

CIRCE'S CHARMS

Sheri Gilmore

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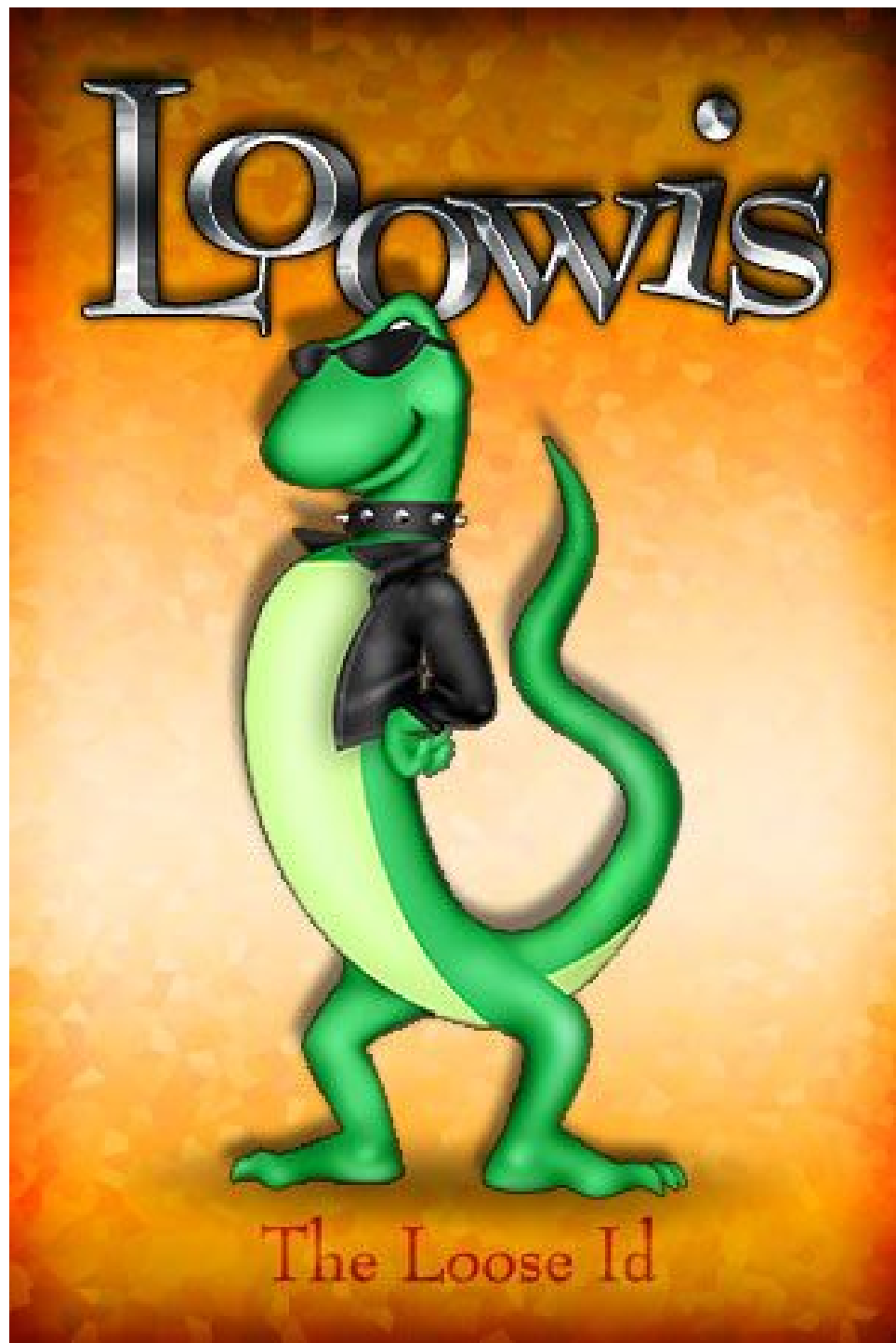
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Secrets Between Pals

“You know she’s sleeping with Mr. Dean in Marketing. They go down to the Ellis Hotel every Tuesday. And when I say ‘go down,’ that is exactly what I mean.”

“You are such a pig, Herman.”

“Why thank you, Penny. Did you know that pigs were considered sacred animals of the goddess thousands of years ago?”

“That has nothing to do with why I’m calling you a pig. How can you gossip about Melanie Jenkins like that? She’s married to a preacher.”

“Preachers and their wives are human, too, my dear.”

“You’re not kidding, are you?” Penny asked with a gasp. She couldn’t believe what her coworker had just told her about their supervisor. “I mean...she looks too...I don’t know...uptight...to be having an affair with Patrick Dean of all people. He’s been through more wives and girlfriends than Henry VIII. How do you know this?”

“Get a few beers in him, and Patrick Dean likes to brag about his sex life.” Herman popped a couple of cashews into his mouth. “You don’t think uptight people have desires and fantasies?”

Penny saw a gleam in his eye and knew immediately he was baiting her. She smiled.

“I think everyone has desires and fantasies, Herman. Some people more so than others. You know that saying, ‘It’s the quiet ones you have to watch out for.’”

“Yes, but I’ve always liked ‘Still waters run deep.’” His deep chuckle indicated he was thinking of some private joke.

Maybe he was. Herman always gave the impression that everyone around him was a star in his personal comedy show where he considered the drama in their lives as spurious, hilarious, trivial pursuits. She’d never seen him upset over anything. He just came in, did his work, cracked a few offbeat jokes that only she ever got, gossiped with her whenever he could, and went home. Wherever that was. Penny had no idea where in Atlanta he lived. No one seemed to know much about him, or what he did outside of work. She’d asked him once, and he’d given her a mysterious, dark smile, but no answer.

She laughed. “Yeah. I’ve always liked that one, too.”

Herman tore a slice of orange loose and offered it to her. A sharp, citrus smell rose around them and juice ran down his fingers.

Penny stared at the trickle, holding back her desire to lick his fingers clean before sucking each one deep into her mouth. It was her secret that she found Herman very, very sexy. Most of the other women, and men come to think of it, in the office shied away from him.

She glanced up sharply from her wayward thoughts, and found Herman studying her with narrowed eyes.

“Thank you.” She accepted the orange slice, popping it into her mouth to ease the odd little silence that had risen between them, not to mention the ache in her clit.

She liked Herman. A lot. But, she had a policy of not getting involved with anyone she worked with, especially when they had black-as-night hair and the deepest brown eyes she’d ever seen. Looking into those eyes was like wading into a dark pool and willingly drowning yourself. She’d drowned too many times with coworkers to allow that to happen again.

Office relationships and sex didn't work for her. She hadn't met anyone yet who wanted to stick around long enough to satisfy the needs that she had. The one person she'd thought she could trust with her sexual appetites had betrayed her and gone off with the proverbial "younger woman."

"So --" He took a bite of orange and leaned closer, resting his chin in the palm of one hand. "What naughty fantasies are you harboring, Penelope?"

Penny felt the heat of a blush spread across her cheeks and glanced down at the pile of orange peel that had gathered on the table between them. She shrugged. "My dreams and fantasies died about six months ago, Herm. I don't have any left."

"Come on, girl, I know you have at least a couple. You're one of the 'quiet ones.'" His voice shifted from playful and teasing at the first of his statement to dark and sensual toward the end. "I bet there are all kinds of perverted desires swimming around behind that angelic face of yours."

Penny glanced up, catching a very primal expression on her friend's face. His eyes were intense and his features were more drawn, as if he struggled to control some emotion inside from escaping. She blinked and sat back, but when she opened her eyes again, all she saw was Herman's teasing smile, encouraging her to open up and tell him her deepest, darkest sins. She opened her mouth to do just that, to tell him about how there was a man in the office that she wanted very much, but was afraid he'd laugh at her for thinking she'd ever interest him sexually.

The bell on the microwave dinged, and with a quick shake of her head she caught herself with a very self-conscious sounding laugh. "Oh, my, my. You'd make a wonderful priest, Herman."

His head went back and he released a long, loud laugh into the confines of the small break room. When he'd finished he asked, "Why do you make that hilarious comparison?"

"Something about you invites a person to spill their guts."

“Hm. But, not take their clothes off, eh?” he asked with a wink.

Penny giggled and felt her blush deepen. This one was temptation personified. *No sleeping with coworkers.*

Aloud she said, “No. ’Fraid not.” He didn’t need to know she was lying. She’d have taken her clothes off for him...if she didn’t work with him.

Herman gave an exaggerated sigh, squeezed her hand, then sat back in his chair. “Ah, well. Can’t win them all.”

Penny watched him rock back onto the two hind legs, crossing his arms behind his head. His crisp, white dress shirt pulled tight across his chest, revealing the shadow of black hair on his chest through the material of the shirt. Normally, she didn’t care for men with hairy chests, but on Herman the hair added to the already primal vibe she always picked up from him. He might wear suits and ties and Italian leather shoes, but the sophistication only added to that animal magnetism he carried around beneath designer clothes.

“Why do you hang around with me?” she asked, impulsively tackling the question she’d always wondered about since he’d begun inviting himself in sharing her lunches and breaks.

The rocking stopped. He cocked his head at the same time one side of his mouth quirked up to the opposite side. Now he looked like a playful boy -- totally bad, but irresistible.

“I see great things in you, Penelope Odis. Like the hero, Odysseus, you are going to go far and accomplish things only a few of these imbeciles in this office can ever dream of. But --”

“You’ve been drinking, Herman.” Penny shook her head and rose, cutting his silly gibberish short. He was always spouting nonsense about gods and goddesses and ancient Greek and Egyptian facts, as if he’d been there and knew them all personally.

Lightning swift, Herman's chair came down and he reached across the table and grabbed her wrists in both his hands, pulling her to him across the table. "-- only if you stop denying yourself what you truly want and get past your fears of the unknown."

With their faces less than an inch apart, his gaze looked unfocused, but his voice sounded normal. Penny only knew that she couldn't move and she didn't dare breathe hard in case she sent him over the edge of whatever madness possessed him at the moment. His fingers bit into her wrists, but she didn't try to pull away. "I promise I don't have any fears, Herman," she whispered.

"You're going to meet a man, Penny." Now, his voice *shifted* between what sounded like a male and a female's voice.

Her heart pounding, Penny tried to laugh, but the sound was strangled. "Every girl's dream, right?"

"Is it?" Herman asked, sounding and looking himself again, but something was still *different* about his demeanor from usual. "Ever thought about trying the girls?"

"Lesbian? Well..." Penny swallowed the knot of nervous energy that rose in her throat. This close she could count Herman's eyelashes. They were so long and thick. *A sin for a guy to have such gorgeous lashes*, she thought, fighting for normalcy. "I've thought about it once or twice." She twisted her wrist, trying to pull away from his intense stare and painful grip.

"And?" Herman tugged her closer with the heat of his question fanning her already hot cheeks. The scent of his sticky fingers teased her nostrils and stung her bruised skin.

Enough was enough. Penny dropped her gaze to his grip with a raised eyebrow, but when he didn't appear to take her subtle hint to release her, she submitted to his questioning. "I've always wanted to do it with a girl, but I've never had the opportunity. Besides I wouldn't know what to do. Women intimidate me. Now let go, please."

He frowned, as if he was considering her response. "I guess sometimes it is hard to know where to look for the things you want to try, but have never done." He released her,

sitting back into his chair. “Women are women. Just like you. All you have to do is do what you’d like done to yourself.”

Watching him resume his consumption of the orange, Penny wondered if she’d just imagined the interlude of madness a few seconds before. Clearing her throat, she eased back into her own chair. “What was all that about meeting a man?”

He shrugged, as if he’d forgotten the tangent he’d gone off on earlier.

“Oh” -- he wiped his fingers on his pants leg -- “this gift certificate came in the mail the other day and I thought of you. I know how you’re always collecting rare books on different subjects. Thought you’d like it. I won’t use it.” He pulled a folded piece of paper from his shirt pocket. “I’ve read most of the books there already.” He offered it to her, saying, “This place is up around Dahlenega. Not in the town square area where all the other arts and crafts shops are located, but off the main track. I hear it’s really cool with all kinds of incense, herbs, candles, and books.”

Before she could respond, he threw the paper onto the table between them with a casual shrug that was so like the Herman she knew and desired.

Penny shook her head, surprised that he’d bothered to think of her at all. The question rose again why he hung around her, but she didn’t repeat it. Instead she reached for the gift certificate that had streaks of juice along the edges. Her hand mere centimeters from the certificate, she heard Herman’s voice shift into that dark and sensual tone he’d used earlier.

“Just beware the witch who dwelleth inside the castle. Whatever gifts are offered during your stay, accept.”

A chill raced along her spine at his strange words. Glancing up, quickly, Penny asked, “What?”

“I’m just the messenger, sweets.” Stuffing his mouth with the last two slices of orange, Herman smiled and winked, but offered nothing further. A second later he frowned and

glanced at his watch, as if he'd drifted off to sleep and just awakened. "Damn, I'm late. I'll see you later."

