



Prince *of* Servitude

An erotic gay fairy tale

G.A. Hauser

Prince of Servitude

An Erotic Gay Fairy Tale

G. A. Hauser

PRINCE OF SERVITUDE

Copyright © G.A. Hauser, 2009

Cover art by Stephanie Vaughan

ISBN Trade paperback: 978-1-44863-911-3

The G.A. Hauser Collection

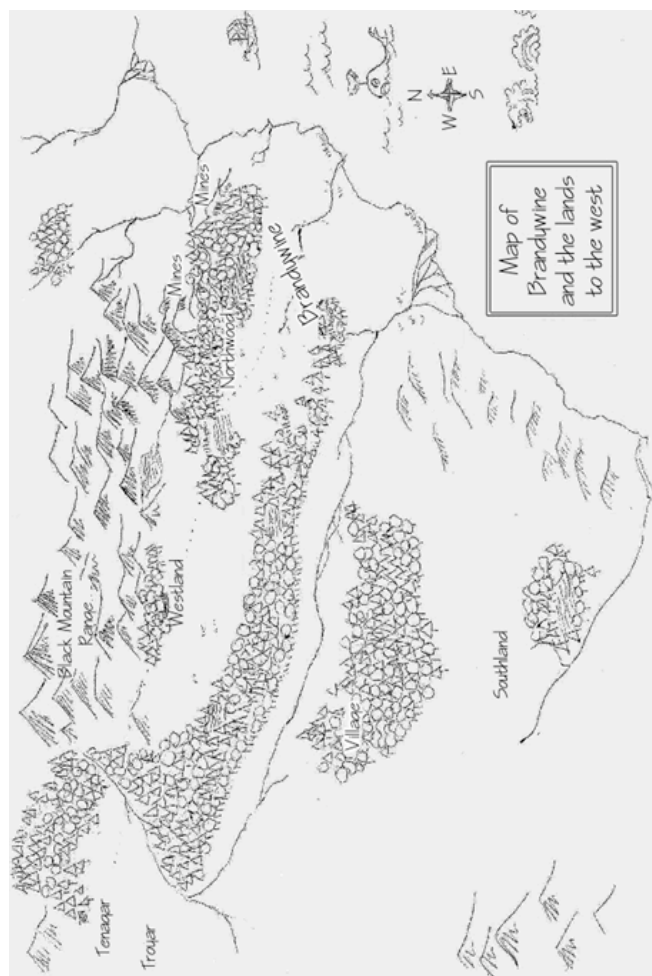
This is a work of fiction and any resemblance to persons, living or dead, or business establishments, events or locales is coincidental.

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

WARNING

This book contains material that maybe offensive to some: graphic language, homosexual relations, adult situations. Please store your books carefully where they cannot be accessed by underage readers.

First G.A. Hauser publication: July 2009



Prologue

They called him “Tristen the Fair”. A child similar to most in all ways, save one. This was to be the next ruler of the land they called Brandywine, heir to the throne of an enormous empire that expanded even as baby Tristen slept, gurgled, and crawled. His life was surrounded by pleasant faces of those who pampered him. While his mother, Queen Olympia, was busy roaming the castle, Tristen was constantly accompanied by his nannies. His view of life was as content as any baby’s could be.

There was peace, though somewhat strained, and King Renelin was happy to have made an alliance with the Lord of Westland, King Ator, to protect him from the land of intruders just beyond Westland’s border. Tristen was promised to King Ator’s daughter, Princess Lynette. When they were of age they would wed to join the kingdoms. Troyar lay just west of the Kingdom of Westland and King Renelin wanted space between him and his mortal enemy, the vicious King Telgras.

When the young prince turned four he was permitted to explore outside the nursery and into the three rooms his mother occupied. Never alone for long, Tristen was always under a very watchful gaze. He was bright and inquisitive to everything new and grand. When Tristen stumbled, hands would rush to set him right. When he cried, arms would reach to quiet him. He was sweet and easy to spoil, Tristen with the golden hair, soft as an ermine’s belly and eyes the rare color of sky blue. His mother’s

feline features he was said to have. His father's bones in him were strong.

By the age of six Tristen bore a short sword proudly on his hip. Adoring his father for the gift, Tristen dreamed of the day he'd become a soldier. By now his nursemaids were sure he'd be the most handsome prince in all the land. He was taught to read and write and loved to sing. Tristen and his mother would cuddle together for their duets, his sweet soprano rising to meet her own to echo off the stone walls.

As Tristen grew, King Renelin ensured his young son was taught the art of war while still inside the castle's tall walls.

The young pup sprouted like a well-watered weed and became eager for the world beyond the castle doors.

Chapter One

“He is thirteen. He needs to be with boys his own age. Get out of the castle. Explore the wood.” The King growled angrily. “I will acquaint him with the young nobles from within. At least then he can become a man and not something as soft as a woman.” His black beard bristled as he glared at his wife.

She stared back coldly. “He is your only son and heir. Do you not fear for his safety? A boy so young? Alone in the woods?”

“What nonsense is this? If it were up to you, would you lock him in his room like a dungeon?”

Her long brown hair shimmered in the fading light. She walked slowly to the window to gaze out at the setting sun. “He is content in his rooms. He is safe there.”

“He is not content. He is infuriated. Have you talked with him?”

Queen Olympia lowered her lashes in defeat. “An armed guard then.” She turned to face her husband. “Your Captain of the Guard shall accompany him. I’ll have it no other way.”

The king stroked his beard and softened his glare at her beauty. He walked to her and cupped her tender young jaw. “Yes, you shall have your armed guard. But if he objects, I will not have him thinking he cannot be trusted.”

She smiled. “I shall talk with him.”

“Very good.” He kissed her lips softly.

Tristen was in the baths being attended to by his servant, Caine, when his mother entered the room. The queen sat on the marble ledge behind her son’s back.

The young servant lowered his head to her. Queen Olympia reached for the sponge and gently ran it over Tristen’s back.

With his eyes half-closed as he was bathed, Tristen savored the warmth of the water and the soft caresses.

The queen nodded for the young boy to leave them. Silently the servant bowed and obeyed. When he had closed the door the queen said, “Tristen.”

“Yes, Mother.”

“My dearest, let’s get you dry so you can come for a stroll with me in the courtyard.”

Tristen stood out of the water, the drops rushing down his muscular thighs. After she patted him gently with a soft cloth, he found his leggings, tunic, and cape. The queen helped him get dressed, tying his many leather lacings.

Once Tristen stepped into his boots and fastened his dagger to his hip, he held out his elbow. His mother escorted him out to the courtyard.

The full moon glowed brilliantly in the autumn air. The queen clasped Tristen’s hand and brought him closer.

“What is it, Mother?” Tristen gazed at her brown eyes as they glistened from her smooth, milky skin.

She touched his jaw gently, muttering under her breath, “No trace yet of a beard.”

Tristen’s cheeks burned at the comment. He was as anxious to become a man, yet he knew his mother wished to keep him near, like a baby.

“Your father would like you to associate with some of the young nobles in the kingdom. He wishes you to go out and hunt

Prince of Servitude

and explore the wood.”

His right hand squeezing the hilt of his sword relentlessly, Tristen tried to contain his excitement.

“Is this what you wish?” she asked.

Tristen smiled his most irresistible grin, trying to persuade her. “It would please me greatly.”

“I thought it might.” She turned away and released his hand.

Tristen touched her shoulder, spinning her around so he could gesture to the courtyard walls. “Why is it you wish me to stay inside here always? Surely it is natural I should go beyond them. How am I to rule a kingdom from inside a castle?”

She raised her eyes to his slowly.

As Tristen stared into her face he thought she was truly lovely.

“You may go...on condition,” she said.

“Anything you ask of me.”

“You are to have an escort of the captain and his guard.”

Tristen sighed with relief. “Yes, of course. Where would a prince be without his escort?” He knew she feared for him, knowing all too well the fate of an heir caught even for a moment unprotected. Tristen tried to reassure her with an embrace. He buried his face in her soft hair, his height now exceeding hers. “Don’t be afraid. Nothing will happen. I won’t let it. I’ll be as fierce in battle as my father and look how long he has lived.”

“My dear Tristen, he is not an old man. Not even thrice your age.” She squeezed him tightly. “All right...of course you must go. *But* be ever alert and always remain in the sight of the guard. Will you make it a vow?”

Tristen stood back from her and held the hilt of his sword in one hand and placed the other over his heart. “With all my honor.” In the silvery shadows, Tristen waited for her reply.

Finally she said, “I see the shape of the man in you to come.

G.A. Hauser

Your soft boyish features are gaining the edges of manhood.” She caressed his cheek. “You are big for your age and will soon equal your father in height.” The queen paused and added, “Yet a shiver of fear rushes inside me even as I say a prayer to keep you safe from harm.”

“You do worry too much.” Tristen laughed and kissed her lightly.

“No. You don’t know the dangers that lay outside the castle walls. It is you who do not worry enough.”

Tristen’s skin crawled with gooseflesh, but he disregarded her fears.

Chapter Two

Tristen slept poorly from the excitement, eagerly awaiting the night to pass while lying curled in his bed of sheep skin and sable. With little success he imagined the forest outside the castle limits.

When the sun gleamed through the windows, casting its brilliance on the embroidered tapestries on the walls, Tristen threw off the skins and headed to the basin of cold water, washing himself and delighting in the chilled air.

Caine checked on him and found Tristen awake. Caine greeted him and assisted Tristen with his leather leggings and tunic, lacing his high boots for him.

Tristen had experienced being on the back of a horse only once, in the courtyard. It never occurred to him he would not be able ride. Tristen assumed it would come naturally to him as did everything else he attempted.

Diligently Tristen polished his sword, the very same one his grandfather had held in battle. As he did, Caine ran a comb through his hair for him. Once he was tended, Tristen dashed out in search of his father.

Six young lads had been chosen to accompany the prince. Tristen was aware of the many stories that circulated behind his back. It was common knowledge that he was considered too mothered. At the age of thirteen all of the other boys had long since explored the forests and surrounding land. They had also

taken their first stag or wild sheep.

The king called to his Captain of the Guard, "August, assemble a troop of six to appease the queen."

The captain bowed gracefully and set out to gather his men.

"Now, Tristen," the king said, "You'll make me proud and kill your first stag. It is past time you learned about the world around you."

"Are you not coming, then?" Tristen asked.

"No, not today. Today you go on your own to prove yourself." The king petted his son's head. "So, do not disappoint me."

Tristen knew his father thought he was incapable of any heroics, owing to the maternal coddling. It was obvious by his father's expression the king didn't expect much.

"I won't disappoint you, Father." Tristen bowed as he prepared to leave, catching his father's frown. Tristen brushed off the negative attitude, which he was certain came from too much of his mother's influence.

Tristen met Captain August, a man in his early forties and much revered for his knowledge in war. Tristen stood in the stable and gathered the equipment for their hunt. With a proud smile on his lips, Captain August gave Tristen a quiver of arrows and a bow, then helped him to mount his horse.

"Your Highness, the other young men are waiting in the field."

"Very well, let us not keep them any longer." Tristen spurred his steed confidently and thrilled at the crisp air and the sound of hoof on stone.

On the crest of a hill in the brilliant morning sun, a party of eleven waited. Tristen studied his contemporaries for the first time. Seeing their young faces was a new experience for him. He'd never been allowed to play with them as a toddler, for his mother feared he would catch a fatal disease. When they began whispering together, Tristen overheard them calling him the

Prince of Servitude

“Pretty Prince”, known for his beauty, not his prowess. Not a commoner among them, they were quick to judge the prince at first sight.

