Adara asked.

Poseidon stepped forward between the two groups, holding out his hands.

"Step down, all of you. There's no threat here."

The demon was the first to move, his skin changing to a more normal human color. She wasn't sure which she liked better. The demon had looked quite impressive before.

You won't be noticing the gods damned demon! Is that clear? Pythias' furious voice sounded like a bell in her head. She winced, glaring at him.

I wasn't thinking of him like that, so you can just stop with the theatrics, big guy.

So that wasn't you thinking he was impressive? Damon's normally calm tone was tight. Gods save her from jealous men. She shook her head, turning her back to her sisters and the men who had appeared with them.

Placing her hands on her hips, she stared down her stupid mates.

"Enough. You know how I feel, and I'm not going to repeat myself every time another male happens to appear in my vicinity. You're both acting like children, afraid their favorite toy is going to be taken from them."

"Aella, what's going on here?" Adara repeated herself, a hint of impatience in her tone.

Aella threw up her hands, staring at her father. "Ask him. This is all his doing."

"You've all had dealings lately with Zeus in one way or another. It seems my brother wanted to test me, by testing my youngest children. He's done it before and he'll definitely do it again. Old goat just can't resist a challenge," he muttered.

"Iaha was thrust into looking for the lost Yumani, Adara happened upon a threat from the demons and Aella had to deal with a skirmish that started in Syracuse millennia ago. The men standing in this room have all mated with one of you. There, that should answer your questions. I must be off. People to see, cities to destroy, women to bed."

Aella blinked, staring at the space her father had occupied only minutes before. She opened her mouth, closed it and then opened it again.

Adara started to laugh. "Well, I really shouldn't be surprised by any of this."

"What happened to Jace?" Aella asked.

"History and I'm much better off without him. Trust me. This is Nalameir, the heir to the underworld and the man I'm in love with." She looked behind her, holding out her hand for the demon to grasp.

Aella waved to him, conscious of her glowering mates beside her. She turned her attention to Iaha.

"This is Shedd. It's a long story, but we got married yesterday."

"It's nice to meet you." Shedd stepped forward, embracing Iaha from behind.

"You got married? And didn't tell us?" Adara gaped at their eldest sister.

"I'm more interested in who the two men are behind you."

"It's a long story." Aella fidgeted.

"I have the time."

"Look, Iaha, uh, it's like father said. I was kind of thrust into something bigger than I could handle. I couldn't reach you two and I really didn't know what else to do. It just kinda happened and—"

"You're babbling, and you still haven't told us who they are."

Shedd was grinning behind Iaha, studying them close.

"Well, I sure am glad we all got out of that safely. Can you believe we all went up against Zeus and we're all still here to boast about it? I mean, not everyone can say the same. Uncle kills way more people than he lets live, believe me. Why, I remember about ten years ago, when that little weasel Heson tried to—"

"Aella! You'd drive an immortal to drink. Spill, now."

Damon grinned. "We're her mates. I'm Damon and this is Pythias."

Aella turned and kicked him in the shin. He grunted as if it hurt, but his laughing eyes told a different story.

Did you have to say that? I was trying to come up with the right words to break it to them.

I don't even want to know why you'd have to break it to them. There's nothing wrong with either one of us. We're warriors of Poseidon. Pythias growled, drawing her into his arms.

Contrite, she raised her hand, smoothing her palm along his cheek.

Of course, there's nothing wrong with you, love. I just didn't know how to tell my sisters I fell in love with two men.

"Wow, go Aella." Adara snickered.

Iaha sputtered, her shoulders shaking with her giggles.

"Leave it to you to do something completely out of the ordinary."

"Me? What about the two of you? Shedd's no human and demon boy isn't exactly the type of guy you meet at a coffee shop. How the gods did we all end up with immortals?"

"Father definitely had a hand in this." Adara smiled up at her mate. "But I don't regret it for a single moment."

Iaha nodded her agreement, turning in Shedd's arms to borrow into his chest.

Aella smiled at them, turning to her own mates. "You're right. I don't regret a single minute since I met the two of you. I love you both."

Damon smiled, wrapping his arms around both her and Pythias. "And I you."

Forever. That's what I promise you both. Pythias rubbed his cheek along her hair.

Aella smiled. *I'll take that, love. Forever.*

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Epilogue

Poseidon smiled to himself, sprawling out on a flat rock beside the sea. It was a beautiful day, the sun was shining and the waters were calm and peaceful. Besides, his three youngest were happy. That would make any father proud.

He turned his thoughts to his own happiness. Which woman was he going to grace with his presence tonight? He'd had a lot of fun with the Yumani women, and he'd given a thought or two to approaching a few of the demons he'd spied. They'd certainly give him a chase worthy of a god. Or maybe a human? He hadn't had a good mortal woman in years. There were a few beauties nearby that he could always coax into his bed.

A flash of light to his left caused him to groan aloud. "What do you want now?"

"This isn't over, brother. You may have won this time but I'll get you back."

Poseidon rolled over, squinting up at the frowning countenance of his brother, Zeus. "Leave my girls alone, this is the last time I'll warn you."

Zeus laughed. "I don't think they need your help, old man. They seemed to have done quite well on their own. Besides they have strong men at their sides. I'll think twice before going up against them again. At least not for another century or two. Let them think they're safe."

With that as his parting shot, Zeus disappeared with a crack of thunder.

"Now I know why my daughters are always complaining when I do that. It's damn annoying." Poseidon turned his thoughts inward, seeking out his daughters.

There was the eldest of the three, beautiful Iaha. She was frolicking in the waves under the moonlit sky. At her side, Shedd laughed, picking her up and twirling her through the water. He threw them into the sea, bright tails of purple and red replacing their human limbs. Poseidon smiled to himself, he'd done the right thing there. Shedd and Iaha fit each other like the proverbial glove. He knew all along they belonged together, and if he did say so himself, he'd done a good job of making sure they found each other in the end.

Sweet Adara was next. Adara lay on her back in the renewing waters of Nal's pool, flicking her tail lazily. Nal lay beside her outside the waters, the two gazing at each other with loving eyes. They had their hands linked, trailing in the water between them. He couldn't be happier that she'd found love with Nalameir, although he was still concerned she would be living in such a hellish place. Poseidon shrugged. It seemed he couldn't stop being a doting father, even when his children grew up.

His little hellion was last. Aella stood on the *Whirlwind*, her hands on her hips and her hair blowing wildly in the wind. She was frowning at the two men in the water in front of her. His men. He sniffed, a fierce pride filling him once more at the thought that his faithful warriors had finally found the happiness they deserved with his little whirlwind. She would lead them a merry chase, but they definitely enjoyed every minute of it. With a smirk, he watched as Damon distracted

Aella. Before she knew what was happening, Pythias surged out of the water, grabbing her around her waist and pulling her into the sea. Her bubble of laughter was the last thing he heard before they swam out of sight.

Poseidon chuckled. His daughters were safe, and they had managed to find the men who complemented them perfectly. He rubbed his hands together, he simply loved when things worked out the way he planned. Now, which of the hundreds of beauties at his disposal was he going to grace with his presence tonight? It was good to be a god.

The End

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