Penny watched him hurry toward his office and shook her head. "That was too weird."

She glanced at the gift certificate in her hand. "But I'll take the gift that was offered."

Surrounded by Beasts

“Did you send her images of the two of you?” the Trickster asked.

“Not yet,” the Witch said, glancing into the swirling, blue-black waters of her sieve.

“And of us. You must send her images of us with her, too,” the Nymph said, pushing her way between the other two.

“Make sure you masturbate and hold your coming. Make it last as long as you can, building up to an explosive orgasm.” The Trickster turned and paced toward the darkened opening of the window.

The Witch’s sigh disappeared on the night wind blowing through the room. “I know how to do this.”

But the Trickster wasn’t listening. His gaze held a distant expression, as if he viewed another place, another time. “It’s four o’clock in the morning. Talk to her. She’ll be most open to your suggestions, now.” He turned to the Witch with a low, threatening growl that sounded more wolf than human. “Come on, Circe, do it right. Take a bath, get made up, light the candles, use some oil.”

He moved forward, grabbing the Witch's arm and sliding his other hand up to cup her breast. "Talk to her, tell her what you want while you run your hands all over yourself as though you were touching her."

The Nymph echoed the Trickster's words with mimicking motions through the sheer gauzy material of her gown. When her long, elegant fingers reached her clit, she stopped. "Tell her she loves the feel of your hands and the way you are touching her. Get really hot and send every bit of energy you can at her."

Circe jerked her arm free of the divine joker's grip. Shoving his hand away from her body, she said, "In other words, do what you two have done to me in the past."

The Trickster grinned. "But of course. I am nothing if not a great teacher." His smile faded. "Don't forget to yell 'I want you' when you come."

"Have I *not* done this before, people?" Circe's gaze rolled to the ceiling where blood oozed down onto the walls and around the burning containers of herbs and incense, sandalwood and patchouli she had hanging to dry. A lion, crouched low to the floor, circled her feet, licking her outstretched hand in affection for its mistress.

"We're *not* people, Circe. Don't get lost in your hallucinations or their silly human fantasies." The Trickster moved behind her, pressing his lips to the Witch's ear. "Overcome your nighttime fears and remember who you are. Do you want to regret a missed opportunity?"

"You know that I don't, but what if females are not her 'thing'?"

"Then, don't take chances. Take the lead with this. You have the power to transform others and yourself. Use that."

The Nymph wrapped her arms around the Witch's waist. "She needs this to get back on the right track with her life."

The Trickster kissed the Witch's lips. "*We* need this to renew our energies."

Circe returned his kiss and smoothed a hand over the Nymph's golden hair. "I'll need your assistance. This one is stubborn and strong willed."

The Trickster smiled. "Ah...not to worry, my most beautiful Witch. I've got a man on the inside." Kissing Circe's red, inviting mouth, he said, "But you've got to send her our invitation."

* * * * *

Come with me. There's something I want to show you.

The seductive words, one voice, but a mixture of feminine and masculine tones, whispered across the dark, night air. Sheer purple drapes flowed around her.

A gentle, but insistent hand led her farther into the castle, sitting nestled within the woods. The moon peeked in and out of the clouds, casting eerie shadows upon the already frightening landscape of her dreams.

Penny turned to look behind her, but the path she'd traveled was gone, as if the forest had shifted and covered where she'd been before. There was no going back the way she'd come. Realizing she was lost, bile in the form of panic rose within her throat. She'd have to find a new path. *But how?* She didn't know where she was anymore or which way to turn.

Come with me. You're tired and need to rest from your journey and troubles.

Turning away from what was, Penny relaxed into the invisible tug upon her hand. Their footsteps clicked across the stone flooring of the outer protective chambers of the massive stone castle. Leaves and brush scattered across the slick, shiny surface where the moon reflected on and off, like a neon orb, flashing a warning of danger ahead. It was a message she didn't recognize. The one's voice was so musical and seductive, whispering in her ear. She had to follow to where it called her. Besides, how could something so deep and beautiful be harmful? It was like the beat of some primal drum -- someone's heartbeat, rhythmic and mesmerizing, calming to her soul -- urging her to move with it.

Silence engulfed them, hurting her ears with its suddenness, as they entered a secluded room -- a secret, private sanctuary deep within the heart of the castle, away from the noise and bother of the outside world. Penny covered her ears, but invisible hands pushed hers away. Once more the whispered seduction could be heard.

What are you hiding from, Penelope? Let go and all your desires will and can come true. Trust me and let go.

Cold bit into her back and her buttocks, but she didn't mind. Strong hands laid her back onto a gleaming, golden surface. Lips, insistent and firm, kissed her, long and deep. Unlike all the lovers of her past, they didn't treat her as if she were some goddess, one to be feared and worshipped from afar. They recognized her as a woman of the earth, primal and strong. Demanding she give back what she received -- passion.

Penny realized that what she laid upon was the dining table. Their supper scattered to the floor, as he'd lain on top of her, parting the drape of the gown he'd asked her to wear for him -- for them -- and kissing each globe of her breast gently before biting hard around her nipples.

But...she didn't remember eating. And...why couldn't she see this man who made love to her? Kirke was his name.

It's a dream. Glancing at a shadow moving close along the floor, Penny saw one of the numerous swine she'd seen wandering in the yard grunting its way through the remains of the food. Its rough back brushed against her foot, causing her to involuntarily jerk her leg.

The motion sent the last of the wine glasses tumbling to the floor with a crash. In the distance she heard a woman laugh. The Nymph -- *Calypso*.

How did she know that?

Penny tried to reach for the glass, but couldn't move. Kirke had tied her arms above her head, stretched taut with rough corded binds that cut into her wrists.

I'll have bruises tomorrow. The thought didn't bring her any anxiety, and she wondered again if he'd slipped something into her wine to allow her to be so compliant to their demands. She'd not argued or protested any command they'd given her or any demand they'd made. She wanted to obey them with anything and everything they told her to do. There were three of them -- two men and a woman.

Grapes lay scattered around her and between her legs. The motion of the table had sent one rolling between the cheeks of her ass.

Penny shifted her hips to dislodge the offending fruit, but the silken restraints that Hermes had used on her knees and ankles prevented her from even that small measure of freedom.

At the thought of the black-haired herald of mischief and disaster, a black cat jumped onto the table. Grooming itself as if it were preparing for a feast, it eyed her with its green-gold gaze, knowing and wise. As it sauntered nearer, Penny could hear the deep rumble of a purr. Approaching her crotch, it leaned over and licked the inside of her thigh. The rough texture of his tongue radiated along the sensitive nerves beneath her skin. Her breathing increased, and she whispered frantically, trying not to enjoy something so taboo, "No, kitty, no."

Penny closed her eyes with a low moan, feeling the long, black whiskers of the beast tickle her a second later. Her clit tightened in anticipation of what lay ahead in this night that never seemed to end. Time had no meaning, as the tortures and pleasures she'd been shown wove themselves together into an intricate pattern that entangled her deeper and deeper into the web her three hosts continuously spun for her.

And she had no doubt it was for her. Everything they had given and introduced her to had been what she had wanted. What she'd always desired. What better birthday gift could a girl receive?

Thrashing her head from side to side, she fought against all the years of what she'd learned was "bad," and gave in to what she really knew was "good," because it was what she wanted.

A deep chuckle sounded from between her thighs. The tongue that probed the hair of her mound wasn't feline, but human -- warm and moist.

This time she arched into the caress, giving in to her needs.

"That's it. Give it up. Like that, don't you?" a male voice asked. "Yeah. I knew this had to be one of your desires." His hot breath fanned the moisture he'd produced along the lips of her vagina and her clit.

The familiar voice startled her. Jerking her head up and off the table, she barely repressed the scream building in her throat. "What are *you* doing here?"

It was Herman, but not. The eyes were different. He grinned and kissed the inside of her thigh. "You tell me. It's your dream."

He licked the folds between the juncture of her thighs and her mound; her head fell back. "Like it, Penny?"

"Yes, damn you, I like it. In fact, I fucking love it, and you know it." Penny lifted her head again and stared into the same green-gold gaze she'd looked into seconds before. This Herman had transformed again, back into a cat.

The sleek, feline form lay stretched between her legs with his head propped at an angle so humanlike. He studied her with a curious look, his chin cupped on top of his paw. "Why are you angry? We are giving you what you want, aren't we?"

A cat, talking. This had to be a dream. She felt like Alice in Wonderland. She shook her head.

"I know. I'm not angry at you. I'm angry at me for wasting all those years and desires earlier in my life. I'm forty years old, and I have so much I wanted to do with my life."

An enigmatic smile, so like Herman, teased the cat's mouth. "Time is only of consequence if you allow it to be. What was, is now, and what shall be has come before. You can do whatever you want."

Penny's laughter erupted into the quiet of the darkened room. "Oh my God! I'm having a fucking discussion on philosophy with a cat, who is really my coworker, while he's in the middle of licking my pussy." Laughing until tears poured from her eyes, she turned her head and glanced down the length of her body at him. "It's finally happened. I'm insane."

The cat's smile grew wider. Leaning forward, he whispered into her moist curls, "Why not discuss philosophy with me? Philosophy is the study of life, is it not? Everything we do and are, including this, has to do with *life*, and living it. You're not insane. Yet."

Her fingers curled into fists above her head. Straining against the cords that held her, she so wanted to grab his black head and force him to eat her. Hard, instead of the little nip here and there that he was teasing her with.

In the distance a bear roared and a monkey screamed -- the bizarre jungle sounds blending with the sound of waves crashing along the seashore. But how could that be when they were in the mountains north of Atlanta, hundreds of miles from the ocean?

"Is any of this real?" she asked.

A female-male voice from the shadowy corner of the room answered, "What is *real*, Penelope?"

It was the voice that had led her to this strange place where time held no sway. Penny didn't know how long she'd been here, and she didn't care. Every desire she had ever dreamed of was given to her -- food, wine, sex. She didn't want to leave.

"Then stay as long as you need to."

Had she spoken aloud? Opening her eyes, she registered a tall man emerging into the dim, flickering candlelight that surrounded her on the table at the same time she felt Herman's cat teeth bite her clit.

She screamed, drawing her knees together, but unable. The pain flowed through her, and a thin sheen of sweat broke across her skin. A blond nymph she'd seen laughing and running through the woods knelt beside her, smoothing a cool, slender hand over her brow and into her hair. "Shh...relax into the pain and let it transform into pleasure." Her lips, cool as her hand, covered Penny's mouth.

Penny twisted her face away from the other woman, but forced her muscles to relax, jerking slightly as the pain slowly ebbed into something different, something exquisite. Warmth spread from her tortured clit through her abdomen into her chest. Her toes tingled, and the climax that erupted had her screaming Herman's name over and over.

The nymph kissed her forehead, cheeks, and mouth gently, as she whispered, "That's it. That's good. Let it out, Penny. Don't hold back with us. Give us everything you've got to give, and we'll set you free."

"Free from what?" Managing to open her eyes through a haze of residual pleasure, Penny saw Herman, in cat form, sitting curled on the blonde's lap and licking his paws.

The two turned toward her and answered as one. "From yourself, of course."

Before the sands of sleep took her, Penny shuddered, admitting she'd enjoyed Calypso's caress and kiss as much as she'd enjoyed Herman's.

Birthday Wishes

“Good morning, Atlanta! Rise and shine. The time is six forty-two.”

“Ugh!” Penny pounded the Off button on the clock radio -- once, twice -- before the irritating voice of the announcer shut up. “It’s too freakin’ early for perky people.”

Ring-ring. Ring-ring.

Penny snatched the phone from the charger on the nightstand. “Who the hell...? Mom!”

Speaking of too perky. Pulling the covers over her head, Penny prevented her sweet, Southern belle of a mother from hearing the expletive that now muffled into a mound of cotton and polyester.

“Happy fortieth birthday to you! Happy fortieth birthday to you! Happy fortieth birthday, dear Penneeeeeee! Happy fortieth birthday to you!”

Penny’s gaze rolled to the ceiling, as she shook her head. Plastering a smile on her face so her mother couldn’t hear the irritation in her voice, she said, “Thank you for that wonderful reminder I’ve hit the big four-oh, Mother.”

“Oh, you’re welcome, sweetheart. What are you doing on this special day?”

"Trying to sleep." Penny punched the pillow behind her into a more comfortable mound to rest her back.

"Penelope Odis. It is too beautiful a day for you to be lying around in bed, wasting all that sunshine outside."

"Well, considering I get up every day at five o'clock for eight hours of work, I thought I'd treat myself to a nice sleep-in before moving to the sofa and lounging around in my sweatpants without any makeup or panty hose all day. That would be the perfect birthday present in my book."

"Tsk-tsk-tsk. Darling, you've got to get out more. Make some friends. Just because you're divorced doesn't mean you have to forego life. I know Neal was a bad experience for you and ruined your life, but you've got to move on."