They did not return his charming smile. Instead they looked stern and preoccupied. They bowed respectfully and then the guards led the way into the forest.

Tristen felt the coldness of it in his heart and yearned for the comradeship between friends. He watched with jealousy as they spoke amongst themselves.

The captain escorted Tristen out in front of the group and conferred with him on their plans. Tristen felt relieved that August made him feel his importance. The boys riding behind his back were silent.

Riding up closer to the captain, Tristen asked, “Tell me, August, am I despised by my new friends?” Tristen peeked behind him and caught several dark, suspicious eyes.

“Your Highness, what makes you say such a thing?” But August’s tone did not convince Tristen.

“August, speak the truth to me. And please, call me Tristen. I find it makes me uneasy to be separated from you by title.” Tristen then said, “You must know them. What do they think? Will they give me a chance? Or do they already have their preconceived notions?” The horse snorted in the crisp air.

“Your Highness—I mean, Prince Tristen, why do you ask me such things? I am not part of your peers. You need to inquire of this for yourself, or not, as you wish. They will come away today with whatever opinion you want them to have.”

Tristen thought this over as they entered the rising forest.

He grew bored as August kept searching diligently for any sign of deer. The boys were whispering quietly behind them. Tristen glanced over his shoulder in agony, wanting so much to be accepted, to be able to share his isolated life. He kept trying to slow his horse to have them catch up, but they remained forever behind.

August reined his steed to a stop. "I think we should split the group in two. You three guards take three of the boys to investigate the north wood while I'll ride with the three remaining boys, you two guards, and the prince."

Tristen waited as the six horses moved off at a casual pace.

With this smaller, less intrusive party, they continued to hunt.

A flock of pheasant was stirred into flight. The boys quickly dispatched their arrows and claimed their prizes. Tristen watched them run excitedly over the shrubs, wishing he had spotted the birds as well. He told himself to keep more alert from now on. Scanning the trees, Tristen moved his head right to left diligently and noticed August looking on him with pity.

After a moment August reached out to Tristen. "Your Highness! Up ahead in the thickest of pines, a stag. Ready your bow."

Tristen dropped the rein and reached for an arrow. He took aim, pulling the string tightly, his heart racing. He let go the arrow and felt his horse jolt under him. It whinnied loudly and took off in a sprint through the trees. In panic, Tristen squeezed tightly with his thighs and grabbed for the reins but they were high and out of reach on the stallion's neck. Tristen tried to contain his fear and held onto its mane, calling the horse's name to plead with him to stop. "Pallas! Pallas! For the love of the king, halt!"

Clinging to its back as the horse dodged over boulders and fallen evergreens, winding and jolting over every obstacle, Tristen stretched out as far as he could over the horse's neck, coming within inches of the rein which slowly worked its way higher out of his fingers' grasp.

A deep ravine came into view as Tristen begged the horse to stop. As a last hope Tristen grabbed the solid gold medal that hung around his neck, closed his eyes, and prayed.

The wind tore at Tristen's face and eyes, its fierce gales blowing in the winter season. His tears ran from the sting.

Prince of Servitude

Hanging on tight, Tristen felt the horse's boiling heat through its thick coat. The sounds of its hooves were like thunder. His fingers were being whipped painfully. Tristen opened his eyes to see the rein slapping the back of his hand. He grabbed it with his right and released the medal with his left, hauling back on the leather with a force he'd not known he contained. The stallion reared from the bite in its mouth, snorting and stomping furiously, but it had stopped. Tristen held the rein in shaking fingers, his forehead glistened in sweat. When he looked up he found a deep crevasse in his path with no bottom in sight. He felt weak from the fear.

Hoof beats approaching awoke him from his nightmare. Tristen found the strength to turn the horse around to meet the advancing rider.

August's panic-stricken face suddenly changed to relief when he met Tristen's gaze. He halted next to the prince and held the stallion's chin strap.

"Your Highness, are you harmed?"

"No, August, I'm all right. I cannot think of what could have frightened the horse." Tristen tried to control his shivering.

"No, neither can I." August's tone wasn't convincing.

Tristen noticed August show his teeth in an indication of fury and wondered if it was just his fear over the horse's wild flight or perhaps something more sinister.

"Prince Tristen, the stag, your arrow hit true."

"The stag? Did I? Well! Let's see." Tristen spurred his horse and cantered over the fields, forgetting completely the terror of a moment before.

The boys were cleaning the carcass and the guard had severed the head. Tristen came up in a clamor of hooves and jumped to the ground on unsteady feet.

The guards congratulated him heartily and showed him the prized head.

Tristen stared at it with a mixture of sadness and wonder.

“Such a noble beast to die this way.”

Aldren, a red-haired boy mocked, “Oh, yes, pity the poor beast, he’ll make a noble feast.”

“Yes, it seems so,” Tristen replied.

The venison was loaded onto a horse along with the trophy head. Tristen walked to his steed and led it by the reins out of the scrub.

The youngest of the three boys approached him timidly, keeping his eye on the other two as he did. Tristen knew he was Dinas, the son of a grand duke, but not the first in line for the inheritance. Dinas seemed to take his place without a grudge for he appeared gentle in nature with pleasantly placed features and soft, clay brown hair.

Dinas asked shyly, “Surely it wasn’t your first stag, Your Highness, the arrow hit true.”

Tristen was so shocked at being addressed by one of the young men he almost encouraged Dinas to turn away. “I thank you for your kind words but, truly, it was.” Not wanting the conversation to end as abruptly as it began, Tristen tried to come up with the next thing to say. “You are Elden’s son, Dinas, are you not?” He had tried hard to remember all of the young men’s names when August pointed them out. He was very glad to have remembered this one. He knew it made a difference by the grin on Dinas’ face.

“Yes, that is me. At your service, Your Highness.” He bowed properly.

“Tristen. Please.” He laughed, brimming with joy. “Please, accompany me.”

They walked together, leading the horses out to the trail. Tristen wondered as he noticed Dinas looking back at his companions quite often, if there was something holding Dinas back from his friendship. “We must ride again together soon. Will you? I would like to try falconry. Have you tried it?” Tristen frantically attempted to keep his new friend’s interest.

Prince of Servitude

“You haven’t tried falconry?” Dinas appeared amazed.

Tristen blushed shyly. “I haven’t done much, I fear. But I would like to. Will you please join me?”

Dinas turned around to the two boys who were presently scowling at him. Tristen thought perhaps they felt betrayed as Dinas gained his trust. Dinas was obviously at a loss at what to do.

Tristen read it easily on his face and peeked over at the others for their unspoken warning. Aldren was a first born noble, son of a lesser lord. His fiery red hair was pulled back tautly in a ribbon, his expression was filled with wrath.

“You hesitate,” Tristen said, “could young Aldren be so threatening?”

“No, Prince Tristen. You must forgive me. Let me ride with you. I would be so honored.” Dinas’ smile was bright and genuine.

Tristen placed his arm around Dinas’ shoulder as they walked through the brush together where the other half of the party was waiting for them.

After his evening meal with his mother, Tristen lay back on his soft furs to recall their conversation. Queen Olympia had questioned him harshly about his every move in the woods, never offering a word of praise for his first kill. Tristen abstained from mentioning his morning sprint, knowing full well it would keep him indoors, and prayed word would not reach her.

His father had awaited them at the castle gate. When the captain approached with his son’s trophy the king had been left speechless. He took Tristen into his arms, giving him a warm bear hug.

Tristen still choked up when he thought of his father’s embrace. He’d never felt that fulfilled before. His father’s eyes were so filled with pleasure Tristen never wanted that feeling to

G.A. Hauser

end. He vowed to always make him proud, never humiliated.

The wind whistled through the open cracks in his shutters as Tristen nestled into his furs. He thought of Dinas. It made him smile in the darkness. He curled up with the sable tucked under his chin and dreamed of the day when he and Dinas would be old enough to ride into battle together.

Chapter Three

The morning turned bright and clear after the drenching rain brought down the last of the brown leaves. The king accompanied Tristen along with August, and Dinas, his son's new inseparable comrade.

Each had a falcon on a leather clad wrist, their spirits eager to soar with the flight of the birds.

A servant released a dove and the king removed the tiny hood off the sharp eyes of his prized pet, launching it into the heavens. In a moment, a flurry of white feathers followed and the falcon sent the dove plummeting to earth. The falcon circled twice, then returned to the king's sleeve for a treat of rodent meat. The king laughed heartily at the act.

Tristen's mouth opened in shock. The skill of the hunter far outweighed that of its prey. A shudder of pity passed over Tristen for the poor dove. Its broken body was presented to the king and the king laughed and slapped his thigh.

Tristen studied his father. King Renelin was a robust, dark, husky male, with black, wiry hair and a beard that framed his round face. He had perfect teeth and liked to show them frequently when he smiled, or growled. The king's eyes were brown and brooding, a scar lightly interrupted his right eyebrow where a sword came too close to its mark. Filled with ego and self-confidence, King Renelin's self-importance was almost too large for his body to contain. The king was proud of his

boldness and aggression and made sure all around him kept constantly aware of that fact.

Tristen loved him, but at times did not admire him. He perceived him as cruel and unemotional, with little value for life. Especially the lives of his enemies, and they were many.

Tristen barely remembered his grandfather, King Richard, though he lived to be quite old. King Renelin inherited the throne after the sudden death of his older brother, Scott, a man who died prematurely in his prime. They attributed it to disease possibly picked up from a foreign land. There were whispers of poison, though the truth would never be known.

Tristen never knew what to believe and did not want to think his father was capable of murdering his own brother. It didn't seem to matter. The tales had long since ceased to be told, except by Queen Olympia in moments of anger.

After Renelin was crowned king, he took a wife from the northern boundary to gain alliance with the lord there, thus uniting two kingdoms. Olympia was only a child of fifteen at the time and became a mother a year later.

During Tristen's grandfather's reign, the territory beyond Westland, Troyar, was a constant source of strife. King Mildor felt hatred for the land of Brandywine for it was rich in precious gems and ore. King Mildor envied King Renelin's hoard of treasure and twisted with desire to overtake it.

King Richard, as well as his son, Renelin, sought new mines continually and paid the villagers royally for any new substantial find. Brandywine's treasures increased yearly as the villagers offered tribute until the sum could only be speculated upon. It was said the quantity of loot was so vast that Old King Richard would grind up the gems in his wine as healing remedies.

King Mildor grew wicked with malice each time a report returned to him of his barren lands. He often sent out parties to raid the mines and kill the villagers under the disguise of bandits.

Prince of Servitude

King Richard tolerated no interference in his efforts to attain all the treasures from the earth. He quickly invaded Tenegar Castle in Troyar, burning and pillaging enough to dissuade any further attacks.

Currently the grandson of King Mildor, King Telgras, occupied the throne there. Too young for the position, for he was only sixteen at the time, yet the only heir apparent, Telgras was reckless and incorrigible in his desperate land. Yet his people yearned for a king who was a tyrant and would finally take the jewels and riches and disperse them to each loyal subject. It seemed only a matter of time before King Telgras avenged his grandfather. So, meanwhile, an army was built in Troyar and King Telgras lay in wait.

Tristen knew his father was aware of this conflict. It was his reasons for befriending the Lord of Westland, whose kingdom fell between the two warring countries. King Renelin wanted allies and a safe border. In return Tristen was to be given in marriage to the Princess Lynette, the daughter of King Ator, the reigning king.