"I had hoped not to think about my ex-husband today, Mom." But, her mother wasn't listening to her, as usual.

"I've got a surprise for your birthday."

Penny barely bit a new groan back. Her lip throbbed with the effort and tears welled up into her eyes. "W-what could it possibly be, Mom? I'm almost too...excited...to ask." *Scared* would be more like it. The last "surprise" her mother had given her had been a blind date with her mother's preacher. Talk about disasters.

"Well, I know how you love bookstores and springtime."

Penny sat up higher in the bed, her interest piqued. "Yeah?"

"I always notice you perusing those hardcover books they have marked 'Rare,' but you never buy any of them."

"That's because they are *rare* and they cost more than I make in two weeks worth of work."

"Well, that's my gift, honey. I want you to wake up and go out on this beautiful, glorious spring day and pick out the book of your dreams. No worries with the cost. It's your

birthday, and the gas, food, book, and anything else you want to enjoy while you're out and about is on me. What do you say?"

Penny realized her mouth was open and closed it quickly. "Why...thank you, Mother. That's an excellent birthday present for me. Would you like to go with me?"

"Oh, no, sweetheart. I'm having lunch with Henry -- I mean, my preacher, Reverend Smith."

Ewww. Another bite to her lip. Penny winced, but managed a few choked words. "I'm sure you and he will have a wonderful meal, Mom."

"Oh, dear me, yes. He's such a treat to be with. Don't know why you said you two don't have anything in common. Now, you have yourself a wonderful day, playing in your bookstores, you hear?"

"Thanks again, Mom. I will. I promise." A faint whiff of sandalwood and patchouli circled around her, and Penny lifted her head and sniffed as she placed the phone back into the charger. Where was that aroma coming from?

She glanced around her bedroom. "Um, that smells great." But, for the life of her she couldn't find where the scent emanated. She shrugged and threw back the bedcovers. The sharp cold of the wood floor wakened her further. Padding over to her closet, she opened the doors and stared at her clothes.

"What to wear, what to wear...ah yes...my new black jeans and the red, black, and turquoise sweater." Pulling the sweater up under her chin, she looked at herself in the mirror, liking the way the turquoise brought out the green-blue of her eyes while the darker tones of black and red gave some much needed color to her pale cheeks.

"You really need to go to the tanning bed, girl," she told her reflection. "You are way too white, even if Herman says you have skin like alabaster."

Thinking of her coworker brought the memory of the gift certificate he'd given her the other day to the front of her mind. "Hey...I could go up to that bookstore and check it out."

She padded over to her purse and rummaged through it until she found what she was looking for.

“Half price off everything in stock.” She laughed, as she read the ticket. “All right. This works out perfect. Mom’s generous gift and Herman’s gift certificate. I’ll use them together.”

Twirling toward the bed, she placed her choice of clothing on the end before heading to the shower. Her reflection came into view again. This time she winked at herself. “We’re going to have so much fun today. I can feel it. I refuse to think I’m old and life stops at forty.” She sighed. “I just don’t know exactly where to go, or what to do to keep that life exciting.”

Herman’s lean face framed by dark hair rose in her mind, but was quickly overlaid by that of a black cat coiled on the lap of a blonde-haired woman.

Penny shook her head and frowned, wondering why Herman featured with a cat and a blonde Penny didn’t know.

A fragment of her dream sprang forward. “I’d forgotten about her.” Suddenly her joyful mood dampened with the echoes of her nightmare.

She shook her head. “Forget that. It was just a dream. I’m going to see some of the country and the mountains and won’t have to worry about strange dreams and nympho blonds.”

Again, faint whiffs of sandalwood and patchouli rose around her. She crinkled her nose at the pleasant aroma and perked up. “While I’m there, I’ll get some herbal tea and smell those wonderful books!”

Why not make a weekend of it? The soothing androgynous voice from the night wove itself through her thoughts. She frowned, remembering a quaint cabin nestled in a deep grove of trees on the mountainside that she hadn’t visited in years. “Wonder if it’s still there?”

She smiled. Even if it wasn’t, there were plenty more in the area. She’d wait to make reservations and see how she felt when she got up there. It couldn’t be that difficult to locate.

Feeling lighthearted once again, she skipped across her room into the bathroom.

Shipwrecked

Glancing out her window, long shadows from the surrounding trees and mountains crisscrossed their way across the road and her windshield, casting a flickering type of light against her vision.

She hadn't seen any traffic for the last fifteen minutes of her winding up, down, and around the mountain roads leading away from Dahlonega and the area of land she knew.

"I shouldn't have stopped at the chocolate factory." It had been there in the town square with the other antique and crafts shops. She'd resisted all of them, but she could never resist the chocolate factory whenever she visited the little town forty miles north of Atlanta. She'd stayed longer than she'd intended, as the long shadows wavering across her vision testified.

Herman's hand drawn map lay sprawled on the seat next to her, but she'd already studied it a million times when she'd left the town. Maybe she should have taken him up on his offer to come with her. Of course, he'd been teasing. No way could he have been serious about spending the weekend in the country with her.

When she'd laughed at his offer, he'd winked at her. "Oh, well, have fun. You've had a recent oil change and your spare is aired?"

Penny had assured him that she had everything she needed for a small weekend journey.

Coming back from her memories, she pounded the steering wheel with the palm of her hand. She should have arrived at the bookstore by now.

With a sudden lurch to the left, the steering wheel jerked out of her hands. *Tha-thump, tha-thump, tha-thump.*

“What the heck?” She grabbed the steering wheel as she swerved into the other lane. Hitting the brakes, she guided the car over to the side of the narrow, mountain road as far as she could pull off without tumbling over the edge of the cliff.

The car at a stop, she pulled the emergency brake. With a sigh of relief that she hadn’t been going any faster than she had, Penny climbed out and surveyed her tires.

On the far right passenger side the tire lay tattered beneath the rim. “Jesus.”

Walking to the trunk, she lifted the hatch of the floorboard. The spare was gone.

“Fuck!” She stamped her foot against the ground. She’d forgotten to get it repaired after that last nail she’d picked up.

Glancing at her watch, the deserted road, and the waning daylight, she sighed at her narrowed options. “So much for an enjoyable, relaxing birthday perusing old books and drinking herbal tea.”

She pulled her coat around her shoulders, zipping the front against the onset of the cold, late afternoon air. It always amazed her how much cooler it was up in the mountains than around Atlanta in late spring. She didn’t really want to spend the night out here, but if she had to, she thought she’d be warm enough.

Reaching into the glove box, she pulled out her emergency flashlight and stuffed it into the coat pocket that wasn’t occupied. Maybe she could find an inhabited cabin close by that had a phone.

"That works, dammit!" She removed her phone and shook it. But, it still read, "No Service," like it had ever since she'd arrived in Dahlonga. "I'm going to really research wireless services when I get back to the city. For the amount I pay every month, I should get service, even if I were stranded on top of Mt. Olympus."

A deep rumble, like thunder, sounded in the distance. *Zeus's calling card*, she thought. Thunder sounded again, louder this time.

"Just kidding." Giving a short laugh, Penny didn't like the uneasiness that suddenly wrapped its fearful fingers around her. The hair on the back of her neck stood erect, but she resisted the temptation to rub her neck. Taking a deep breath, she glanced as casually as possible around her.

Shrubbery, rocks, trees, and the screech of a hawk, circling overhead, but other than that, she saw or heard nothing out of the ordinary. Still, the impression that someone was watching her lingered. Pulling her coat tight by crossing her arms, she walked quickly down the winding road that she'd traveled. At least she was going --

"Ahhhhhh!"

-- downhill!

Loosened rock crashed around her, as she tumbled over and over down the incline. Twigs and branches of brush and trees scratched and stabbed into her clothing and skin. The ripping sound of material blended with her screams, as she kept falling, falling from the path that she'd been following.

Thump. At last she hit a leveled area and stopped tumbling. The wind knocked out of her lungs, Penny lay there, trying to breathe. Dust settled over her face, hair, and clothing; she sneezed, then winced from a stabbing pain in her ribs. Vaguely she wondered if she'd broken a rib or worse, her leg.

Moving gently, she experimented with each limb, and when she'd reached her neck, decided she was only badly bruised and scratched from the ordeal. Her gaze darted over the unfamiliar surroundings. Penny groaned.

Her aches and pains weren't the worst of her worries. While she'd been "frolicking" on the hillside, darkness had settled. She may as well be on a deserted island. "I don't have a clue where I am" -- she turned her head in each direction -- "or which way to go to reach Dahlonga or Atlanta."

Groping her coat for her cell phone, her fingers went through what was left of the pocket. That must have been the ripping sound she remembered hearing on her way downhill.

"Just fucking great. How do I get out of here?" She pulled several twigs and leaves out of her hair and threw them into the darkness.

A scream sounded in the near distance -- nonhuman and ferocious to her ears.

She froze with her hand extended in midthrow. Her heartbeat accelerated and her breathing quickened. "Stay calm. It's more afraid of you than you are of it."

Right! Who was she kidding? She was petrified. Closing her eyes she forced herself to take deep, steadying breaths instead of running, screaming into the night. It wouldn't help the situation if she allowed pandemonium to reign.

The image of the god Pan rose in her mind's eye with his naked half-human, half-goat torso, running wild through the woods with his pipes, attracting nymphs and humans alike into following him. "Well, if you're anywhere around, how about leading me out of this mess?" she asked, half joking and half serious.

Struggling to her feet, Penny realized one of her shoes was missing. "Can this day get any worse?"

The earlier animal scream sounded closer followed by another animal's snarl. Visions of lions, wolves, and bears danced through her mind.

"Sorry I asked," she said, scrambling in her other coat pocket for the flashlight. Her fingers brushed the cool metal cylinder and she gave a sigh of relief that she hadn't lost her only source of light. Flicking its beam back and forth across the area around her, she discovered her shoe. "Thank goodness." She hobbled over to it and pulled it on.

The laces tied tight, she scanned the light's beam along the ground and found a faint trail leading slightly across and down the mountainside. Reaching out, she grabbed a substantial-looking stick. Gripping it tightly in her right hand while she held the flashlight in her left, she set off along the overgrown trail, not sure where it would lead her, but knowing she couldn't stay where she was, unprotected from whatever dangers threatened her in the night.

* * * * *

After what seemed like hours of stumbling and trudging up and down the uneven path, Penny leaned against a large boulder, trying to catch her breath. Her throat was dry and aching, but she didn't have anything to moisten the dehydrated membranes. She wiped strands of stray hair out of her eyes, then stopped. "Music."

Pushing away from her support, she cocked her head first to the left, then to the right, straining to hear again what she was sure she'd heard a few seconds before.

"There!" It was coming further down the path to her left. She shone her flashlight in that direction, but couldn't see anything except the brush directly in the path of its beam.

Switching the light off, she strained her vision to focus in the darkness in case whoever was singing had a campfire, or lanterns operating.

Finally, a glimmer of light peeked through the dense brush and trees. Penny squinted to focus on the thin thread of light, like reddish orange wisps of smoke rising in the darkness. The faint strands of a haunting melody carried across the night wind to her ears, and she closed her eyes on the beautiful notes emerging from the darkness, calling to her. She wasn't

lost any longer. She had found refuge from the unknown imagined horrors that surrounded her. The glimmer of light flickered and waned.

Afraid she'd lose her chance, Penny stepped off the uneven path into the brush. "Hello? Is anyone there?"

The whisper of wings fluttered around her, as she pushed her way through the tangled shrubs and tree limbs. Stopping every few feet, she would make sure she could still see the light that guided her. "Can you hear me? I'm lost and I need your help."

Pebbles scattered above her to her right. She stopped and quickly stepped back, pressing her body as close as possible against the boulder at her back. Remembered news stories of landslides in the mountains, trapping and crushing people to their deaths, raced through her mind. She swallowed the scream that wanted to escape her throat.

"Who are you?" a male voice asked from the direction of the pebbles. "Where did you come from?"

Penny glanced up into the darkness, but couldn't see anything except the outline of a figure against the night sky. He was large and appeared as a giant the way he was standing above her, looking down at her as if he were some god. Penny gulped, but answered, "My name is Penny Odis. I'm from Atlanta...Buckhead, actually. I was visiting Dahlonga today and I turned wrong or something, and my car had a flat, and I fell down this ravine, and these beasts were growling and screaming after me...and now I'm lost."

A deep chuckle sounded from the man. "On the verge of hysteria, too."

Staring up into the darkness, Penny put her hands on her hips. "I am not! Look, if you don't want to help me, that's fine. I'll find my own way home."

Turning to go, she heard and felt him jump. Landing behind her, the impact of his weight against the stone shook the ground.

Amazed at how quickly he had moved, she stepped back. One second he was above her, now he was down on her level where she could talk to him, face to face. Or, as close to

that as the campfire he had going would allow. The flames cast shimmering shadows across the big man's face, making him appear half red, half black, like some demon.