Only recently had Tristen learned of his marriage plans. Kept ignorant of most things, he was protected by his mother. Yet protecting him she was not, for more than ever Tristen was vulnerable in his ignorance than if he had been prepared.

The bird was limp and lifeless. King Renelin held it up for the falcon to peck at.

Tristen had a bitter taste in his mouth at the cruelty. As Tristen inspected the sleek bird he held aloft, he petted its downy brown feathers. He admired its skill and wondered what would give better sport.

Dinas walked his horse next to Tristen's. "Will you try next?"

Tristen returned his smile, then shook his head. "I think not, Dinas. It seems an unfair match. Such a weak and shy bird is the dove. It does not stand a chance against one so powerful a hunter."

“What talk it this?” King Renelin bellowed. “The strongest survive in nature. What do you care about these filthy birds? Let the falcon do what he does best.”

Tristen studied his father for a moment. “I think not. I do not enjoy your ‘sport’.” He gave the bird to a nervous servant. “I’ll find a more challenging game. Come along, Dinas.”

Dinas handed off his bird carefully, avoiding the king’s glare. He and Tristen cantered off into the field together.

As they left, Tristen heard his father signal for two doves to be released. Unable to stop himself, Tristen watched the falcon soaring skyward. In a moment two white bodies plummeted out of the air. Tristen noticed the satisfaction on his father’s face as he grinned at August.

Tristen caught August’s gaze as the captain watched him ride away. August gave Tristen a smile as if he admired his decision.

“If I had my doubts about you, Tristen, you’ve put my mind at ease,” Dinas said.

Tristen slowed his horse to a walk and adjusted his sword to lay better on his side. “What doubts do you speak of?”

Dinas looked away shyly.

Tristen glanced back at his blush and stopped his horse. “Let’s walk them. I prefer it to shouting.” Tristen slid off the stallion and held the rein in his hand. Dinas did the same. They walked between the horses, near enough now to whisper. Tristen wrapped his ermine cloak around him closely, cutting off the wind. “You spoke of doubt. I am listening.” Tristen felt preoccupied and annoyed.

“Tristen, “Dinas started hesitantly, “I suppose I have never imagined you standing up to the king. Many of us have misjudged you. We have all heard the tales. There is not a man alive who would have ridden from the king as you did.”

“How funny you are. These tales I would like to hear and hope you will tell me. As for the king, you forget, he is a father

Prince of Servitude

to me first.” Tristen glanced at Dinas’ expression, very much enjoying staring at his handsome face and intelligent eyes. “Do you know the woods well? I don’t know them at all.”

“Yes. I’ve been here many times.” Dinas pointed. “There’s an old mine there I’ve explored. Would you like to see it? I’ve found some gems in there, in the stones.”

“You have found gems there yourself? How wonderful. Yes. Please lead the way.” Tristen gestured for Dinas to show him.

After he assisted Tristen to his saddle, Dinas mounted his horse. They cantered into the woods on a well worn trail carved by the use of wagon wheels. The clouds blew in, rising the dust on the path and a chilly breeze blew through the poplars, whistling and moaning.

“Up ahead. Careful of the shafts,” Dinas warned as he approached a deep cave that had been cut into the side of a slight hill. Dinas tied up his mount, reached to help Tristen down from his horse and then peered into the gloom.

Tristen did the same. “It looks quite dark.”

“Your eyes will become accustomed. Come.” Dinas took his hand.

Dinas led him over the fallen rocks and debris as Tristen felt the jagged edges cutting his boot leather. The cave had a foul odor. Wrapping his cloak around him tighter for security, Tristen squinted to see in the dark. After a few moments his vision was better. Light filtered through holes bored into the ceiling of the cave.

“Here. This is where I found my last gem.” Dinas paused. “It was quite small, but very beautiful. I thought it was a good omen.”

Tristen searched the floor for anything that sparkled, picking up rocks and pebbles curiously, tucking them away in his tunic for later inspection if they looked promising.

Dinas moved deeper into the shaft until Tristen lost sight of

him. Tristen felt intimidated suddenly by the fear of being alone. For comfort, Tristen hunted under his leather tunic for his gold medal, claspings it in his palm. It was warm from lying against his skin and felt heavy on its chain. He wanted so much to be strong and brave and find a jewel to bring back for his mother. Praying silently to be guided to one, he heard Dinas shuffling in the dark and noticed a beam of light trickling into the shaft. Tristen approached it and felt Dinas close by.

“Any luck?” Tristen whispered.

“I do not know. I have a few collected, but I need the sun to really see them.”

Tristen started to feel the coldness. It was coming from inside him as well as out. He reached for the reassuring presence of his friend and closed his eyes to try and resist the fear the blindness of the cave gave him. Tristen knew it was unreasonable to feel it but it did not stop the sensation of terror growing in him.

Tristen’s hand tightened on Dinas’ shoulder while he stilled himself, hearing his own breathing in the silence, sharp and quick.

“Tristen,” Dinas whispered to comfort him.

Tristen drew Dinas towards him, caressing his hair gently. “Hold me.”

Dinas instantly crushed Tristen in an embrace, wrapping his arms around him.

With the security of Dinas’ hug, Tristen opened his eyes and was able to feel more of the light around him. He inhaled a few deep breaths. “I am fine now. Do they still work this mine?” It felt better to talk.

“It produces far too little for the king’s liking.” As if thinking about what he had just said, Dinas added quickly, “I am sorry, Tristen. That sounded rude. It was not meant to be.”

With the exception of his mother and nannies, Tristen had never held another person this way. It was bliss. Tingles of heat

Prince of Servitude

began racing through Tristen's body causing his cock to harden and fill his leather leggings. The sensation of excitement caught him off guard. Tristen tried to understand why he felt this way in the arms of Dinas and could not explain it.

Tristen cupped his hand behind Dinas' head to see into his shimmering eyes. "No insult taken." Afraid Dinas would feel the bulge in his crotch, Tristen took a step deeper into the cave. "What a foul place. It seems to me somewhere I've been in a nightmare. To be trapped in here in total darkness would drive me to madness." He kicked a large object and stooped to investigate it. "These are bones. I think some animal must have been here. Hence the smell." Tristen picked over a few pebbles.

Dinas stood on the same spot where he and Tristen had embraced.

After Tristen had moved away, he missed Dinas' warmth and scent, not to mention the large mound pressing into his own.

Tristen was about to say something more, but noticed Dinas had closed his eyes and was touching between his legs. The sight made Tristen shiver in delight. "Dinas?"

As if waking from a dream, Dinas quickly dropped his hand to his side and said, "We should be going, Tristen. If an animal has been here, I'm not looking forward to facing it when it returns."

Tristen acknowledged him with a nod, sighing with relief that he had not spoken of leaving first. Though he was disappointed not to have found any gems, Tristen said, "Yes, we should go." He reached out his hand for Dinas' and Dinas led him back out to the entrance.

The tunnel of the cave appeared like a bright white mouth. The light had begun to angle in perfectly as the sun set.

Tristen noticed a flash of brilliance on the wall. Approaching it excitedly, he took out his short sword to chip at it with the hilt. The crumbling boulder echoed like rain in the cave and a crystal he did manage to remove, nearly the size of

his thumb.

“Dinas, come see.” He held it aloft and it glowed like a hot coal, burning red.

Dinas brushed his fingers over the stone, then spit on it, rubbing the moisture on the surface. “It is a beauty, Tristen. Let us look at it in the light.”

They chased the sun’s rays eagerly out of the shaft and huddled together at the mouth. The crystal blazed like fire in the afternoon light. Tristen had never seen anything like it. Dinas handed it back to him gently. “You see? A sign. A good omen.”

“It is a gift to my mother.” Tristen held it up.

“Fit for a queen.” Dinas laughed.

The snort of a horse brought them on the alert. They spotted a small black bear snuffling the brush out in the distance.

“It looks like we are leaving just in time.” Dinas took hold of Tristen’s horse and helped him mount.

As they walked leisurely, not eager to rush back to the castle, they found a soft sloping hill that overlooked it. The sun tilted low, but they still had an hour or two before it disappeared behind the ridge. They cuddled together on a pile of leaves. Tristen wrapped them both up in his ermine and velvet cloak while the horses grazed lazily beside them.

After a long pause Dinas said, “The feast is in your honor tonight. In honor of the stag you took. It will be a splendid affair. You will attend, won’t you?” Dinas waited, adding, “I have never seen you at a feast.”

Tristen squeezed him closer to his chest and gazed down at Dinas’ long brown lashes glittering in the sunset. “Yes, of course I shall attend. How else am I to be honored?” He brushed a leaf out of Dinas’ dark hair.

“Why is it you have never attended before?” Dinas pressed his ear against Tristen’s ribs.

Tristen sighed. “I do not know. To be honest, I never knew we held a feast. My mother has always kept company with me

Prince of Servitude

while I ate.”

Dinas raised his head to stare at Tristen. “You have missed much. I feel sorrow for you. It seems a prince should be more spoiled in such things than the rest of us.”

“Yes, you would think.” Tristen pouted.

“Why? Why then were you kept away from us? Was it the queen?” Dinas propped himself up on his elbows and petted the soft fur at Tristen’s shoulder.

Tristen didn’t know the answer. He thought about his mother. He loved her deeply, her beauty and cunning, but knew not why he was kept hidden for so long and yearned to live again the last thirteen years to catch all he had missed.

Dinas studied Tristen for a moment. “I feel your misery, my Prince.” He kissed Tristen’s cheek, then lay his head back on Tristen’s chest.

Tristen’s eyes filled with warm tears. Embracing Dinas tightly, Tristen felt his heat and friendship in comfort. *I adore you*. Tristen never wanted to let him go.

Chapter Four

Tristen's attendants dressed him in his finest robes. A tunic of royal blue with the coat of arms on his breast and a cape of rich purple velvet trimmed with white fur. His golden hair was washed and combed until it lay like fine silk against his shoulders and down his back. His sword was polished and placed in its scabbard at his hip. Layers of gold were arranged around his neck and each finger was adorned with a ring. An armband was clasped on his muscular biceps and a light crown was laid on his head. He tilted his chin to the looking glass, loving the feel of the splendor.

Tristen had cleaned the red crystal, flaking off any darkness around it and placed it in his tunic to present it to his mother during the feast. The servants bowed to indicate he was ready. Setting his shoulders back, Tristen tried to calm his jumping nerves so he could enjoy his first feast and meet the many new faces. It didn't matter. He could not, for his insides quivered nervously regardless of his command.

The door was opened and the servants bowed low as Tristen brushed passed them. A murmur went through the halls behind him as guards and maids alike admired him.

Tristen tried to look straight ahead, but couldn't help but steal a glance at the many sets of staring eyes.

The Great Hall was filled with all the nobles of the kingdom. Dinas, his two brothers, and his father all sat in places

Prince of Servitude

of honor as did befit their rank. Aldren, with his father Remous, sat as well in places befitting theirs; at the foot of the great oak table. Remous only ruled a small village, but never spoke of a grudge.

The king and queen sat on the dais in bejeweled thrones. The king's scepter carried a large clear stone that threw rainbows around the room.

A hundred did gather for the greatest of feasts, for the prince was finally coming out for all to meet. Tristen knew of the fabricated stories that surrounded him, that he must be malformed or mute for never would they think otherwise of a child that was kept hidden for thirteen years. *They shall see me now. I am not horrible.*

"August, my good friend. A few words to calm my twisting liver." Tristen faced the broad, bearded man.

Captain August laughed heartily. "Your Highness, you will silence them all with your beauty. They will never hear a word from your lips so occupied will their eyes be."

Tristen touched the man's shoulder, thankful for the kindness.

A horn sounded and the hall became silent. Tristen took a deep breath and walked into the vast room. Not a movement could be seen, not even the stir of a dog's tail.

Feelings mixed with fear and pride, Tristen walked to his parents and bowed low, then sat upon the throne provided between them.

The food was brought out in a parade of aroma and color. The great stag's head was presented to the prince. He nodded and waved it away, feeling too queer for its sad eyes. The pheasants were cooked and re-feathered, their plumage replaced to absolute perfection. Exotic fruits bought from trade were laid out on great platters and wine was poured into sterling chalices.

Tristen tasted his first cup of the grape and tried to meet the many appraising eyes. Lovely ladies were gathering, all trying

to catch his attention.

The queen gave each a jealous look. Tristen knew she carefully watched his gaze to see if it would rest on one in particular. As far as Tristen was concerned, only his loyal friend intrigued him, no flashy painted maiden.

He and Dinas shared a toast across the room, which helped calm Tristen.

Music played joyously as all ate their fill. Tristen begged to have leave to wander around. He asked it of the king and was granted permission before the queen could voice her objections. As Tristen anxiously made his way to Dinas, many a fair woman approached him. They all appeared to want a chance to speak to Tristen and to gaze into his eyes. A circle formed to trap him. Tristen knew not how as each female enviously sought his attention and a word. Some boldly touched the fur of his cape.

Tristen froze in fear of their forward advances and bowed many times politely to take his leave of them. He spied over their naked shoulders for Dinas in desperation. The wine had gone to Tristen's head and he was becoming dizzy. He backed away from the women and sought the door to escape. Aldren blocked his way.

At fifteen Aldren was taller than the prince and obviously enjoyed it. Looking down his pointed nose Aldren said, "Your stag was a bit tough to chew. Try a younger one for your next."

Tristen, unused to such insolence, became defensive quickly. "Aldren, I see you have left your place at the table. Maybe you should learn where 'your place' is." Tristen showed his teeth in a snarl.

Aldren reached for the hilt of his sword and Tristen narrowed his eyes in fury.

"You have escaped your admirers." Dinas appeared and nudged Tristen through the doorway.

Tristen turned back to watch Aldren's eyes. "Treason,"

Prince of Servitude

Tristen murmured.

“What talk is this?” Dinas made light of it. “You just don’t know the fellow. He’s really not so bad.” Dinas handed Tristen a skin of wine. “Come. They have lit the watch fires. Let us go have a look.” Dinas grabbed Tristen’s hand and tugged him down the passageway.

After climbing the winding stair they came upon the tower guard. Dinas stood back and allowed him to see Tristen. The guard’s anger subsided and he bowed low as they passed. Dinas led Tristen along the outside pathway and then leaned out over the wall. “Look.” Dinas pointed to the distant hills where great orange blazes speckled the gloom. “Just think, five more years and we shall be of age to join them.” His voice quivered with excitement.

Tristen leaned over the wall to have a look into the pitch dark. He felt a sharp pain in his side and jerked back. When Tristen reached into his tunic, he removed the red crystal, shaking his head at having forgotten it.

“Give it to her later,” Dinas said. “Before she sleeps.”

Tristen nodded and hid it again. They stared at the distant flames while they passed the flask. Getting very intoxicated, Tristen leaned his back against the wall and started to laugh. He raised his hands to inspect his many rings and removed one, holding it up. “This is supposed to prevent me from getting drunken,” he slurred. “Dinas, I’m quite drunken.”

Dinas smiled and drank more wine. “I am afraid, fair prince, I am more experienced with wine and hold it better than do you.” As he swallowed it down, Dinas watched the prince’s expression.

“Here. It does not work. You take it.” Tristen grabbed Dinas’ hand and slipped the ring onto his finger.

Dinas held up his hand to admire the purple stone. “But, my Prince, perhaps it will not work for me either.” Dinas’ face filled with joy.

It made Tristen feel warm and affectionate for him. He cupped Dinas' jaw in his hands to hold him still. "I shall give you a kiss to honor our friendship."

Dinas grunted in shock as Tristen met his lips.

Tristen savored the sweet wine from Dinas' tongue. The consuming passion at his first kiss overwhelmed Tristen. He opened his eyes to see Dinas had closed his tightly. As their groins ground together, the pressure of hot friction sent a surge of pleasure rushing over Tristen's length.

Then something very sharp poked him. Tristen jumped and cried out in pain. Dinas gasped and released him. Tristen reached into his tunic and produced the sharp crystal. "Dear Dinas, what a way to end a kiss."

Holding his chest, Dinas panted. "Oh. It was the ruby. Tristen, you gave me quite a fright."

"Come here." Tristen opened his cloak to him in invitation.

Without hesitation, Dinas moved under it to keep warm as they leaned over the wall together, staring wistfully into the night.

The wine had drained Tristen to exhaustion. Though he knew he and Dinas must go their separate ways, Tristen wished he could keep his friend with him.

Loneliness edging out the memory of Dinas' lips, Tristen made his way to his rooms where the servants awaited him. They stripped him of his jewels and robes. Assisting them, he elevated his arms as his tunic was removed and the crystal fell to the floor. Tristen gasped in fear for its safety and was relieved to see it had hit the soft furs at his feet and lay unharmed. He picked it up, standing naked but for his leggings and boots. *If I do not give it to her now, it will surely be damaged.*

He wrapped his fur cape around his shoulders and made his way to his mother's quarters. Tristen greeted the guard who appeared surprised to see him.

Prince of Servitude

“Your Highness, how did you enjoy your first feast?”

“Well, Jonas. Very well.” Tristen felt flattered.

“I heard you shot your first stag. Well done, Your Highness.”

Tristen tucked the crystal into his waistband as he enjoyed this rare chat from one of his mother’s handsome Royal Guard. “Thank you, sincerely. It is hard to believe it has taken me thirteen years to get outside these castle walls.”

“I agree, Your Highness. Beauty such as yours should be shared not hidden.” The guard opened the door for him and bowed low.

Tristen smiled sweetly as he passed, very happy with the attention. To his surprise, the guard reached for his hand to kiss. The charge of excitement that raced to Tristen’s crotch was thrilling. Images of this big, muscular soldier ravishing him began to make Tristen lose track of why he was where he was. Deep in a fantasy about being devoured by a man of steel, Tristen paused until it was released, then gave the armor-covered guard a very satisfied smile as he entered his mother’s chambers. “Thank you, Jonas.”

“My pleasure, Prince Tristen,” Jonas purred seductively sending chills rushing all over Tristen’s skin.

The queen was seated before her looking glass as her maid combed her brown tresses. Her sleeping gown was soft and sheer. A fire burned warmly in the hearth attended by her lady. She noticed Tristen’s reflection and paused, nodding for her ladies to take their leave.

As the maidens disappeared, Tristen gazed at them without interest, then raised his eyes slowly to his young mother. “Forgive me. I did not mean to intrude. I have quite forgotten my manners.” He averted his eyes.

“You have quite forgotten your mother tonight as well. What makes you remember her now as she readies for bed?”

Transformed into the guilty little boy, Tristen lowered his

head and stepped closer to her, lifting a strand of her hair, feeling the texture in his fingers absently. "I beg your forgiveness, Mother, you have a thoughtless son."

"What is it you want of me?"

He lost himself on her hair for a moment.

"Tristen?"

Startled by her tone, he remembered the purpose of his visit. Tristen touched under his cape and felt bare skin. He shifted around and searched for the crystal, reaching into his waistband until he felt the gem fall to his thigh.

Her eyebrows raised as he moved his hand in his leggings. "What are you doing? Remove your hands from there this instant!" She rose to her feet.

"No! Mother. Wait." Blushing crimson, Tristen turned his back to her as he shook out his leg. The crystal slipped into his boot. On one foot he hopped to her bed to carefully remove it. When Tristen finally had it in his hands again he sighed, laying his boot aside, and stared into its inner flame, lost.

He had forgotten his mother once again as his thoughts wandered.

She asked, "Do I have a mad man for a son?"

Tristen jerked his head up to her. "No, Mother. This. I have this for you." He handed it to her.

Tilting her head curiously, she took it out of his palm. When she realized its worth, her expression softened. "My precious son. A ruby so fine. From where did it come?"

"I found it for you. With my own hands." He was infinitely proud.

As if she were melting from his affection, she held his hands and kissed them, kneeling down before him.

"Mother, please rise!" Tristen panicked and brought her to her feet. The queen did not bow to her son!

She embraced him and he crushed his face into her hair. He

Prince of Servitude

loved to please her. She released him, wiping at a tear, and walked slowly to her dressing table. She laid the crystal on a soft fur cloth and turned to look at him.

Tristen smiled brightly at making her happy.

She removed his cloak, smoothing her hands over his skin. "Sleep here tonight. I dread being alone."

"Where is Father?"

"He sleeps not. He is with August."

"Is there war?" Tristen's heart skipped a beat.

"I think not. Not yet." She crouched down to remove his remaining boot, unlacing it.

Tristen held her shoulder as he stepped out of his leggings.

When he was naked she wrest her eyes away from him. "You are no longer the babe in my arms, are you, Tristen?"

"A babe? No, Mother. Don't be silly. I'm thirteen. I'm a man." Tristen climbed into her bed and snuggled under the layers of fur. He hadn't remembered sharing it with her in years, since he was quite small. This was a special occasion indeed. Holding the gold medal that hung around his neck, he thanked the spirits for helping him find the ruby. When he glanced up, his mother was dousing the oil lamps allowing only the hearth fire to give the room an orange glow.

At the first sensation of her touch, a shiver washed over him. He remembered Dinas' kiss and the caress of his body. Tristen imagined he and Dinas alone in his bedroom chambers.

His mother held him from behind, the crush of her breasts on his back. Great warmth engulfed him as Tristen closed his eyes to sleep, but the aroused excitement in him at Dinas' kiss wouldn't allow it. Wishing it were Dinas in her place, Tristen began to struggle with his taboo thoughts.

Her breath stirred his hair as she whispered, "You have a friend?"

"Yes. Dinas," he answered, wondering if she could read his

thoughts.

She paused, then said, "Male friends I will allow, but you must not keep company with any of the maidens. You are promised to a princess from Westland and are to remain pure. Do you understand what that means?"

"Yes, Mother." Tristen cleared his throat awkwardly.

"They will soil you. You must be strong and remain chaste or I will be horribly disappointed in you."

"I won't ever disappoint you." Tristen pressed his head into the pillows, trying not to feel her every breath brushing his neck.

"I know that, darling." She kissed his hair and cuddled him closer.

When her hand brushed over his hardness, a trickle of sweat ran down Tristen's temple in embarrassment. He lay still as stone until he heard her breathing soften, only then was he able to sleep.

Chapter Five

By his eighteenth birthday Tristen was already proficient with a spear. He and Dinas practiced for hours, along with the other boys who came of age. They would swordfight, train at archery, wrestle and spar, all to prepare for the defense of the realm should there be a need.

Tristen had grown tall, standing six feet, two inches. Dinas had reached his maximum at five feet eleven. Tristen loved Dinas' infectious smile and taut muscular frame.

Aldren and his circle of friends were forever tormenting the prince behind his back; passing stories that his betrothed was an old maid, used only to secure boundaries. When Tristen heard the rumors he cringed until Dinas laughed at him and eased his mind with images of great beauty. Regardless, Tristen was growing less and less interested in female flesh and more and more enthralled with his best friend's growth of facial hair, not to mention the dark bush under his armpits and on his lower abdomen. Tristen couldn't get enough of Dinas' scent, but he kept his secret desires to himself.