He stepped closer and leaned his face to her. "Which way are you going to go?"

This close she could see his eyes, nose, and mouth -- all wickedly carved into the most handsome of features framed by dark red hair that hung around and down his shoulders and back. Her lips parted to respond, but no words would come out. Her gaze darted in all directions, but she didn't have a clue what was north, south, east, or west. Everything looked the same.

The expression on his face gentled. He reached out a long, roughened finger and traced along her jaw. The frisson of electricity Penny experienced forced her to suck her breath in hard with a hiss.

"Cat got your tongue?" he asked. "Of course, he'll probably have more than that before it's over and done, won't he?"

Penny blinked, coming out of whatever hypnotic spell he'd put her under. "What are you talking about?"

Her rescuer smiled and shrugged. "If I help you, what will you give me, Penny 'from Atlanta... Buckhead, actually'?"

Not missing what he was suggesting, the heat of a blush spread across her chest and up her neck. She had been near hysteria at the thought he'd leave her here to fend for herself, but she'd be damned if she was going to give into it when this guy was demanding: a payment of sex if he helped her. She lifted her chin and met his narrowed gaze. "That's extortion, mister."

His smile widened to show the edges of his teeth, and he stepped closer. "Is it, now? I rather thought it was just two adults sharing a few pleasures while they passed a cold, lonely night together in the wilderness."

The heat of his body scorched her through her coat and clothing.

“W-what else would you take in way of payment?” She stepped back, but there wasn’t anywhere else to go. A wall of stone cut into her already bruised flesh.

Placing his hands on either side of the stone, he laughed. “Nothing else.” His head blocked the firelight, as he moved his mouth close to hers.

“No.” She put her hands out and pushed him, but he didn’t move. “I don’t sleep with strange men.”

The smile vanished, and his body pressed fully against hers at the same time a large hand wrapped into her tangled hair. Pulling her head back, his lips were only centimeters from hers. “I think you’ll change your mind once you kiss me.”

Hot breath fanned her lips and cheeks. Penny closed her eyes at the waves of desire that washed over her, like his breath. Her clit quivered and she wished he’d go ahead and kiss her. Kiss her and fuck her right there against that wall. It didn’t matter she didn’t know his name, or that she’d just met him. Her fingers clenched around the material of his shirt. She’d been alone for so long.

The smell and feel of him engulfed her.

A whimper of need escaped her throat and she wanted to die at the show of her weakness. How embarrassing for someone to know how alone you were and how much you needed to be touched. “Kiss me,” she said, not caring he was a stranger, and she was in a strange environment, far away from her everyday life.

“Is that all you want to give me for my assistance?” he asked.

She shook her head, trying to clear the mesmerizing feel of his touch from her system. “I can give you money --”

He made a scoffing sound with his mouth and nose, as he moved away from her. “Keep your gold, Princess. I don’t need it.”

Panic rose within her at the thought she’d offended him and he would leave her out here alone. “Wait! Please... I don’t have anything else to offer you.”

When he turned back toward her there was a new light in his eyes. His gaze scorched her from head to toe, devouring every inch of her body, like the flames from the fire behind him. "Oh, you know that you do. You offered your mouth a few seconds ago." He crossed his arms over his chest and gave her a nod. "Let's see what's beneath that rag of a coat you're wearing."

Her skin tingled hot and cold. She knew exactly what he was demanding. While she should have more pride, Penny couldn't deny that she wanted to give him exactly what he was asking. It'd been a long time since she'd had sex with a good-looking man. This one was more striking than most she usually met.

Her fingers fumbled with the zip of the coat, but she managed to get it undone. A kiss would've led to this anyway, she told herself, justifying her actions.

Staring at the ground, she shrugged her shoulders and heard and felt the material fall down her body around her feet. The cold of the night bit through the thin fabric of her sweater. Her nipples stiffened in response, but she didn't try to cover her breasts. The sight of the man in front of her tracing her body with his gaze had her paralyzed. She could feel each flicker of his pupil against her skin, like a caress. His gaze finally met hers and he said through lips that barely moved, "Take the rest off."

Penny closed her eyes and swallowed, wondering for the briefest of seconds if she knew what she was getting into. Her arms crossed as she caught the edge of the sweater with both her hands and lifted.

The cold rushed in; she hesitated with her elbows blocking her view of him. "I don't even know your name."

"Kirke," he said, closer to her.

Penny gasped, as he pulled the sweater the rest of the way over her head and dropped it to the side on the ground.

Strong, warm hands circled her waist, pulling her to him, before one palm splayed flat against the small of her back. His other hand moved up beneath her hair at her neck. His fingers touched her jaw, as he angled her head.

She knew he was about to kiss her. Her heartbeat accelerated.

“Like the witch,” he whispered against her mouth.

Penny stiffened, remembering Herman’s warning, *Beware the witch*, but she couldn’t protest because Kirke’s mouth touched her own, taking her breath and any protest she might have voiced.

Softly, he traced her lips with his tongue, sending quivers of electricity shooting into her womb.

Gasping, she clutched his arms, digging her fingernails into his skin. “Wait.”

“This is what you promised to give in payment for my help, isn’t it?” he asked, barely moving his lips from hers. When he spoke, each word was turned into a caress.

“Yes,” Penny said with a groan. Her grip tightened, and she pulled him closer, keeping her eyes open and covering his mouth with her own. She wanted to watch his reaction.

A shaft of surprise hit as she stared into his gaze, burning with a fire that sizzled all the way to her feet. Fighting her self-consciousness, Penny nibbled and kissed his lips, teasing between his with her tongue.

Not allowing her to take control, Kirke pulled her hair hard, forcing her head back from him. A low groan emitted from his chest before his mouth came down hard over hers, pressing his lips against hers in a bruising crush.

Penny struggled against the show of dominance and his hold lightened. The firm lips gentled and he coaxed her lips apart with his tongue, sliding further into her mouth to tangle with her tongue in a teasing play that mimicked two people fucking.

On reflex, her eyes closed. The skin between her legs grew damp. Sliding her arms up, she encircled his neck and leaned into the heat of his body.

His hands slid down, wrapping around her waist. He pulled her to him hard, bringing his cock into full contact with her belly.

"Umm. I like that," she said, pulling her lips from his.

With a quick movement of his arm and hands, he turned her, and she found herself facing the fire with Kirke's luscious cock nestled in the small of her back and his arms wrapped around her waist, hugging her tightly to him and caressing the underside of her breasts.

Penny's head leaned back into his touch. Raising her arms up around his neck from this angle forced her breasts out and her ass to curve up.

His hand slid down to the waist of her jeans. Unsnapping and unzipping her pants, he shoved the denim from her hips along with her panties.

Penny never released her hold on him, as Kirke did what he wanted to her -- biting her neck, pinching her nipples, massaging her breasts, or massaging one breast while one hand explored her cunt and clit. The whole time she stared, mesmerized into the flames of the fire, lost to the sensations of pleasure Kirke created within her.

She found herself on her knees, grunting in pain as the rocky surface cut into the palms of her hands and the skin of her knees.

Behind her, Kirke's tongue circled and suckled her asshole, rimming her until her anus quivered with need for more stimulation than his tongue could provide.

She lowered her head to her hands, offering her ass to him.

"As you wish, Princess. It will be my pleasure."

A long, wet finger probed the opening of her anus.

Her muscles automatically clamped firmly around the intruder. A stab of pain had Penny crying out.

"Breathe deep and push against my finger."

“Okay.” She did what he instructed in between pants of desire. Sweat gathered between her breasts and along her back.

This time his finger slid all the way in.

Penny’s head came back, and her hair splayed like the cords of a whip across her back at the full sensation in her rectum. She’d always liked this position, but had never been able to convince her partners to fuck her hard enough to make it worth the effort.

“Fuck me.”

There was no hesitation from the man behind her. Quickly, he pulled his finger from her body.

Penny turned her head where she could watch him between her legs, as he slathered his cock with saliva. Her anus quivered in anticipation and her pussy dripped with her desire.

When he moved back toward her, she reangled her head, and wiggled her ass. “Do it.”

“Impatient, aren’t we?”

“Yes. Please, just do it. I need --”

Hands grabbed her hips and pulled her back, as his cock buried into her ass. “Push down.” His order grated through what sounded like gritted teeth.

Her muscles gave and Kirke’s cock filled the space where his finger had been previous seconds before. Penny screamed with the pain and pleasure, like one of the wild animals, as Kirke’s cock pumped into her ass. His hand tangled into her hair, pulling her head back. He kissed her, as he fucked her, hard and fast, taking what he wanted, but giving her what she needed in return.

And, all the while, the animals called and howled around them throughout the woods, their eyes glinting silver and gold in the darkness from the reflected light of the fire.

Kirke’s voice growled into her ear. “Scream again, Penelope. Howl like the wolves. Transform yourself and be an animal for me.”

And, she did. Throwing her head back, she released a howl that coalesced into a screaming orgasm. Her body shook and twisted with the intensity of her climax, and she surely was changing shape and form from the pain and ecstasy she experienced. Through the sweat that poured into her eyes, she blinked, seeing what looked like fur and claws emerging from her arms and hands. She screamed again, this time in horror of the hallucination and delirium that must be overtaking her, as her body changed form.

Sweat combined with blood to sting the scratches caused by the rocks and Kirke's teeth. The sticky-sweet feel and smell of Kirke's cum covered her body when he finally found his release within and on her. All around them the air was charged with the electricity of sex.

Like any dominant animal, he'd marked her as his own.

* * * * *

"Wake up, Penny. It's time to go home."

"Hm?" Penny lifted her head, fighting to focus in the darkness around them. "What?"

Her body rocked forward, then back with Kirke's effort to lift her in his arms.

"Where are we going?" she asked with a yawn. Unable to keep her eyes open, she listened to his breathing and the sound of his footsteps along the pathway -- crunching rock and leaves. Night birds called out in eerie succession, almost as if they were guiding Kirke to his destination.

"You will stay with me until we can get someone to tow and repair your car."

"But...I have to leave tomorrow. I've got work on Monday."

"Shh. Don't worry about those things. You need to rest before you return home. You've had a difficult journey."

They entered a clearing and Penny opened her eyes. Before them stood a magnificent palace of creamy marble, glinting in the moonlight.

“Beautiful,” she said, softly, almost to herself.

All around the beasts from the forest crept up the steps into the castle, glancing back at Kirke and crouching low to the ground as he and Penny passed them.

“Thank you. It and all that is within is yours for your use and pleasure, while you are here.”

Sleep crowded into her mind. Allowing her head to drop back to his shoulder, Penny sighed. “Like a princess in a fairy tale.”

All in the Family

A shaft of light teased her eyelids. Squinting and blinking against the brightness that filtered through a crack between the shade and the wall, Penny pulled the blanket farther over her head. It was too early to get up. Kirke had just allowed her to go to sleep.

Kirke! Penny sat up in the bed, clutching the bedcovers to her breasts. Breasts that still tingled and ached from the pleasurably painful abuse Kirke had subjected them to all night long. Once had not been enough to satisfy him. No sooner had he given her one orgasm, he was starting on the next round of biting, kissing, sucking, and fucking.

Penny squirmed, rubbing her ass against the silken sheets. Her breasts weren't the only things aching and tender on her body. The heat in her cheeks reminded her of just what she'd allowed him to get away with doing to her. When she had protested out of shyness, he had been prompt in reminding her that her body was payment for whatever he wanted or needed to use.

"Quit fighting me and relax. Let it happen. Be an animal for me. It's going to happen whether you cooperate or not."

"That's rape," she said.

"It's never rape in my bed, love. All who come to me are willing participants. It takes more persuasion with some than others with certain activities, that's all. I have to get them to let go of their fears so they can enjoy all the pleasures I can offer."

"Do you sleep with men, too?" she asked, amazed that the thought of Kirke with another man turned her on.

"Many, many times." He kissed her belly, licking spiral patterns around her naval and causing her abdominal muscles to tighten and quiver. "Do you sleep with women?"

"No. I'm not a lesbian." Again, flashes of her conversation with Herman sprang to mind.

"Your answer was a bit hasty." Kirke smiled against her skin, biting before continuing. "We'll have to remedy that before you leave my little domain."

This morning in the light of day, Penny covered her eyes and flopped back onto the pillows. "I can't believe I did all that."

"It's amazing what we can do when we let go of our inhibitions and allow our true selves to come through, isn't it?"

With a yelp, Penny sat up again. "I didn't hear you come in."

Kirke stood just inside the doorway, leaning against the wall. "You were busy with your thoughts."

He walked toward the bed slowly. Their gazes locked, reliving memories of the night before.

When he reached the bed, he climbed on top, crawling to her. "Was there one or two in particular you'd like to revisit?"

Penny pulled the covers higher, just beneath her chin. "I don't think so. I need to get back to Atlanta."