Tristen knew Queen Olympia always watched him from her high window as he threw his javelin. He had more determination than all the others to be best. He had to be. He was their prince.

The summer was in full bloom as the young men grew tanned from their outdoor exposure. Tristen felt sleek and solid

from his many activities. His hair was the color of the golden ore that came pouring out of the ground, and he kept it long, which was the style for royalty in times of peace.

The ruby crystal hung from a golden chain around the queen's neck, for she refused to part with it save only during her sleep, for its edges were sharp.

Tristen glanced up through the sun to wave at her jubilantly. She threw him a kiss back.

"If I had a mother who looked like that, I would have no need for a hag of a wife."

Tristen spun around abruptly to Aldren and lunged for his throat, pinning Aldren to the ground. Tristen could have easily strangled him, but the guards were there to pull them apart.

Captain August raced to the commotion and admonished the two boys. "No infighting. I am extremely disappointed in both of you. It is enough we have enemies outside our borders. Save it for them."

Aldren rubbed his red neck and spit the dirt from his mouth.

Dinas held Tristen around his waist from behind.

"You filthy bastard," Tristen shouted. "Denounce your words or I shall kill you!"

Aldren scanned around at all the accusing eyes. Straightening his back, Aldren bowed in a mocking gesture. "Please forgive my err in judgment, Your Highness." His tone remained condescending. Aldren spun on his heels and walked away.

Tristen shook with anger as the servants tried to brush the grass off his hot skin. In his frustration Tristen shoved them away. "August. Such insolence. I cannot abide this kind of talk about my own mother."

"Your Highness." August took him by the arm and looked patiently at Dinas who tried to follow. When the captain brought Tristen out of earshot he confided, "Prince Tristen, you must remember your position. A king or a prince is the target of

Prince of Servitude

much jealousy and bitterness. There are those who have less and will always hold their grudge. You cannot simply behead all those who are too proud for their own good. The kingdom would be littered with bodiless heads.” He tried to smile. “You must learn control and patience. Aldren is not pleasant and will soon be alienated by those who love you. Isn’t that punishment enough?”

Tristen smoldered. Aldren’s words cut deep. “But when is it treason? When is it a menace?”

August shrugged. “Through years of experience you will learn the distinction. To kill carelessly is something very hard to live with, and for you, dear Prince, it would be your doom.”

“Yes, it is true. I would be in torment if I killed out of rage.” He gazed into August’s eyes. “Always the trusted friend, good August.” Removing an emerald ring from his finger, Tristen closed it into August’s palm, then pranced back lightly to Dinas. When Tristen peeked back at the captain he found August glance around discreetly, opening his hand. August looked in wonder at the fine stone and slipped the gem into his tunic. Tristen smiled happily.

For hours Tristen aimed his spear, hitting the target each time.

After all the other young men had finished practice and drifted off, Dinas sat on the lush grass as Tristen threw again and again at a target, his servant, Caine, weary of retrieving.

When Tristen’s muscles burned and ached and he was glistening with sweat, he finally sent Caine away and collapsed next to Dinas.

“Why do you torture yourself? You are by far the best and still you hammer away at your target. Give it a rest.” Dinas exhaled in exasperation.

Tristen placed his hands behind his head and watched the passing clouds. “Dear Dinas.” He caught his breath. “Why do you think I am the best?” Tristen gave him a mischievous glance.

“Because you are Tristen.” Dinas shoved him playfully.

Tristen shook his head, laughing.

Dinas chewed a blade of grass, his eyes glazed as if in contemplation. Finally he rolled to his side and said, “There are rumors of war. They say that small bands of men are raiding livestock on the Westland border.”

“I know.”

“Have you consulted your father? What have you heard?” Dinas slid closer to him.

“No, Father has not sent for me in weeks. I cannot think why not. I hear they are planning on riding to the palace at Westland to consult with King Ator.”

“That is where your betrothed is.” Dinas propped up his head.

Tristen groaned. “That is why I need to go.” He moved to his side, mirroring his friend. “I suppose I need to see her, Dinas.” Tristen loosened the strap at his hip that held his leather crotch pouch in place. His legs were brown and the light blond hair sparkled on them like flecks of gold. He noticed Dinas’ attention was distracted by his actions.

“I know you are tired of the rumors. I tell you she is beautiful.”

“You know? You know nothing, you rascal.” Tristen jumped on Dinas and crushed him to the ground, loving their naked sweaty skin gliding together.

Giving a grunt of surprise, Dinas gazed up at him.

“I wish you did know. I would sleep easier.” Tristen drew close to Dinas’ lips. As his cock grew hard, Tristen pushed it against his friend’s. The urge to grind them together was overpowering.

Dinas gaped at him, his brown eyes connected to Tristen’s as if he were in a trance. “My beautiful prince, your tanned skin makes your light eyes glow like the blue sky above.” Dinas panted, his chest heaving. “And your hair? My love, pure gold,

Prince of Servitude

so thick and long, and filled with soft waves and golden highlights.”

After taking a peek around, Tristen slid off him reluctantly, keeping his leg across Dinas’ crotch and thighs, feeling where Dinas had grown equally hard under the leather crotch-piece.

Dinas reached down to hold the prince’s leg in place. “Tristen, look at you. You are the fairest prince in all the land and you think your father will wed you to a hag.”

Tristen was in agony. He did not wish to speak of an arranged marriage to an unknown female. He peered down at Dinas’ hand as it caressed his leg from his knee to his hip. Tristen enjoyed the touch so much, he lay on Dinas’ chest again. “Do you think I’m fair?”

Dinas’ breath caught in his throat. Tristen could feel his friend’s heart pounding ferociously under his ribs and Dinas’ cock began throbbing under Tristen’s leg. Tristen studied Dinas’ features; his perfect skin, perfect nose, perfect chin, those magical brown eyes, and that thick, wonderful head of chocolate brown hair.

Tristen waited for his answer, his lips softening to a pout.

“No, not fair,” Dinas replied.

Tristen was terribly disappointed.

“Fair hardly describes someone so blessed with beauty, Tristen.”

Tristen found his eyes again. “I need you to be honest with me, Dinas. Do not jest with me.”

Dinas raised his hand from Tristen’s leg to caress his cheek. “Is it that important to you to be desirable?”

“Mother seems to think so. She does go on about it.”

“But what of me? If I thought looks were everything, I would throw myself off the ravine.” He laughed.

Tristen grabbed him by both shoulders. “No, Dinas, you are extremely handsome.”

Dinas choked. "I was only joking."

Feeling like a fool, Tristen blushed and lowered his lashes. "Oh. Yes, of course."

"You think I am 'extremely handsome'?" he asked softly.

The throbbing between both their legs was a torment and a humiliation to Tristen, but something he knew he could not control. Tristen became very serious. After raising his head to their surroundings to be certain no one was left in the area, he glimpsed up at the high windows for a sign of his mother. They were vacant.

Dinas watched him with unmatched intensity.

Tristen arranged his body so it rubbed against Dinas in the right places. "Yes, I think you are very handsome." Tristen was going mad for him. He didn't know how much more he could take of holding back his desires. He brought his lips closer to Dinas'.

Dinas' body tensed and it seemed he could no longer swallow for he gulped loudly. "A kiss? To seal our friendship?"

Tristen smiled. "Yes. A kiss."

When their lips met Dinas whimpered.

Tristen closed his eyes and slipped his tongue into Dinas' mouth, thinking someone had set fire to the grass he was so hot. He ground his pelvis against Dinas', feeling a yearning to come so intense Tristen knew he would. There was no way to prevent the attraction he felt for his best friend. But in Brandywine, these acts were illegal and punished severely.

Dinas dug his hands into Tristen's hair and prolonged their kiss.

Tristen opened his mouth wider to accept Dinas' tongue and as it pushed in and out between his lips, Tristen came. The climax both thrilled and terrified him and Tristen had no idea if Dinas was aware of what he had done. Once the sensations subsided, Tristen opened his eyes. He felt a strong pulsating coming from Dinas' crotch and gazed in awe as Dinas appeared

Prince of Servitude

to be experiencing what Tristen had. *Oh, by the rule of the king, I love you.* Tristen wanted him desperately. He waited until Dinas opened his eyes. When their gazes met they locked. Tristen felt them both panting in fear at what they had just done.

Unsure if they would be caught and punished, Tristen rolled off of Dinas and took a paranoid glance around. "Come with me to the baths." He stood and reached out his hand.

Dinas clasped it and Tristen hauled him to his feet. He followed the prince into the castle. Both of them were preoccupied and silent.

Chapter Six

The king called his captain and advisors together. A map was laid out on a scarred wooden table in the war room. “We should have destroyed them the first time. How they torment Ator to get at me.”

“Your Majesty,” one of the King’s advisors gestured for calm, “King Ator has a strong force. The raids are few and lack any real strength. Surely we would be acting too hastily.”

The king grunted in disagreement.

“With all due respect,” August addressed the advisor, “I was of age to fight alongside your father, Your Majesty. This is the way the first wars began. Troyar’s army pretended to be a band of common looters and were able to press quite close into the Westland territory.”

The king replied, “We ride to Westland. Call or no. We see for ourselves if this be a regular band or not. How many can we ready?”

August scratched his beard. “Ten thousand men, a few thousand on horseback.”

The king sat in his large oak chair, resting his chin in his hand. “We do not want to show our strength. Only five hundred on horse and one thousand on foot. Set up a relay to the others if we need them. Two thousand to cover the castle at all times. They are never to leave it unguarded.”

“What of Tristen, Your Majesty?” August asked.

Prince of Servitude

“Hmm?” The king was preoccupied.

“What of your son?”

“He is too young to fight. He stays with his mother.” He brushed August off.

“He is of age, Your Majesty, and the best in all his weapons. The men will follow him anywhere—”

The king’s gaze silenced August.

“Forgive me, sire.” August bowed. “I know how much the boy wants to ride at his father’s side.”

“He can come if he wishes. If you can get permission of his mother.”

August looked defeated.

“You’ve leave to try.” The king elevated his hand.

August kissed his ring and left the room.

“No, I forbid it,” the queen said, “That’s final. Get out.”

“But, Your Highness, Tristen craves to be treated like a man. He will be crushed if he is left behind with the women. There is no threat of war and he will be guarded by one thousand men. They need to see his face. To know he stands with them. It will humiliate him if he stays.”

The queen fingered the ruby crystal from where it hung around her neck, pressing her finger against its edge. “He shall be safe here. How can I trust him on the march? It will take weeks to travel that far. You would separate a mother from her son?”

August dreaded telling Tristen, especially when Dinas was to ride. Just as he was about to walk out, he turned back say, “Your Highness will you not ride with us? You shall meet your son’s future wife. Will that not solve all?”

Queen Olympia paused, touching the ruby to her lips. “Wise August, ever the diplomat. Bring my son to me. I shall tell him myself.”

“Thank you, Your Highness.” He bowed and left.

“You sent for me, Mother?” Tristen stood in her doorway.

She nodded for him to come in.

With an affectionate smile, Tristen turned back to the guard and said kindly, “Thank you, Jonas.”

“Anything, Your Highness.” Winking flirtatiously, the guard closed the door between them.

“Why do you bother to engage one of the guards in conversation?” She gestured for Tristen to come closer. “Where have you been you look like a wild wolf.”