"Buckhead."

"Um...yes. Buckhead." She tried to smile, but couldn't. It had been a long time since she'd had to deal with the morning after a one-night stand.

When he reached out and stroked her cheek, her eyes closed and she leaned into his caress. His touch was magic, mesmerizing. She could lie there in his bed forever, as long as he stroked and kissed her like that.

"Did you complete your business in Dahlonga yesterday?"

His question shook her out of her reverie. "Oh. No. I came to visit your shop for a book, actually. A friend of mine from work gave me a coupon."

"Then before you leave, you must complete your quest." He kissed her mouth, biting harder on her bottom lip when the kiss was complete.

Penny whimpered and dropped the bedclothes. Moving closer to him to ease the pressure he exerted, she knew better than to fight. He'd done this several times the night before and she'd learned that it meant he wanted her to come to him.

When she had moved completely from beneath the sheets, Kirke placed his hands on either side of her hips, guiding her onto his lap and releasing her.

"Unzip my pants and take my cock out," he said, licking and sucking her swollen lip.

"Kirke --"

He silenced her with a quick dip of his head, latching onto her nipple with his teeth.

Her head went back and she couldn't do anything but ride the wave of pleasure mingled with pain, as he brought her close to climax. Her pussy throbbed from the excitement he created in her breast. Her fingernails dug into his upper arms, then released with the rhythm of his sucking. Penny arched her hips, rubbing her clit back and forth on his thigh. "Oh, please stop. I can't take anymore."

He released her nipple and pulled her head back with a firm grip on her hair. "Then take my cock into that dripping hot pussy of yours and ride me like I taught you last night."

They stared at each other for several seconds. She wanted to rebel against the authority he'd assumed over her, but one look at his face told her he'd not relinquish his hold of her easily. She lowered her gaze; he released her hair.

His long body stretched the length of the bed, as he put both hands behind his head.

Penny's lips drew together. The way his head was angled, looking down, he looked like some kind of god. She unzipped his pants and leaned down to take him into her mouth.

Two centimeters from his cock, he cupped her chin and lifted her face toward him. "Don't you like fucking me, Penny?"

She didn't hesitate. "Yes."

"Then enjoy what we're doing. Don't be angry with the things I demand of you. They're lessons. Pay attention and learn." With that he dropped his hand and laid back into the position he'd assumed earlier, watching her.

Penny frowned at his words. Lessons? What was she supposed to learn, except how to really fuck a guy the way he liked to be fucked. She studied Kirke's cock -- long and thick. The head mushroomed over a wide shaft, and the memory of it lodged deep into her cunt had her pussy dripping wet with the excitement of experiencing that sensation again. She'd had dildos that pleased her better than her past boyfriends and ex-husband, but none of them measured up to Kirke's cock. Nor his mouth, teeth, or hands -- they were all magical against her skin.

She licked the shaft, slowly, circling her tongue around and down, working her way up to the head.

Nope, Kirke's "charms" were one of a kind. She giggled.

"What's so funny?" he asked with his head lifted off the pillow.

Penny finished her route, dragging her teeth from the base of his cock over the head. She experienced a sense of power when he closed his eyes and released a hiss through clenched teeth. "Nothing. Just lie back and enjoy what I'm doing."

“Oh there’s no way I *can’t* enjoy this, sweetheart. Your mouth and tongue were made for giving head.”

She smiled. “I thought you wanted me to ride you.”

“I do, but you don’t have to rush into anything. We’ve got all the time in the world.”

The way he said the words had a strange ring to it. Penny frowned, not able to place what was wrong with what he’d said. She’d heard hundreds of people use the same phrase and it hadn’t ever struck her as ominous, but from Kirke she was beginning to understand that words had different meanings than what other people used them for, and in the short time she’d been with him, she’d come to realize he rarely used them frivolously. “What do you mean?”

He smiled. “Just what I said.”

Strong fingers dug into her upper arms, as he lifted and pulled her on top of him. With one thrust his cock plunged deep into her pussy.

Penny gasped, liking the pressure of his body inside of her. Her vaginal walls pulsated, contracting and relaxing, as her body tried to adjust to the invasion of his.

“That feels so fucking good.” His groan of pleasure increased her excitement and a flood of juices coated her and him.

“Yes, it does,” she said, moving her hips up and back.

Her clit hit against his pubic bone with each thrust down to the base of his cock. The pressure in her pussy rose again, but this time, she was the one who controlled the pace.

Lifting onto her knees, she brought herself down harder and faster, rocking forward against his pubic bone. One...two...three times and she exploded around him, screaming into the morning light, not caring who might hear her in her moment of ecstasy.

It didn’t end there, because Kirke wasn’t complete. He grabbed her hips with both hands, anchoring her body to his, as he pumped hard and fast into her. “Grab the top of the bed and push against me as I push into you.”

Weak and out of breath, Penny nevertheless did what he instructed, not sure she could take too much more. Her body stretched over his, as she grabbed the headboard. When he pushed upward into her, Penny pushed down. Her tender breasts ached with the bouncing rhythm. Panting, her own excitement built toward climax a second time. But, Kirke wasn't through playing.

Grabbing her wrists, he pulled her loose of the headboard and rolled her beneath him. Pulling his cock from her body, he flipped her over and angled her hips and legs where they hung off the side of the bed. Before she could question him, he moved in behind her and filled her cunt with his cock, pumping harder and faster than when he was beneath her.

At this angle, his cock slid farther into her body, hitting her G-spot directly. Penny screamed as another orgasm shook her body with Kirke joining her with his own sounds of release. Their breathing ragged and their bodies covered with sweat, he pulled her onto the bed and lay beside her with one leg over her lower body. Minutes faded and Penny drifted off to sleep.

When she woke it was dusk again and Kirke was gone.

She grabbed the clock beside the bed. Eight thirty!

"I've slept all day!" Scrambling with her clothes, she headed for the bathroom and a shower. The weekend was over and she had to get back home for work tomorrow.

When she stepped into the hallway a little while later, sun shone through the stained-glass windows, forming intricate patterns of color and light across the stone floors.

Her gait faltered. It had just been dark... She glanced around, frantically searching for a clock. When she found it, it read nine o'clock. But...

We've got all the time in the world. Kirke's words came back to her.

Penny's heart pounded against her chest. "What's going on?"

Down the stairs the sound of a bell sounded, like a cash register.

Following the chime, Penny wound her way through the maze of floors that consisted of Kirke's *castle*. No way could this massive structure be considered a mere house. With four stories and several wings, this constituted at least mansion status. And everywhere she walked, wild animals roamed or lazed in the shards of sunlight that streamed through the windows. But they weren't wild. They were as tame as kittens or household dogs.

"What is going on here?" With shaky legs, she took care not to upset any of the leopards that lay along the staircase, flicking their long black tails and cleaning their faces with massive paws. "I've got to get out of this madhouse nightmare."

Her foot caught the edge of something solid and she tripped.

A pig squealed at the same time Penny did. Catching herself on the banister, she watched the pig run several feet ahead of her down the stairs to disappear behind a satin curtain of deep purple. As its ass went through the portal, the body form shifted and changed into that of a man. He turned back to her with a look of horror and confusion. The sight of a small, shriveled penis caught her attention as it bobbed up and down with the man's unsteady gait. Then the satin fell down and his body was blocked from her view.

Penny blinked and rubbed her eyes, not sure she'd seen what she thought she saw.

"Ah. There you are, Mr. Jones. Did you enjoy your time in my castle? I hope you learned much from the experience. I finally found those special herbs you were asking me about to aid erectile dysfunction, so you can keep your wife and your girlfriend happy, if you're still interested."

Inside that room she could hear Kirke speaking to "the pig" about the different herbs he grew and sold. "Uh...no. I'm not interested anymore." The man's voice held a lingering squeal.

Reaching for the curtain, Penny noticed her hands were shaking. Realizing she'd thought she might never get home, she took a deep, steadying breath.

“It’s okay now.” She’d found the way out of this surreal landscape that Kirke called home.

Greeks Bearing Gifts

"What is it?" Penny asked, smiling, as she studied the brightly wrapped package Kirke's large hands held out to her in offering.

"A gift," he said. "For your birthday."

Beware of Greeks bearing gifts.

Penny frowned at the ancient warning that swiftly passed through her thoughts. She glanced from the package to the man standing in front of her. "Are you Greek, by chance?"

A boom of laughter shook the walls. Compared to the expanse of the house behind the curtain, the shop was relatively tiny. The floors and walls were done in a rustic wooden veneer, and the smell of antiquity permeated the small space.

Everyone in the place stopped what they were doing and turned to stare, transfixed, by the owner. Some reacted to the sound with what looked like panic and terror and headed for the door as fast as they could. The ones remaining stepped closer to him, drawn by some unseen force that emanated from the presence before them.

Jason Kirke. Tall and imposing at almost six feet five, he didn't frighten Penny. Instead, he intrigued her and made her pussy drip with desire. Long, dark red hair pulled into a ponytail hung down his back. Blue-green eyes, the color of the ocean on a sunny day,

twinkled down at her. His skin was smooth and tanned, not your usual complexion for someone with red hair. He looked to be in his midthirties, but something in his gaze made him seem older, wiser, than his years.

She hadn't noticed that about him the night before. He was a most unlikely character for a bookstore owner. There wasn't a quiet, reserved bone in the man's body from what she'd observed of him. He bewitched his customers with his words and actions, focusing on the smallest of details that someone did or said, and was able to draw from those what the customer really wanted to find within the walls of his shop. Vivacious and charming, the store's name suited well -- *Circe's Charms*. Pronounced like his name -- Kir-kee.

"My *people* came before the Greeks, but you don't have to beware of me. It's yourself that you're afraid of, Penelope."

A chill of trepidation crept over Penny's skin. "H-how did you know it was my birthday?" She took a step away from his offering.

Kirke smiled. "Magic, of course." Then he leaned closer and whispered where no one but herself could hear. "Your driver's license told me." He held her wallet out to her. "You dropped it last night in the courtyard. My...coworker...found it this morning when she came in."

A rush of heat infused Penny's cheeks, and she glanced down and around the shop feeling as foolish as she surely must appear to this man. Of course there would have been a logical reason for him knowing it was her birthday. "I'm sorry." Nothing was as it seemed in this place. She felt off-kilter, but couldn't understand why. Everything around her appeared normal, like it was supposed to look.

What exactly is "normal?" that strange, feminine voice questioned her.

Penny frowned.

Long fingers curled beneath her chin, lifting her face to his. The smile was gone and a strange intensity filled his gaze. "Don't be sorry. I enjoyed learning about you from your

reaction.” They stood like that, staring at each other for several seconds. The heat of his breath fanned across her cheeks, and several strands of her light brown hair tangled around his fingers, still holding her chin.

Penny’s mouth parted and her heartbeat raced inside her chest. “What exactly did you learn?” Heat covered not only her face, but her body. Moisture pooled in the crotch of her panties at the familiar, but still stimulating touch of his fingers against her skin.

His thumb moved across her bottom lip.

She trembled, remembering his punishing grip the night before.

“You don’t trust easily. Someone has hurt you deeply in your past. A lover; a man.”

She blinked a couple of times and felt her gaze widen from the relaxed state his touch had created. “You learned all that from a few stupid words?”

“Words are powerful weapons to be used for knowledge -- good or evil. Depends on what your desire is at the moment you use them.”

Penny stared at him with her skin tingling. The hair on her arms and body rose at what Kirke was telling her. What was he? A sorcerer?

“*Meowww*.” The sound of a cat and the pressure of it rubbing against her legs broke the final strings of the spell that Kirke’s presence had wound around her mind.

Penny stepped away from the shop owner, glancing down at the sleek black feline marking her ankles and legs as his property. His purr signaled his pleasure that she had decided to notice him. “Hey, kitty, what’s your name?”

She kneeled down, rubbing the cat’s ears and scratching beneath his chin. “You’re such a sweet, lovable boy, aren’t you?”

“His name is Hermes, and don’t let the meek and mild demeanor fool you. He’s a damned tricky beast, who enjoys slicing and dicing with his claws as much as he enjoys licking you with his silver tongue.”

Penny glanced swiftly up at Kirke. His face was pleasant enough, but the strange inflection in his voice when he spoke of his cat sent another chill over Penny's skin. *The cat's name is Hermes, like in my dream.*

The door to the shop opened and a tall blonde girl stepped through the opening. Hermes hissed and darted to the back of the store.

Penny gasped. *Calypso.*

"Well. I see he's still pissed about my little joke this morning," the girl said with a laugh, watching the feline's departure.

"What did you expect, Calypso? You placed foil on his paws while he was asleep. It took him thirty minutes to shake it off when he woke."

Calypso shrugged and laughed -- a tinkling musical sound that played along Penny's spine and settled in her clit. The moisture increased, causing her to shift her hips to ease the increasing discomfort in her jeans.

"It was a joke. If he can't take what he dishes out, he shouldn't pull some of the nasty pranks on others that he does."

Penny watched Kirke's brows draw together and his lips thin in apparent displeasure at Calypso's words.

"*That* is Hermes' prerogative." He suddenly glanced toward Penny, his frown clearing, as if he just remembered she was there. "Come. Meet Penelope. Today is her birthday, and she has decided to spend it with us."

Calypso's head tilted to the side, as her dark gaze slid over Penny from head to toe.

Penny felt as if the other girl had actually caressed her. She swallowed the nervous knot that formed in her throat and held out her hand. "H-how do you do? I'm pleased to meet you," she said, reciting the greeting her mother had instilled into her as the proper common courtesy to be extended when meeting strangers, whether you meant it or not.

Long, cool fingers wrapped around hers in a brief, but firm handshake. "The pleasure will surely be mine." Calypso's voice circled around Penny, causing her to lean toward the other woman.

Calypso met her halfway and kissed her before glancing up at Kirke with a smile and a raised eyebrow, asking some silent question that Penny didn't understand, but somehow knew pertained to her.

Kirke's frown was back, but this time it looked more like a scowl. He pushed Calypso, once, toward the back of the store. "Go make peace with Hermes. I don't want my evening spoiled because you two are on the outs with each other."

Calypso's smile widened and she slid a sly glance toward Penny as she walked by. "See you later, Penny."

"Oh. Sure. See you later." Penny's step wavered and she blinked, like she was coming out of some trance, and watched Calypso disappear behind the dark purple curtain that separated the store area from the vast exotic treasures that Kirke kept hidden from the public. She felt his gaze on her back, but couldn't turn to him. "She's very enticing."

"Very."

"Is she your girlfriend?"

"She's my friend, who would like to be your friend, too."

This was all connected with her dream. Something was happening, but she didn't understand what. A tiny trickle of fear began to form in her mind.

"Open your gift, Penelope." He'd stepped closer, because his breath tickled her neck. Large hands settled on her shoulders, squeezing and kneading the tension that had gathered there in the last few minutes. "And tell me if the gift I've chosen for you meets with your desire."

The whispered words in a tone so arousing and seductive, like the night before, zeroed straight to her clit. Her eyes closed with her moan, and she laid her head back as an orgasm,

strong and swift, rocked her body. Strong hands supported her, as the spasms washed over her. When it ended, she hung her head, glancing around the bookstore in shame at her loss of control. But, no one seemed to have noticed. No one, that is, except the man behind her, whose body pressed along every heated inch of hers. His rock-hard cock nestled in the cleft of her buttocks, silently reminding her of what she'd given him, and demanding a repeat performance. But she couldn't. She had to go home. Back to her job, her mother, her mediocre life.

A sob escaped her dry lips, and she tried to pull away, but he held her tight with one arm wrapped around her shoulders.

"Don't run away from your fears, girl." He gave her a quick shake. "Wake up, Penelope. *This* is what you want. What you need."

Penny relaxed against him, her breathing slowing along with her heartbeat.

Raising the package, Kirke kissed the back of her head. "Open your present and accept the special gift I offer you," he whispered into her hair.

Her hands shook, but she managed to tear the bright paper off. The last scrap fluttered to the floor like a feather, twisting and twirling in the air. In her hands lay an old leather-bound book.

Automatically, she lifted it to her nose, flipped the pages open and breathed in deeply.

Kirke laughed. "What are you doing, silly girl? It's not a bouquet of roses. It's a book."

"I know." Glancing at the book's cover, Penny grinned as she silently read the title, *Temptation's Temple*.

A quiver of anticipation at what lay within the leather binding shot from her clit into her abdomen. She swallowed a gasp.

"I-I've always done this ever since I was a little girl. I like to smell the pages and ink. Books have a very unique smell that changes with time. A new book doesn't smell like an old

book. And old books smell the best. It's like all that knowledge has had time to marinate between the pages." She shrugged, glancing up nervously at her host.

He was studying her with an odd expression. "You surprise me more and more."

Penny smiled, allowing her inner "imp" to come out. "Good. I'd hate to be predictable and boring."

A large hand snaked beneath her hair, massaging her neck and shoulder. "Not so far, but I sense that you're not as open with others as you are with me."

Penny's smile faded. "No. I'm not."

"Why?"

Glancing around, she saw that all the customers were gone at the moment. It was just her and Kirke in the shop. "I had a husband who wasn't satisfied with what I could give him, so he went elsewhere for his pleasures and comfort."

"He was a fool not knowing what he had right in front of him." His words were tight, and the hand on her neck tightened, as if Kirke were experiencing anger.

"It doesn't matter. It's over."

"Is it? You haven't been with a lover in a long time."

Penny jerked away from the mesmerizing touch. "And *how* do you know that?"

Kirke leaned closer, putting his face level with hers. A spark danced in his eyes and Penny couldn't tell if he was angry or amused. Either way, he wasn't smiling.

"Remember, I've been with you recently. I know you haven't had a lover in quite awhile."

A blush started beneath her sweater and worked its way up her neck to her face. "Oh, yeah."

Kirke's eyebrow rose and he nodded. "Yeah."

"I d-don't want to be hurt again."

“Then, don’t. Only you can allow someone to hurt you. That doesn’t mean you have to quit living. Take what you need from your lovers, then leave. You don’t have to enjoy sex and companionship with a ring around your neck.”

“Finger.”

“I think it’s the same principle. Both bind and constrict until you choke to death.”

“I want sex to be special, not some casual *thing* I do with just anyone, anytime or anywhere.”

“Really? I’m glad to know that I’m special, then.” He straightened to his full height, puffed his chest out, and smoothed his hands over his shirt.

Penny couldn’t help but laugh. Taking the book in two hands, she swatted the air in front of him. “Don’t get too cocky. You’re still a stranger to me.”

He caught her hands and pulled her to him. “Read your book. It will give you information that you can use to make your life fuller and richer.”

She opened her mouth.

The feel of his lips against hers crushed any protest she had been thinking of making.

The sound of the doorbell and someone clearing their throat had Penny struggling to break free. Glancing up, she cursed at the smug grin on Kirke’s face. He liked it that she was embarrassed.

Hugging her present to her chest, Penny fled through the curtain back into the recesses of the house where she could read her book in private.

Sitting on a small cushioned settee in the dining room with her legs folded in yogic fashion, she scanned the pages, gasping at the explicit language and drawings that filled each page. Around her the shadows shifted and changed with the passing of time until what had been morning turned to evening.

Candles flickered in the sconces on the walls. Crickets chirped outside. Servants came and went, setting the table with glass and food. But Penny only gave it all a passing glance, as her attention was mesmerized with her new gift -- a book like no other.

"This makes the Kama Sutra look tame."

"What have you been reading all these hours?" a voice asked from the direction of the doors leading onto the landing outside. "Aren't you interested in exploring this strange place?"

Penny squealed, dropping the book onto the silken cover beside her, and grabbed her chest.

With a whisking sound, the thing slid to the floor with a thump.

Hermes strolled in, but no one else.

Sliding off the chair, Penny went to the door. Glancing left and right, she couldn't see anyone. Below her, the cat rubbed against her legs and ankles, marking her again.

"Hey, puss. You like me, don't you?"

"Yep." Hermes glanced up to her and winked.

Penny's mouth dropped open, but no sound emitted. If she hadn't seen it with her own eyes, she wouldn't have believed it. She still didn't.

Her legs shaking, she reached for the settee for support.

The cat jumped onto the sofa and leaned his head on her shoulder.

Penny froze. Her heart hammered against her chest hard enough she could hear the beat -- fast and erratic. She closed her eyes, as visions of her nightmare flashed through her mind.

Behind her, two paws settled on her shoulders, kneading her muscles. "It's okay, Princess. I'm not going to do anything you don't want me to."

The Way of Women

“You’re tense.” The paws extended into fingers. “Now don’t freak out. I’m just going to *change* into something a little more comfortable.” He laughed.

The settee creaked and Penny felt the cushions sink.

“Jesus Christ.” She had a good idea that Hermes now possessed more than human fingers. Taking a gulp of air, she tried to stay calm.

Hermes snorted. “Relax, I tell you, woman. You’ve got rocks embedded in your muscles.”

She laughed, remembering where Kirke had fucked her the night before. “I don’t doubt that at all.”

Hermes’ fingers dug deeper. “You know, you’re handling all this much better than I expected.”

Penny groaned and leaned into the massage. “That’s because it feels so good.”

Hermes laughed, softly, and whispered in her ear, “Stretch out on your stomach across the table.”

"But, what about our supper?" she asked, waving her hand at the expanse of china and glassware filled with food and wine, so much like the dream she'd had prior to visiting this place.

A second later her protest faded, as Hermes pushed the plates and bowls of food to one end of the table. "There. Enough room for an orgy."

Not sure if he was joking, or not, Penny studied him for the first time in his new form. The shock she felt at the sight of his handsome features must have shown on her face.

He winked, offering a sexy grin. "I don't offer this to everyone, you know."

Again, she was stunned at the similarity between Hermes and her coworker, Herman -- the man of her unrequited desire. Unable to resist such a familiar wickedly, sexy grin, Penny lifted her leg onto the table. Climbing onto the gleaming surface, she asked, "What do I lay my head on?"

Immediately, Hermes rummaged through the buffet to find a folded towel that he quickly placed beneath her head. "Comfy?"

"Yes. Thank you."

"You're welcome." His fingers smoothed her hair away from her neck. His warm breath tickled along her neck and down her spine. She sighed.

The kiss to her earlobe startled her; she jumped.

"I'm just trying to get you to relax, Princess."

"Why do you all call me that?"

"Odysseus's wife was Penelope. She was a princess, and your surname is Odis."

"Are you going to fuck me?" she asked, not wanting to discuss Greek mythology. This "person" looked and sounded like the man of her desires, who she probably would never have the opportunity to kiss or fuck. She didn't want to waste this opportunity.

"Tsk-tsk. So unladylike."

“Who says I’m a lady?” She wiggled her hips against the table, searching for a more comfortable position. “I’ve already screwed your boss, and I’m pretty attracted to you, too.”

“So any old guy will do, huh?”

Penny raised her head. “No. It’s just been a long time since I’ve had the opportunity to have good sex. Besides, you remind me of a guy I’d really like to go to bed with.”

“Why not go to bed with him, then, instead of me?”

“He probably won’t ever ask me. He only thinks of me as a pal.” She shifted around again.

“Here try this.” Hermes reached around and beneath her waist and loosened her belt and jeans. Keeping one hand on her lower back he pulled her shoes off her feet. “Why not change his mind about how he views you?”

“I wouldn’t know how to do that. What if he laughs at me for being so stupid as to think he’d want to have sex with me?”

“Do I look stupid?” Hermes’ tone sounded angry.

Penny’s mouth opened, then closed it. “No. Why?”

“Because I *do* want to have sex with you.” Hermes tugged on the waist of her jeans, indicating that he wanted to pull them off. “Your choice, Princess.”

Her hesitation didn’t last long. This might be her only chance to get “Herman” in her pants. “Do it.” She lifted her hips, then her knees and feet as he stripped the denim down her legs. A rush of cool air across her bared skin teased her nipples and clit into hard pebbles, making her wish he’d wrap a warm tongue around all three to heat her up again.

“Relax. Breathe in. Breathe out. Nice and slow.” Firm hands smoothed up her right leg, spreading a warm, fragrant oil, like vanilla, over her skin. When he reached her panties, his fingers fanned out beneath the thin scrap of material over her buttocks.

Her muscles contracted.

A swift, hard bite stung her left buttock.

"Ow!" Penny tried to rise, but Hermes' left hand pushed her down at the small of her back.

"I said 'relax,' not tense up."

"I didn't expect you to go under my panties." She twisted her head where she could see him over her shoulder.

"Didn't you?" he asked, laughing. "You want me to go under them, in them, and all around them. Admit it." With each item ticked off his list, he'd leaned closer until their lips were mere inches apart.

She so wanted to kiss him, but couldn't bring herself to move forward.

"Why don't we just get rid of them?" He snaked his tongue out, tracing the edge of her lips.

Penny closed her eyes and let the heat spread from her mouth down into her abdomen and settle into her clit. Raising up on her hands and knees, she kept her eyes shut, not sure she'd be brave enough to allow him to remove her underwear if she watched him.

There was a hard tug and a ripping sound as the cotton material was torn from between her legs, leaving her ass exposed.

"Hey! That's my favorite pair of panties."

"I'll have Circe weave you another pair."

"He weaves?" she asked, wondering what else her strange host and lover could do. All that faded as soon as Hermes resumed his massage of her other leg. Penny sighed and allowed herself to finally relax. "And don't you mean *Kirke*?"

"Hm? What did I say?" Hermes sounded absorbed in what he was doing to her skin. Less forceful this time, his fingertips caressed with feather kisses up her legs and thighs to her buttocks where he increased pressure to hit trigger points she didn't realize she had.