Tristen glanced down at his sole attire, the wide leather strap between his legs. “I was on my way to the baths with Dinas. I was out practicing javelin. What is it? Dinas is waiting.”

The queen rested a hand on each of his shoulders and gazed into his eyes. “You are my only son, my flesh and blood. What happens to you also happens to me.”

Restraining the urge to roll his eyes, Tristen tried not to get impatient.

“If so much as a drop of your blood is shed I will be in torment.”

“Mother, please.”

She silenced him. “You have heard rumors of the Westland raids? Your father is making ready to ride.”

This was what Tristen was waiting for. He started shifting his weight anxiously from side to side.

“You will go with him to the Kingdom of Westland.”

Tristen tried to look stern, but his smile was growing. Right behind his tight lips, he yearned to ask her a million questions about war, strategy, battle, but kept silent.

“My son, because of my love for you I will ride as well.”

Prince of Servitude

He kissed her forehead.

"Then you approve?" she asked.

"Of course. You always know best."

She ran her hands down his arms. "Stay with me tonight."

"I am too old to share your bed."

"Who put those thoughts into your head?"

"No one puts thoughts into my head, but I."

In a huff she sat at her dressing table, touching her hair. She removed a pin from it to let the tresses fall. "Will you brush it for me?"

Though he was preoccupied and anxious, Tristen walked over to her mechanically and took the brush she handed him. "The sun has set. I need to take my leave of you."

"Who awaits you?" She narrowed her eyes suspiciously.

"Dinas." Tristen set the brush down.

"You prefer his company to mine?"

"If we are to ride to Westland, there is much to discuss. I need to see Father. Why hasn't he summoned me? Why am I left to guess his plans?"

The queen sighed in irritation. "He shall call you now. Now that he knows you will ride." She faced him. "Will you stay with me on the road? Will you make it a vow?" She held his waist.

"I will be with the soldiers. How would it look for me if I slept with my mother? I would be made a fool."

Taking insult, she dropped her hands to her lap. "Leave before I decide we both shall stay."

Tristen grew angry and took a step back. "I am no longer a little boy. Please don't forget I am a man." He paused, watching her. "I'm sorry if this hurts you, but this is how it will be. You know I love you dearly, but I beg you to understand." He backed his way to the door.

She touched the crystal to her lips and gazed off into the room.

Unable to bear it, Tristen turned away from her devastated expression and left. He found Dinas waiting for him in the baths. At Tristen's approach Dinas stood up off a ledge of a deep tiled recessed tub and met him.

"I don't have time for a leisurely soak. I must wash and change quickly, then find my father."

"What has happened?"

"It seems I am riding to Westland. Can I meet you later?"

"Of course."

Just to be sure Dinas was not upset, Tristen held him to judge his eyes. Dinas nodded and shoved him out.

With all speed, Tristen rinsed his skin at a basin in his room, then changed into his tunic, leggings, and boots as well as his cape and a weapon. He strode the length of the castle to his father's war room. The oil lamps were blazing and the murmur of men's voices were heard rumbling through the corridor. When Tristen stood at the entrance the king looked up and the room became silent.

Tristen tossed his light cape over his shoulder and held the hilt of his sword. "When do we ride?"

"So, August has not deceived me. You are joining us. Good." The king waved him over to the map.

Tristen was fascinated by the dark parchment and ink that traced the mountain ranges and forest borders.

His father said, "The castle at Westland lays many leagues away. A two week journey, maybe more. You will command a small squadron of the boys you have trained with and be fitted with armor come the morning. A heavy battle steed will be selected for you."

Though he tried to ignore it, Tristen felt the men judging him, wondering if he was capable. August's eyes were loyal and proud, his smile just under his beard. The others who hardly

Prince of Servitude

knew him were obviously skeptical of his abilities.

One of the advisors asked the king, “Will the boys follow their new leader?”

August replied quickly, “He outshoots them daily and can beat any swordsman with his incredible reach and skill. They will follow wherever Prince Tristen leads.”

Tristen scanned around at all the wizened faces. Their gray beards hanging long and thin. They had not the confidence in him Captain August did.

“Leave us now, son. You will be summoned in the morning.”

Tristen bowed and exited the room, his cape swirling as he did. Before he left, Tristen stood by the door to listen to the aftermath of the decision.

The king ordered a servant to pour more wine, then one of the scholars asked August, “Tell me, now that the boy has left. His beauty is beyond question, but can he lead his men? I have heard stories that he was quite softened by his mother, only coming out of her halls five years ago. What can he do to aid our cause? Surely he will be more trouble if all his men do is watch over him to protect him from harm.”

August replied, “Deleanor, my friend, he will lead them and fight the fiercest. His time in solitude has made his inner core harder to break than most. The prince proves himself daily on the green. He is by far the greatest warrior. He will not flinch in battle. Of that you have my word.”

Deleanor said, “If you say so, Captain. But we all have our doubts.”

Tristen lowered his head and walked off, passing a host of his father’s guards. They saluted him formally, but Tristen barely acknowledged them. *I will show those old men I can do it. I will show them.*

To his relief Tristen found Dinas in his chamber, waiting for his return.

Dinas stood as Tristen approached. "What is it? You must tell me." He reached for Tristen's shoulders.

"I've been with my father in his war room. We discussed the plans of our ride. I am to lead our friends in battle."

"Tristen, that's wonderful. You shall be glorious."

"And you will be by my side, Dinas, just as we dreamed."

"I will always be by your side, Prince Tristen, until death tears me from it."

"Do not speak of death. What a horrible omen." Tristen touched Dinas' cheek.

"And to think, all this fuss is about your father's gold. Has he ever shown it to you? Have you ever been to his vault?"

"No. I've only heard him speak of it. I have never seen it." Tristen fingered his gold charm, rubbing it in his fingers. "This was given to me by my grandfather when I was born. Mother said his grandfather before him had it created. Look." Tristen held it out. "Have you ever noticed, Dinas? On one side of the medal is a horse with wings; the other has our god of war."

"Yes, Tristen. Of course I have noticed it before. You never take it off. Are you not curious about the amount in your father's vaults?"

"Not until just now. Come." He held Dinas' hand and raced through the stone halls. They descended the never-ending steps to the bowels of the castle.

Tristen held a torch aloft to see his way. Many guards were stationed on each different level, all bowing low as he passed. Tristen noticed the big soldiers were covered in gold and gems. His grandfather had originated a select guard of loyal men. They were given all they desired to reduce the risk of becoming thieves themselves. They were the envy of the army and extremely ruthless and tough.

After hundreds of stone steps Tristen and Dinas came to a door guarded by four men armed with ax and spear. The door itself was a foot in depth and covered with iron. Tristen signaled

Prince of Servitude

for the vault to be opened. Two of the men heaved at the iron cross bar until it moved. It creaked and echoed loudly in the damp cellar air.

Thrusting in his torch, Tristen walked into the chamber, then set the flame on a wall stand and waited for Dinas to come in. They stood for a moment, drinking in the image. The chamber was enormous, reaching one hundred feet in each direction. Its ceiling hung low and dank. In the torch fire, glittering beams of light bounced back at them from stacks of gold bars, too many to count. Huge barrels rose, mounded with coins of silver and gold. Gems were piled on top of skins that were stretched under them; crystals, polished faceted stones of every hue. Even in the sparse light they glowed with intensity.

Tristen awakened from his daze first and approached a casket full of richly ornamented jewels; rings, crowns, armbands, pendants with royal seals, and ring-mail. He placed a crown on his head which contained a center stone of blue as large as his fist.

Dinas walked to a high barrel and dug through the coins with his fingers. They looked at each other in amazement and then started to laugh, laughing so hard that the tears did flow. Tristen called to Dinas and set to work on covering him in jewels wherever he could adorn him until he was heavy with it. Dinas looked down at himself and admired the collection. Lastly, Tristen grabbed a handful of gold dust and sprinkled it into Dinas' long brown hair.

Tristen stood back and observed him curiously. "You look like a wood faerie. Like something from the heavens."

"I am in complete awe." Dinas stared down at the rings on his fingers.

"I wish I could give it to you. When I am king I promise we shall do this again and anything you can wear out or carry shall be yours."

"Then I will come with two heads and four arms, to be sure."

Impulsively, Tristen embraced him. "You bring me great joy, my sweet Dinas." He smiled warmly into his glittering eyes.

Tristen felt Dinas hold his breath. His movements brought a melody of jingling as the many bracelets tapped one another. "No more than the pleasure I feel, my Prince."

"I adore you." Tristen wanted to tell Dinas exactly how much, but knew he could not. Tristen broke the embrace and started to remove the gold from Dinas. They spent a while longer exploring and even in an hour they had not seen all the wealth. It made Tristen angry suddenly. Why was there a need for so much? Why not give some to Telgras in exchange for peace? He thought about the new way he would treat the foreign affairs when he was king. There was plenty to go around.

Weary of it, Tristen reached out to bring Dinas close to him. "Take any one item you desire."

Dinas lowered his head, then raised his purple ring. "You gave it to me, remember? It is enough."

"No. Choose," Tristen demanded.

Dinas only wanted one thing, and of this he could not voice. The heat of Tristen's arm around his back in the cool air tormented him though he savored his closeness. Dinas actually imagined saying what he felt, 'It is thee I desire.' Knowing he couldn't, Dinas sighed and moved to the casket of gold, searching through it carefully.

Tristen walked up behind him to watch, obviously curious of his choice. Dinas lifted a light chain with a gold medal coin attached to it. "It is like yours. It makes me think of you."

"Then it shall be yours." Tristen took the chain from him and kissed the coin, then placed it around Dinas' neck. "May it protect you in battle."

As they brushed up against each other, Dinas felt his heart bursting with love for his prince.

Prince of Servitude

“I’ll take this coat of mail.” Tristen held it aloft. “It is white like silver, but I have heard it called ‘gold that has not yet ripened’. It does not tarnish and is tougher than gold. The smiths say it wears like iron.” Tristen inspected the links carefully. “Come, I am exhausted.”

Dinas tugged on the coin as it hung on the chain. The weight felt strange around his throat.

The guards insisted on knowing what was taken for they kept a log of every item the vault contained. The charm and the mail were shown.

They climbed the steps heavily. It seemed an eternity to the top. The castle felt warm in comparison. Dinas turned at one point to go to his father’s house, but Tristen held him back.

The guard bowed low at Tristen’s door. Tristen greeted him by name and allowed him to kiss his hand.

Dinas followed behind the prince into his private quarters, shivering from the jealous look he received from the big armored-covered man holding the long spear and wearing a sheathed sword.

With a wave of his hand Tristen dismissed Caine.

Once he and Dinas were alone, Tristen slid the latch of his door from the inside, then displayed the chain-mail on a table to admire as he removed his cape.

Dinas stood uneasily, inspecting the details of the room to distract himself.

Tristen turned to him. “You are worn. Sleep with me tonight. We will need to rise early together to get suited in armor. It would keep me at peace to know you were by my side.” Tristen unlaced his tunic.

Dinas swallowed in an audible gulp. *Sleep with you? In the same bed? Me sleeping with Prince Tristen of Brandywine? By the gods, thank you.* In appreciation, Dinas clasped his new medal and closed his eyes.

Misinterpreting the gesture, Tristen approached him. “You

are tired. Can I help you, Dinas?”

Dinas’ eyes sprang open as Tristen knelt. “No! Do not kneel to me!” He panicked and brought the prince to his feet quickly.

Tristen laughed at him. “I am not kneeling. I am merely unlacing your boot.”

Dinas panted in anxiety, having no idea how to cope with his unacceptable sexual demand. “No, let me be the one to assist you.”

“As you wish.” Tristen smiled sweetly at him.

Dinas cleared his throat, then stepped closer. His hands shook as he untied the leather of Tristen’s tunic. Finding his courage, Dinas pushed it wide, revealing the prince’s hairless chest, then took it off and set it on a wooden bench.

Tristen appeared confused as Dinas’ hands trembled. Dinas tugged off Tristen’s high boots. The last piece of clothing covering his lovely prince’s body about to be removed, Dinas took a deep breath and stared at the lacing of Tristen’s leggings. Resolved to be strong, Dinas bit his lip and unknotted the tie at his waist. When he pushed them down the prince’s long muscular legs Dinas went into heat.

Tristen stepped out of them and thanked Dinas, walking to the basin to wash and relieve himself.

Dinas couldn’t stop quivering as he stared at Tristen’s nakedness from behind. He caught his breath and turned his back on the prince to work on his own garments. When he too was naked, Dinas folded all his things into a pile and noticed Tristen staring at him boldly. In reflex, Dinas covered himself, a blush hot in his cheeks. *Oh, this is not a wise idea.*

As if Dinas were a painting, Tristen studied his every inch.

Dinas knew, as did every other person in the kingdom, Tristen had never experienced other boys when he was growing up. Dinas was certain Tristen didn’t have the opportunity to inspect someone completely naked. Even in the baths it was just quick glimpses. Dinas had seen Tristen averting the eyes of his

Prince of Servitude

comrades while they practiced nearly nude on the field. But Dinas had a feeling this was Tristen's first time to have a leisurely look at a nude man.

The wait for a response was an eternity. Dinas cleared his throat in discomfort. "Tristen, please."

It broke the prince's trance. Tristen turned away and said, "I meant no harm. Please forgive me."

Dinas straightened his back boldly and stepped closer, dropping his hands to his sides. "Does it please you?"

"Yes. It pleases me." Tristen blushed, looked away, and climbed into bed.

Dinas waited for a sign. He couldn't imagine being fearless enough to join Tristen in his royal bed without an invitation.

The prince folded back the covers and gestured for Dinas to get in. The stone walls kept the interior cool and the blankets felt warm and inviting. In complete pleasure, Dinas nestled in and shivered at the richness. It felt like a prince's bed, large and well made. His at home was narrow and hard. His toes hung off the edge. Sensing Tristen shifting closer, Dinas froze.

Tristen leaned on Dinas' shoulder to whisper, "Goodnight," then kissed his cheek and rolled over to face the wall.

With some regret at Tristen's immediate choice to sleep, Dinas watched Tristen as he drifted off, thinking he should initiate something. After all, didn't they rub crotches and climax together on the field earlier?

Dinas raised his hand to caress Tristen's golden hair, then lost his courage and closed his eyes.

Tristen was in agony. All he wanted to do was turn over, snake his arms and legs around Dinas and devour him. But in Brandywine, this was taboo and punishable by imprisonment. No man was allowed to touch another man sexually and that threat didn't compare to his mother's warning to remain "chaste" for his bride-to-be.

G.A. Hauser

So close. Tristen eyes filled with tears. *So close, my love.* Exhaling tiredly, Tristen had to be content with his best friend just sleeping with him. Tristen wiggled backwards until Dinas was spooning him from behind. At the press of Dinas' hard cock against his bottom, and the excitement it created, it took a very long time for Tristen to fall asleep.

Chapter Seven

Dinas awoke. The bedchamber was filled with light. Slowly he remembered where he was. In Prince Tristen's bed. The prince's body was coiled around his. Dinas began to pant once again and made an effort at calming himself. Parched and craving water or wine, Dinas yearned for many things as Tristen's body heat penetrated his own. He dared not move. Peeking down at Tristen's beautiful face, all of Tristen's golden locks were spread out over Dinas' chest. With his free hand Dinas touched them, running them between his fingers. This tender moment, right here and now, the prince belonged to him.

Tristen started to stir, raising his head. He smiled lazily. "Hullo, Dinas."

"Good morn, my Prince." Dinas smiled back.

Like it was a practiced ritual, Tristen kissed his cheek, sat up, yawning and stretching his back.

Dinas touched the spot on his face where Tristen's mouth had made contact and stared at Tristen's incredible body as it was revealed from the furs.

Tristen grinned down at him happily. "I like you here with me. Shall we make it permanent? Would your father object?"

Dumbfounded with the invitation, Dinas couldn't answer, too busy trying to connect words together in his head. *Permanent?* He held the gold charm and said, "Thank you," closing his eyes.

Tristen said, "I will not make you do anything you do not wish to do, Dinas."

In panic, Dinas blinked. "What? No! I mean, yes. Yes, I will stay here. No, my father will not mind."

Tristen laughed at him. "Oh, my Dinas, you do make me giggle."

Dinas tried to laugh but he was too stunned.

Tristen rose to his feet and went to the basin.

His eyes not leaving that naked form, Dinas ogled Tristen's slender back and those long, muscular legs. Dinas felt throbbing between his own like an ache. Seeing Tristen was also hard, Dinas exhaled in frustration and tossed off the covers, heading to the basin to wash as well.

Tristen glimpsed at Dinas' crotch briefly. "It is the same for you then?"

"What?" Dinas gasped, wondering if Tristen meant what he thought he meant.

Tristen gestured to himself. "This."

"Oh." Dinas calmed down. "Yes, Tristen, it is normal. Did no one ever explain these things to you?"

Tristen turned away.

Immediately Dinas regretted his tone and approached him. "Tristen." He touched the prince's arm.

With his golden hair hiding his face, Tristen turned to Dinas slowly, his cheeks still showing his blush. "You must find me incredibly naïve. I know nothing of this. Not even of myself." Tristen touched his own hard length.

"Come here." Holding the prince's hand, Dinas brought Tristen to sit with him on the bed. Dinas pushed his long blond hair back from his eyes, behind his shoulder, then brought Tristen's hand to his lap. "Men have needs, Tristen. A need to feel pleasure." Dinas was hesitant to mention their little crotch rubbing session on the field in case Tristen grew upset by it.

Prince of Servitude

“I am to remain chaste.” Tristen’s bottom lip pouted like a child.

“That just means you cannot enter another woman.”

“Yes.”

“Not that you cannot pleasure yourself.”

“Pleasure myself?” Tristen looked confused.

Dinas squeezed Tristen’s hand. “Have you never touched yourself that way?”

Tristen bit his lip and shook his head.

“You mean, you have never experimented? Felt the pleasure from your own hand?” Dinas tried not make Tristen feel any worse.

“Experimented by touching myself?”

“Yes.”

Tristen covered his face in embarrassment.

Dinas tugged on Tristen’s arms. “Stop. I do not say these things to humiliate you. Tristen, you must relieve yourself or you will go mad.”

“I have felt a need constantly, but I have not touched it except to urinate.” Tristen didn’t look at Dinas any longer.

“Yesterday. On the field. Remember?” At the look of pure terror, Dinas left that topic alone. “All right. Never mind that. Touch yourself, Tristen.” Dinas tried to lay Tristen’s hand on his crotch.

Tristen twisted away to face the wall of tapestries and resisted.

Dinas grew upset and grabbed Tristen’s jaw to turn it back. “Look at me.” Dinas waited until the prince did. “Watch me.”

Tristen peeked at him.

Dinas began stroking his own cock, his gaze on the object of his desire, naked and innocent. Dinas felt the orgasm rising quickly. Closing his eyes as it overwhelmed him, Dinas came,

gasping in pleasure as the white cream erupted from his slit in pulsating blasts.

After witnessing that act, Tristen was in awe. He looked down at himself. He was completely aroused, blushing purple and hard as a mortar brick.

As if coming back from a swoon, Dinas gazed at the prince. "Tristen, there is nothing quite like it." With an effort, Dinas sat up straight. "Do not be afraid." He took Tristen's right hand and placed it again on his crotch.

How many times had his mother admonished him for going near his genitals even for a scratch of an itch? She warned Tristen he would become ill, it would fall off, and so many other nightmarish tales, Tristen was petrified to even brush his hand over himself.

Trying to overcome his fear, Tristen swallowed down a closing throat. With Dinas assisting him, Tristen squeezed his shaft and started to feel something in him stir.

Dinas gripped around Tristen's fingers tighter to work with him. Tristen met Dinas' gaze briefly before Tristen was drawn to stare at Dinas' naked body.

With Tristen's focus on Dinas' cock, the climax hit him. As his seed shot out from his slit, Tristen could not believe the intensity of the pleasure. He gasped while Dinas continued to milk him, bringing lovely aftershocks to ripple over his cock.

Dinas toyed gently with Tristen's length, cupped his balls, and said smugly, "Now, that is how you pleasure yourself."

Tristen was speechless.

Dinas continued to play with Tristen, massaging his softening cock and sack lovingly. "Your seed is supposed to go into a woman," Dinas explained. "If she is a virgin, she will feel pain and small drops of blood will stain the bed—"

Tristen couldn't care less. He leapt on top of Dinas and trapped him to the bed.

Prince of Servitude

Dinas inhaled sharply in surprise.

Tristen felt absolute joy in the discovery of self-satisfaction, squirming on Dinas' naked body under him and loving the stickiness of their cum between them. "It is like nothing I have experienced before. You are my sage."

Dinas' mouth went slack as Tristen kissed him.

"What would I do without my trusted friend?" Tristen was still spinning from the orgasm.

"Oh, Lord," Dinas moaned, his legs were spread wide while Tristen pushed his hips against him. Dinas bent his knees, and embraced Tristen, burying his face in his hair. "I love you, my Prince. I am forever your servant."

Tristen squeezed him tightly. "And I am forever your faithful prince."

While Tristen was attended by the iron smiths, the king observed the making of his armor.

Tristen's cuirass covered over his fine white chain-mail and the helmet made his voice echo in his ears. Lowering the visor to test if he could see through it, Tristen found it covered all but his chin. A horizontal slat had been cut at eye level for vision. He felt increasingly clumsy and heavy as more chain-mail was measured for his thighs and forearms.

King Renelin tapped Tristen's helmet to get his attention. "How does it fit?"

"It is awfully bulky, Father. How does one fight?" Tristen raised his arms awkwardly. "This is hardly built for agility. May I have leave to design my own?"

"Design you own?" the king asked. "Your great-grandfather fought in this style suit of armor."

"Yes, and it feels as old in style as he would be if he lived today. Please, Father." Tristen struggled to push the visor up to stop the annoying echo.

“You are the oddest— If you think you can do better.” The king shook his head and left.

Tristen shed the heavy steel with the help of Caine. Before the burley smiths escaped him, Tristen explained what he wanted. Seeing their hesitation, Tristen demanded, “You will set to work on this immediately so I can supervise. Go.” Tristen rolled his eyes at Caine. “They think I am a madman.”

“They are very wrong.”

Tristen threw a kiss at his servant playfully.

By sundown a new look Tristen did have. The chain-mail was sleeveless, revealing his naked shoulders and his thighs were covered in mail to the knee, meeting his leather boots. The metal gloves were short, only to his wrist. His helmet had no visor and a heavy woolen cape draped over his back. He dismissed Caine from his duties, thanking him.

Tristen parried and thrust his sword, feeling luxuriously unburdened. “This is it. Perfection.” Tristen danced over the oak tables, startling the horses that were awaiting their new shoes.