Finding it more difficult to think straight with his hands on her body, Penny frowned trying to form the thought she'd had. "His name...you said it without the hard *k* sound."

She felt, rather than saw Hermes shrug.

“*Sir-cee* or *Kir-kee*, does it matter? Different people pronounce it different ways. Depends on who she -- he -- is needing to be.”

“What do you mean -- ‘who he is needing to be?’”

At that moment Hermes slid his hands up her left leg. Near her buttocks he rotated his hand in an outward movement with each hand going in opposite directions.

Penny buried her face into the towel, groaning, totally forgetting the topic of their conversation.

“Like that, don’t you? Was beginning to think I’d lost the touch with all that talking you were doing.”

His questions triggered the memory of her dream. Fighting her way through the fog he’d created with his fingers, she said, “We’ve done this before.”

At the juncture of her knee, he bit and sucked the sensitive skin.

“Ah!” A flood of moisture pooled beneath her pubis area, pressing against the table. Her clit throbbed, begging to be bitten and sucked in the same manner.

A soft whisper sounded near her head.

She turned toward it, but her vision was blocked by a silk scarf, wrapping around her head, over her eyes. A note of protest escaped her throat.

“Shh. Close your eyes and just let yourself ‘feel.’ Don’t talk anymore.”

Warm hands, spreading oil, continued their intricate exploration of her naked body from her waist down.

“Roll over.” This time the voice was deeper. *Kirke*.

Penny complied, as her secret fantasy of two male lovers rushed into reality. When she was on her back, one of the men pushed her legs open.

For a second, she tensed, but forced herself to relax into what she knew she wanted.

Fingers caressed her ankles, knees, and inner thighs, at the same time another set of fingers unbuttoned her blouse. Just as her panties had been removed, so came her bra with one tug and a rip. Something long and silky skimmed over the skin of her calves.

Penny shivered; her nipples hardened.

A mouth, apparently eager at the sign of her excitement, took advantage and latched on, licking and sucking; biting and tugging. Another set of lips and teeth suckled her clit, then plunged their tongue deep into her cunt.

Penny bucked her hips, trying to bring her knees together and push the mouth from her breast, but found she couldn't escape the multitude of sensations they were subjecting her to. Just as in her dream, the silk scarves circled her knees and ankles, and she was completely exposed to the men. Next came her hands. Cords of some sort were wound around her wrists and knotted before being pulled tight, bringing her arms up over her head where one of the two men secured the ropes out of her reach. Out of her control.

A soft, but firm hand rested just above her pubic bone. The lips and tongue that explored her pussy disappeared to be replaced by long cool fingers.

Penny tensed, remembering who those long, cool fingers belonged to in her dream. So far everything else had come true. Why *not* this?

Why not? the seductive voice from her dreams asked. *Why not take a woman for your lover?*

Two fingers curved into her body; Penny arched into the invasion, trying not to admit she liked what she was experiencing.

"Who are you?" Penny asked through clenched teeth.

The fingers stilled, but remained within her vagina. A body shifted upwards over her own. A feather kiss brushed Penny's lips. "It's Calypso."

"No, no..." Penny whispered. "The voice. Whose voice do I keep hearing in my mind? *Who?*"

Calypso kissed her cheek. “Don’t you know? It’s your inner voice, guiding you where you need to go.” She slipped down Penny’s body to where she nestled between Penny’s thighs again, massaging deep within her vagina with one hand, while her other smoothed up Penny’s body, cupping her breast.

“But I heard it in my dreams. It’s male, but it’s also female.”

Calypso’s thumb and forefinger circled Penny’s nipple, stroking and rotating in a clockwise motion. “It’s telling you to give in to what you want. Isn’t it?”

“Yes.” Penny gasped at the double stimulation the other girl provided her. Moisture flooded beneath her buttocks, indicating for all to see that Penny found Calypso’s touch exciting.

“Tell me what you want me to do, Penny,” Calypso said. “And, I’ll gladly do it. I want you to enjoy this as much as I am.”

“Are...are they watching us?” Penny whispered, turning her head from side to side, listening for the two men. She couldn’t hear anything but her own and Calypso’s breathing.

“Of course they are. Does that turn you on?” Dragging her fingernails over Penny’s skin, Calypso smoothed a hand between Penny’s breasts, down to her belly.

Hiss. Penny arched and strained against the binds that held her. “Yes...it turns me on.”

Calypso laughed, wiggling her fingers inside Penny’s body. “I can see by your body’s response that you’re telling the truth.”

Penny felt the blonde lean closer. When the swipe of her wet, hot tongue teased Penny’s clit, Penny jerked and pulled against the silk scarves holding her in place.

“Do you like it light and flicking, or broad, circular strokes?”

Panting, Penny raised her head. She couldn’t see the other girl, but she knew exactly where Calypso lay between her legs. “I-I like it all. Whichever way you want to give it to me.”

Laughing, Calypso pumped her fingers in and out several times. When she pulled out, Penny whimpered, not wanting the fullness inside her cunt gone.

“Don’t worry, I’m coming back to that. Right now I think you need a spanking for being such a naughty princess.”

Before Penny could guess what the other woman intended, Calypso’s hand smacked hard against Penny’s clit.

The shock and bolt of pain and pleasure raced through Penny’s body. After several hard taps to Penny’s clit, Calypso plunged the two fingers back into Penny’s cunt.

Like a jackhammer cock pumping into her pussy, the combined stimulation sent Penny over the edge.

A scream resembling that of one of Kirke’s wild beasts, signaled Penny’s orgasm along with flooding juices, like a man ejaculating semen, over Calypso’s fingers.

“That’s it, Princess, give it to me. I want to savor every drop,” Calypso said, in between kisses to Penny’s soaking cunt. The soft, warm tongue prolonged the spasms of her orgasm, forcing her body to jerk, and moans of pleasure to drag forth from deep within her body. Slowly, the tongue subsided to be replaced by other sensations.

A multitude of hands continued massaging and caressing Penny’s body.

She whimpered, turning her head from side to side. “Can’t take...can’t take...anymore.”

Hermes was immediately at her head, removing the blindfold. “Oh, but you can, Princess. We’ve got all night long to teach you everything you need to know.”

Penny blinked against the sudden glare of the candlelight. She needed a break. Her legs and arms were tingling with the lack of circulation from being tied for so long. The sight of the spilled wineglass caught her attention. “But what about dinner? We never ate and I’m really hungry.”

Kirke, grinning, straddled her chest. "I bet you are after all that pussy eating. Looked like it took everything out of you." His cock, long and hard, jutted forward in phallic offering. "I have just the thing to fill you up."

Penny giggled, Calypso crossed her arms with a "humph," and Hermes shook his head as he rolled his gaze to the ceiling.

* * * * *

The room around her spun from the effects of whatever Kirke had put in her food. She didn't care; she just wanted to feel the pleasure they'd given her so many times already tonight. Again and again. She didn't want it to end. She didn't want to return to the boring, lonely life she lived in her tiny apartment in Atlanta.

Trying to rise, her hand slipped off the edge of the table and she fell onto her side. Beyond her, Kirke's features wavered and weaved as she tried to focus her vision. "W-what did you give me?"

Swirling the contents of a silver wine goblet, Kirke stepped forward. "It's a special mixture of herbs that I concocted." He smiled. "I've been told it makes pigs of men and she-cats of women. How do you feel?"

Penny rolled onto her back, staring up into that gorgeous face that was now as familiar as her own. Heat rose within her body and she pressed a hand to her forehead. "I feel flushed, like I have a fever."

"Good. That's what you're supposed to experience. It means the herbs are working."

Calypso rushed forward, an eager expression on her face. "Is she ready?"

Hermes peered over her shoulder, sleek and contained, like his cat self. "Give her some space, you nympho. She'll be ready to fuck in a few minutes."

Calypso shoved Hermes; he laughed, infuriating her more. With a shriek, the blonde lashed out with her fingernails, trying to claw Hermes' face.

Kirke stepped between them. "Enough. We are working here, people."

Hermes stretched his neck and smoothed his hands over his shirt, like he would his fur if he were in cat form. "I've told you before. We're *not* people."

All the while, Penny watched them, wavering and shimmering before her, like characters in a nightmare. "That's what this is."

"What, sweetheart? What are you talking about?" Kirke asked, smoothing a hand over her hair.

Penny smiled, liking his touch, so gentle and caring, like her brother, but in a sensuous way. It really turned her on. She frowned, noticing the heat in her face had moved downward into her abdomen. She twisted away from the light caress. "I want you to touch me."

Kirke's smile lost its brotherly concern. Almost sinister in its transformation, he asked, "How do you want me to touch you?"

She looked at the three staring down at her, and twisted sideways on the table. Her body was on fire. Her clit throbbed. "Touch my pussy. Touch it, lick it, bite it."

"I will," Kirke said.

"What can I do for you?" Calypso asked, clasping her hands together in a silent plea. "Tell me and I'll do it."

Kirke had already moved forward and positioned himself between her legs. Spreading her pussy lips, his finger explored along the sides of her clit, up and down.

"Yes!" Penny arched off the table at the feel of his thumb and forefinger pinching her clit hard.

"Oh, stop it, Circe! I want to know what she wants from me." Calypso shoved Kirke.

Through the lust-induced haze of the Kirke's herbs, Penny focused on how Calypso had said his name. "It's *Kir-kee*."

“Whatever! What do you want of me?” Calypso dropped to her knees. Over the nymph’s shoulder, Penny could see Hermes’ bored stare pick up interest at his nemesis’ subordinate position.

Lifting her own cunt to Kirke’s mouth, Penny smiled at the blonde girl. “I want to taste your pussy --”

There was a squeal of delight, as Calypso climbed onto the table and straddled Penny’s shoulders. Positioning her pussy over Penny’s mouth, she pushed forward, but Penny stopped her with two hands on her thighs. “Wait.”

The soft, musky smell of the other girl teased her nostrils, and Penny’s mouth watered at the feast before her. But she glanced up at Hermes, who had moved closer to watch.

“I want to taste your pussy while you’re eating Hermes’ cock.”

Hermes blinked twice, then threw his head back in a roar of laughter. Calypso screamed and tried to climb off the table, but Penny held her tight, as did Kirke.

“You told me *anything* I wanted.” Penny gazed up at the infuriated woman, who glared and hissed at the black demon, smiling and unzipping his pants, in front of her.

“You *did* tell her that, my naughty nymph.”

“I’m not your *naughty* anything, you perverted shape-shifter!” Calypso tried to hit Hermes, but Kirke caught her arms, pinning them at her side.

“Hey, I resemble that remark. I’m a shape-shifter, too, and I like a bit of perversion every now and then,” Kirke said, lifting his eyebrows up and down, suggestively.

Beneath the three of them, Penny laughed. She couldn’t help it. Her nightmare had turned into a comedy. “It’s not a nightmare. It’s a divine comedy.” She laughed again and again, until tears streamed down her face.

Kirke laughed too. “You are so right, sweetheart. Life is just a divine comedy.”

He kissed her; Penny stopped laughing at the feel of his lips against hers. The taste of herself still fresh on his lips, his tongue circled hers like he’d circled her clit a few minutes

before. The heat inside her rose again. Penny groaned, twisting free of his mouth. "Let's do it. All of us. Now."

The four of them stared at each other for several seconds. Finally, Calypso nodded at Hermes, who bowed at her acquiescence. "I will be most honored, dear Calypso."

"I know you will. Just remember I'm doing this for Penny."

"I have no doubts in my mind as to why you are doing this." Hermes winked at Kirke.

"Let's play nice, boys and girls," Kirke said.

"Why?" Penny asked. "I want to play down and dirty, like good sex is supposed to be." She wiggled her shoulders between Calypso's thighs.

The view was breathtaking. Full, engorged inner and outer lips told Penny that Calypso was excited. Of course, the dewy line of moisture along the slit of her vagina gave that away too. With one finger, Penny reached out and traced those pussy lips, liking the feel of the natural lubricant on her finger. She wondered if another woman tasted like she did.

Putting her finger in her mouth, she inhaled and tasted the essence of Calypso -- salty and tangy like the sea. "You taste good."

Calypso smiled down at her. "You do, too." With a small nod, the nymph leaned forward and took Hermes' cock in her hand. With a sigh of submission, she sucked his penis into her mouth, stroking up and down the shaft with long, even strokes while her hand circled his balls.

Hermes let his head drop back with a groan of pleasure. His hand shook, as he massaged Calypso's hair and scalp, urging her into the rhythm that pleased him.

Taking a cue from him, Penny parted the still moist lips of the delectable woman astride her chest. Gazing at the hidden treasures behind the folds of skin had her mouth watering. Moving her mouth close, Penny inhaled, getting high on the smell of girl, then exhaled, allowing her breath to heat and tease Calypso's crotch.

She wasn't dissatisfied when Calypso moaned her protest and tried to move her hips closer to Penny's mouth.

Her humor was short-lived, because down below Kirke had started his own form of teasing and torture. While his tongue circled her clit, he inserted his nose into her curls where he lapped her vaginal opening quickly with his tongue. His nose, moving with the rate of lapping, bumped against her clit.

"Oh...yeah." Penny let go of Calypso's hips to grab Kirke's head, but had to reach back and grab Calypso's hips, so she could keep up the beat that the two of them had established. Realizing she couldn't control what Kirke was doing, Penny let it go, riding his wave of eroticism. When she came, she bit into the soft flesh of Calypso's thigh, causing the other woman to jerk and come, spending her orgasmic juices down the sides of her thighs where Penny lapped them up with an eager tongue, as she watched the man above her.

Hermes's eyes shut and he grunted, pumping in and out of Calypso's mouth. Penny grinned as he gave one last thrust and gripped Calypso's hair with clenched fingers. The veins in his neck expanded, as Penny imagined his cum exploding into that mouth so pink and swollen from Hermes abuse.

"Swallow every drop he gives you, Calypso. Don't spill anything." Penny continued to watch Hermes, as he removed his dick slowly from the nymph's mouth.

Penny felt a rush of desire at the look of total adoration he gave the woman they shared. He glanced down and caught her stare. Leaning down, he kissed Penny's lips -- upside down -- brief but gentle and warm. "Thank you for that gift, Princess. Your kindness and generosity will not be overlooked."

The four of them curled together on the long, wide table. Penny's breasts pressed against Calypso's back, Kirke's chest and cock nestled into the curve of her own, and Calypso had her arms and legs wrapped tightly around Hermes larger frame. Penny giggled, thinking how they must look.

Hermes raised his head with a sleepy yawn. "What's so funny, now?"

"We must look like a bunch of kittens in a box, keeping each other warm."

Calypso turned her head with her eyes shut and kissed Penny's forehead. "I like kittens," she said drowsily, hugging Hermes closer.

"I like you," Kirke whispered in Penny's ear before kissing her cheek.

Penny closed her eyes. "Umm...I like you all, too."

After a few seconds of enjoying the warmth of their bodies entwined, Penny whispered into Kirke's ear, "You didn't get to come."

He hugged her and kissed the top of her head. "It's okay."

Careful not to disturb the others, she shifted. She could see his face and that his eyes were shut in the flicker of the candlelight. "No, it's not. You've given me so much. I want to give, too."

Sliding her hand down his chest, she trailed her fingernails along the arrow of hair she knew to be red that led to his cock.

His arm tightened, letting her know he liked what she did.

Exploring further, she wrapped her fingers around his dick, enjoying the satin, smooth texture of his skin.

A pulse beat along the large vein that ran the underside of his shaft. The organ was like a living, breathing animal that throbbed beneath her touch. When she stroked from the base to the head, then let go, it would rear up, demanding her attention again.

Penny laughed, quietly, and leaned close to Kirke's ear. "He likes that."

"Yeah, but he'd like something else better." Kirke shifted and turned his body so that his waist was at her head.

"I thought you didn't want anything."

“I changed my mind.” His hands tangled in her hair, pulling her head to his body. “Fuck me with your mouth.”

He didn’t ask. It was a command, but Penny could hear a thread of need deep within his words. She complied.

Still careful of the other two, she circled Kirke’s thighs with her hands and placed her head between his legs.

Breathing in deeply, she savored the essence of Kirke -- a mixture of sandalwood, patchouli, and the sea. Her mouth watered at the prospect of his cum filling her mouth and throat.

The head was large, but she managed to get the whole of it in her mouth. Her tongue wrapped along the shaft, as her nose buried into the curls of his pubic hair. Slowly, she slid her lips and tongue up, then down the length of him.

His fingers massaged her scalp at the same time her fingers kneaded the muscles of his thigh. The salty taste of precum told her Kirke was close.

Sliding one hand across his thigh she cupped his balls, gently massaging as she suckled his cock.

Kirke’s groan rumbled through her body, and Penny increased the rate of her mouth’s motions. Grasping the base of his cock, she worked the shaft with her hand and focused her mouth and tongue on his head.

His thigh muscles tensed and relaxed as his cockhead swelled.

Seconds later, fingers tightened in a punishing grip in her hair, and Kirke thrust his hips, pumping his cock into her mouth over and over.

The salty flood of cum coated Penny’s mouth. She moaned and continued swallowing. The smell of sex filled the air once again.

Licking the last drop from her lips, Penny kissed the inside of Kirke’s thighs. Curling in tight against his body, she sighed. “That was good.”

A gentle hand smoothed over her head, back and hip. "Thank you for that gift."

Penny smiled, remembering Hermes' "thank you" for her earlier kindness toward him.
"You're welcome."

The Return Home

“Think she’ll be back?” Green-gold eyes gleamed through the darkened room before turning their gaze back through the glass of the window.

A silver economy-size vehicle pulled slowly down the gravel drive. The taillights pumped bright red, on and off, as the driver pushed the brakes before easing farther down the steep incline.

“We can only hope, can’t we?” a deep, silken voice replied.

“I liked her. A lot,” a soft, feminine voice added.

The three watched the red glow disappear around the bend of the mountain.

An audible sigh filled and disappeared into the space around them, but the sound of regret and need lingered.

The tallest member stepped forward, placing his palm flat against the window pane. “I can’t describe how much I *liked* her. *Like* doesn’t even come close to what I feel for that one.”

“I hope she comes back,” the feminine voice said. “I wanted her to stay with us.”

"She can't stay. She belongs out there, following her own destiny, and fulfilling her own desires and needs. Not here satisfying ours." Jason Kirke's form shimmered and shifted until once again "he" was "she," Circe, the Enchantress, the Witch.

More felt than seen, the Trickster nodded his head in agreement. "Our job is done. Once she gets home, she'll have what she needs to conquer her fears. It will be up to her to use the gifts and tools we've given her."

The Nymph gave an exasperated sigh. "It's not fair. No one ever stays with us very long."

Hermes hugged Calypso. "I'm here with you." He sneaked an arm around Circe's waist and pulled her close. "Both of you. Forever."

"Great!" The Nymph said. Jerking her arm free of Hermes' embrace, she stormed from the room.

Circe kissed the Trickster's cheek. "Calypso will be all right when the next lost traveler comes along."

"I know." Hermes studied Circe. "I'm not worried about her. Her affections have always been immature and fickle. I'm wondering how this has affected you, my witch. I sense that you had grown quite fond of our Penelope. You've never been one to share your affections casually. You are not Calypso."

"In other words, she's the maid and I'm the old crone?" Taking his hand, Circe offered Hermes a smile that didn't quite feel genuine.

"But not a hag. You will always be much too beautiful for that." He raised her hand to his lips. "You are true love, Circe. You give all that you are and have, but never ask for more than what they can give you."

Circe sighed. "Penny reminded me of Odysseus. And, you know, I loved him dearly. He was so worn-out and disheartened when he found me, much like Penny. He needed rest from the world he knew. I like to think I gave them that and some genuine happiness while

they were in my bed. But they have their own lives to live and paths to follow that don't include me." She squeezed Hermes' hand. "I am here to guide them; replenish their strength when they are lost; then send them along to find their own way home."

When she smiled again, it felt stronger. "I'll be fine. I'm not alone. I have you and Calypso to eternally entertain and irritate me."

Hermes laughed. "So you do. So you do."

As one, they turned away from the window and faded into the purple-black darkness of Circe's castle. All around, the animals crouched and circled, licking their hands and feet as they strolled by -- signs of adoration and affection for their mistress, goddess of transformation.

* * * * *

Penny hurried toward the break room. Coffee was her only priority right now, as she'd missed her normal two cups this morning after waking an hour late.

Too exhausted to glance at a clock, she didn't have a clue what time she'd gotten to bed after arriving home last night, but knew it had been late. Throwing her bags into the corner, she'd collapsed on top of her bed and fallen into a deep, dreamless sleep.

At the sight of Herman bent over, picking up something off the floor, she stopped inside the doorway. His dress slacks pulled tight across his ass, and there were no underwear lines that she could detect. Damn, he was a fine-looking man. Thoughts of Hermes and what they'd done together in Dahlonge rose, making her mouth water and her clit tingle.

Penny eased into the room, closing and locking the door softly behind her. Tiptoeing over to Herman, she reached down and cupped his ass with both hands.

Herman jerked upright, turning toward his assailant. The look of anger turned to one of shock. "Penny! What are you doing?"

Penny smiled and moved forward, pushing the man of her desires against the counter. When he looked like he would squirm away, she grabbed the lapels of his jacket. With one quick movement out and down, she'd pulled his jacket tight around his arms, pinning him in place. "Herman, there's something I've been dying to do to you."

Before he could answer, she covered his mouth with hers, absorbing his protests with a kiss. Sucking his tongue, she unzipped his pants and pulled his cock out.

Herman struggled free. "What the hell are you doing?"

Stroking his cock, she watched his face, liking the various expressions of pleasure, shock, and desire she saw displayed with such a tiny movement. "I'm doing something I've wanted to do for a long time, but didn't have the guts to do it until after this weekend."

"Um, Penny" -- he quit struggling at her third stroke that included her fingernails raking over sensitive skin -- "that is extraordinary. What else would you like to do?"

Penny grinned. "Let me show you." She dropped to her knees in front of him. With one hand cupping and massaging his balls, he closed his eyes.

"Look at me." She held her gaze unflinching, wanting to see what he saw as she fucked him with her mouth.

His eyes opened and he stared at her, as she sucked on his head, gliding her hand up and down the shaft of his cock. The pupils widened, and she knew she had his attention.

Sliding her mouth past his shaft, she sucked one of his balls into her mouth before nipping his inner thigh with her teeth.

A hiss from him let her know he liked it, but it was his eyes that told her what she wanted to know. His desire was for her and what she was doing. With his gaze on her, it was her he saw, not someone else.

"You've...got a really intense...look going on."

She loosened her suction of his cock long enough to tell him to shh.

His hand massaged her head and scalp. "Okay, baby, anything you want."

He thrust harder and deeper into her mouth. She adjusted her lips, swallowing to take him further.

“Oh, yeah. That’s it. That’s it.” His fingers grabbed her hair tight as he came into her mouth.

Penny swallowed, savoring the salty taste of his semen. When he’d completed, she stood and wiped her bottom lip with her forefinger. “I liked that. I’ll see you at lunch?”

Herman blinked. “Wait. That’s *all* you’re going to say after blowing my balls better than anyone has ever blown them?”

Penny smiled and unlocked the door. “Glad you liked it.”

Herman pushed the door shut. “What happened up in Dahlonga this weekend?”

“My car broke down.” She opened the door.

He pushed it shut. “And?”

“I met three interesting people.” Penny pulled the door open, again.

Herman placed his hand on the door.

Penny sighed. “Are we going to do this all day?”

“I don’t know. Are you going to tell me what happened to you?”

She kissed his lips, briefly, but firmly. “I have seen the light. Now, I have a meeting to attend. I’ll see you at lunch.”

“We’ll have lunch at the Ellis,” he said with a wink.

Penny laughed. “Be thinking of what you’d like to eat.”

Herman kissed her. “I’m thinking...dessert.”

* * * * *

“Did she do it?” the Nymph asked, trying to see over the Trickster’s shoulder.

"Of course she did," he said, wrapping an arm around her waist, so she could move closer to the sieve. "She had an excellent teacher, did she not?"

Snort. "That would have been me, right?" the Witch asked.

"Not at all, my dear. I'm speaking of myself." The Trickster sniffed his disdain.

"The only someone who had your cock in their mouth this weekend was me, Hermes," the Nymph said.

"Whereas, my cock was in Penelope's mouth all weekend long," the Witch replied.

"What do you know? You're a woman."

Circe circled her sieve, coming to stand shoulder to shoulder with her friend and teacher. "As you said yourself, I am the goddess of transformation. It matters not what form I assume, as long as the lesson that needs to be learned is taught, O Master Shape-shifter. I think it ingenious that you changed your features to that of Penny's desire. It helped me teach her what she needed to know so much easier."

Hermes smiled and kissed her lips. "My most beautiful witch, you are my greatest student."

Calypso pouted. "What about me?"

Circe and Hermes wrapped their arms around the lovely blonde woman. "You are our most adorable pet, my dear, whom we pamper and spoil for your pleasure."

The three strolled arm in arm through the courtyard gate into the forest near Circe's castle. The sound of lions, tigers, and bears roared and echoed around them, as did the crashing of waves against the seashore.

 THE END 

Sheri Gilmore

When Sheri Gilmore isn't creating romantic sexual fantasies for her readers, she's a registered nurse, wife, and a mother of three. Her most favorite cities are New Orleans, San Francisco, and New York City, but she's always wanted to visit San Antonio, Santa Fe, and Las Vegas. Visit Sheri on the Web at www.sherisecrets.com.