The iron workers watched him. Tristen knew they were thinking he was a lunatic. *Yes, all of you now have your doubts confirmed. I am insane.*

“Go! Leave my sight.” Tristen waved them out, sick of their accusing expressions. Once they had left, Tristen fought with invisible foes, ten at once! The freedom of movement sent him reeling.

A metal-covered figure approached and stood stiffly at the arched doorway. “Tristen,” it thundered.

Tristen bounced lightly over to the man and lifted his visor for a peek. “Dinas. How awful you look in there. Where are you in that thing?”

“In here.” Dinas clanked his iron glove against his chest. “Where is yours?”

Tristen spun around for him, sword pointed up.

“I don’t understand.”

Prince of Servitude

“Take that silly thing off.” Tristen removed Dinas’ helmet.

With obvious relief Dinas shook out his damp hair. After running his fingers through its sweaty length, Dinas gave the Prince’s outfit a once over. “What have you done?”

“Look. I can breathe. Move. Fight!” Tristen jumped onto an anvil and sliced his blade through the air. “You must try this armor. With an entire regime clad this way the freedom of movement and vision will be a wonderful advantage.”

“Yes, I see your point, but what of the exposed flesh?”

“Only the vital organs matter. What of a cut on the arm?”

“What if the arm is cut off,” Dinas scolded.

“They won’t be able to find it. It will be moving too quickly.” Tristen leapt onto a table and the horses complained nervously.

Dinas watched him in his usual awe-struck manner. “Okay. Yes. Get me out of this contraption.”

With a graceful leap to the floor, Tristen assisted Dinas in removing all of the armor. Then at leisurely pace, they walked together to the stable, the torches glowing in the night.

“Father wants me to pick out a charger. My hunting steed is far too small to carry me into battle.”

“I hear they are of good stock. They come from over the oceans. They have feathers on their feet.” Dinas laughed as if he’d heard himself say the oddest thing.

Tristen opened a stall door to see for himself. The horse stood nineteen hands high. It was the most enormous creature he’d ever seen. Its eyes sparkled in the torchlight and it snorted.

Tristen quickly closed the door. “Well! Ah, yes, first thing tomorrow then. By the light of day.” He and Dinas roared with laughter.

Like lovers, they walked arm in arm back to their room.

“Tristen!” The queen stood imposingly in the doorway.

“Yes, Mother,” Tristen answered calmly.

Dinas froze as if he had an unreasonable fear of the queen. Tristen knew most men did.

“Did you forget your mother today? Why is it you have neglected to come and see me?”

“We are preparing for a journey. Surely that takes precedence.” Tristen gestured to his armored outfit and sword.

She bristled angrily. “Come to my chambers before you sleep tonight.”

Tristen glanced back at Dinas. “I’m sorry, I have made other arrangements. Where is Father?”

She stiffened in fury as Tristen held Dinas’ hand and walked away.

Dinas cowered. “She will have my head, Tristen. I shall be poisoned at the morning meal.”

“Then I shall personally taste all of your food first.” Tristen nudged him playfully with his elbow. “And they will have to hew through me to get to you. Come. Stop all this nonsense.” He led Dinas to the baths.

Dinas found two young boys waiting for them. “Send your servants away, I will tend you.”

Tristen replied, “That is unnecessary. They will tend you.”

“I insist, Tristen. Let us have our privacy.”

“As you wish.” Tristen waved them out.

Dinas waited until they were gone before undressing Tristen.

Tristen smiled kindly at him. “Why do you not let me treat you like the noble you are?”

Because I want you alone, you beautiful man! “I do not trust anyone who may overhear us.” Dinas draped Tristen’s cape on a marble bench and started working on his new chain-mail.

Tristen leaned close to Dinas’ ear. “What secrets will you tell me, my love, hmm?”

Prince of Servitude

Dinas' skin prickled with delight. He let out a soft chuckle.

Tristen grinned at Dinas as Dinas was still intent on getting him out of his new armor. "What are you thinking, my mischievous friend?" Tristen purred.

Not wanting to reveal his true thoughts, Dinas kept smiling and made his way to Tristen's lower half.

First his high leather boots, then Tristen's thigh armor and deerskin leggings fell to the floor. Tristen stood naked while Dinas arranged everything neatly on the marble bench.

Dinas glanced over his shoulder to see Tristen stepping into the heated water.

They met eyes as Dinas undressed. Something had changed. Dinas loved the look of adoration his prince was bestowing on him. The attraction wasn't only one of love and respect now, but of pure sexual want.

Dinas stepped into the heated pool, washing Tristen's shoulder and back lovingly with soap.

"You do not have to behave like my servant, Dinas."

"Why not? It is what I am."

Tristen replied in anger, "No. You are not below me."

"Of course I am."

Tristen spun around, grabbing his wrist tightly. Dinas gasped in surprise and met with that furious azure gaze.

"We are equal in my eyes. Do you hear me?"

Having no idea why it made Tristen so angry, Dinas was shocked. Not knowing what to say Dinas could only stare at Tristen in longing.

Tristen took the soap from Dinas and started to wash him. "I have servants who tend me. You are not my servant."

Tristen bathed Dinas with affection. Dinas' heart pounded in joy. "There has never been a ruler such as you, Prince Tristen."

Tristen met his eyes. "Nor a friend as true as you, Dinas."

G.A. Hauser

Tristen drew near to his lips. Dinas was about to go mad and devour him when through the corner of his eye Dinas caught another noble entering the baths.

“Your Highness,” the man greeted Tristen formally.

“Lord Pontious,” Tristen replied.

Dinas made a gap between he and Tristen but they kept smiling secretly, wondering the thoughts of the other.

Chapter Eight

At dawn the company gathered. A thousand men on foot and five hundred on horse silhouetted the morning sun. The queen had decided to remain behind, much to the king and Tristen's relief.

The small unit of light-armored men cheered their new captain, Prince Tristen, as he rode on an enormous white charger. With Dinas urging the men on in the rally, Tristen felt euphoric at the prospect of battle.

News came to Tristen that Aldren had seceded from the unit, thinking the light armor was a fool's notion and insisted on full metal armor. Tristen was glad, for he had not the stomach for the fiery-haired noble.

They rode in formation, the king and his Royal Guard led the force, their banners whipping in the breeze. Behind them a long line of men sang cheerfully in the clear air. Tristen thought the good weather was an omen of success.

King Renelin sent scouts ahead to inform the villages they were going to pass through of their arrival. Two more horsemen were dispatched as messengers to ride straight through to Westland to announce their approach to King Ator.

Tristen stood in his stirrups to look behind him at the vast force of men. His heart thundered under the platinum mail as he smiled in triumph at Dinas who rode at his side.

The first two nights were spent in the field. Huge tents were

erected to accommodate the captains and the king while the foot soldiers slept comfortably under the stars in the grass.

Tristen and Dinas bedded down in the prince's tent together. Dinas waited until darkness to join him for fear of the jealousy he would inspire. Tristen didn't want it to be too obvious they were joined at the hip, though he had a feeling all knew.

In the privacy of their small cozy tent, they snuggled to keep warm, both starved for a taste of each other's sweet lips. But the fear of discovery was great so they had to be content to just cuddle.

By the third night they came upon a small village. A welcome party stood at its gates and cheers rang out along with the clanging of bells. King Renelin allowed his subjects to kiss his cape in appreciation. The soldiers were eager for women and grog as the sight of all the village females flirting in their doorways set them off. The king knew such a multitude of men would overwhelm a small village so he ordered them to ride through and set up camp just outside the village gates.

Captain August led them on their way, smiling in delight at the women who walked along with them handing them fresh bread to eat.

Once he was settled, King Renelin called his son to him.

"Yes, Father?" Still mounted on his horse, Tristen bowed, his hand on the hilt of his sword.

"You and your men may remain in town for the evening, if you wish."

Upon hearing that wonderful news, Tristen replied, "Thank you, Father," and raced out to tell his men.

Tristen relayed the information in the middle of the street as people bustled around them preparing food for the hungry men. There were ten nobles in the light-armored unit, all looking anxiously to Tristen for guidance.

"Well!" Tristen scanned around at their eager faces and dismounted. "I say we eat a good hot meal. What say you?"

Prince of Servitude

The men replied enthusiastically, following Tristen who walked his charger to the stables. Young grooms came running out to help house the huge beasts. Seeing the expressions on their faces, Tristen laughed at the joy they took in handling the enormous, but tame, horses. With their swords at their hips, the light-armored squad headed into a small inn.

Acting as their leader, though he wasn't used to being in a position of authority, Tristen pushed through the door and checked the place over. A few travelers were enjoying their meals, their clothing covered with the dry dust of the road. They were rangers, men without homes who sought odd jobs and ate when they could. Their faces were hard and weathered, like the lives they led. Though they spied up at Tristen, they made no show of respect.

Tristen stood tall and signaled his men to enter and eat their fill while Dinas stayed by the prince's side.

A woman emerged from the kitchen, wiping her hands on a soiled rag. Her face glistened from cooking fat, her apron expanded over her plump form. "Uh! Your Highness!" She bent her knee and took his hand to kiss. "You grace our modest inn with your royal presence. Please, have the seat of honor. Here...here..." She gently led him to a table by the hearth. The room was warm from the fire and the kitchen stoves.

The moment the old woman addressed him as the prince, Tristen glanced at the men at the other tables who suddenly eyed him curiously.

"Some ale," the hostess called out and a young woman hurried to set up cups before the prince and his company.

"My men first." Tristen gestured.

"Yes, Sire." She steered the serving girl to the others. "A meal of the finest lamb in the land. Can you smell the rich aroma?" She smiled proudly. "Right away, Your Highness." After a curtsy, she hurried back into the kitchen.

In respect, the serving girl bowed low when she offered to pour for the prince. She smiled shyly at the two men and Dinas

grinned back politely.

Tristen was preoccupied with the rangers. "Who are these men that pass through Father's kingdom with little or no respect for me or his Royal Guard?" Tristen sipped his ale.

Dinas looked over his shoulder at them. "They are just outcasts, Tristen. Pay them no mind."

"But what if they were to ride to King Telgras and inform him of our presence?" He caught a cold glance from one of the rough men.

"What if? There is little King Telgras can do. If he knows not yet that we are coming, I will only be more amazed." The serving girl returned and brushed by Dinas' chair.

"They feel foul. What if I were to approach them and ask them to join us as mercenaries? Pay them?" Tristen touched the hilt of the sword.

"For what cause? We are fifteen hundred strong with nine thousand more to call. If they be spies, then they will soon be beheaded."

The serving girl leaned over the table to set down the food.

Tristen noticed Dinas was given a deliberate view down her light cotton peasant dress. When she glanced up and smiled, Dinas gulped audibly. She brushed by Dinas again as she made her way to the kitchen. The exchange made Tristen bristle with jealousy but he said nothing.

Tristen ate his meal with one eye on the rangers. His own men laughed merrily and guzzled the refreshing ale while Dinas ate quickly.

"Tristen, I do not think it is wise if we share a bed in here tonight." Dinas gave the room a quick scan. "It will be very obvious if we do. I know we will be taking a risk."

Tristen's heart broke. "No. You must sneak in."

Dinas rubbed his eyes and Tristen could see his apprehension and weariness.

Prince of Servitude

Tristen gave Dinas' hand a quick squeeze under the table. "All right, my love. We shall have time to be together soon."

"It pains me as well, Tristen. But," Dinas lowered his voice, "so many are already suspicious and I am very tired from the long journey. On my honor, I will do nothing to risk our friendship. Nothing." Dinas moved out his chair.

"Yes, my sweet. Always the wise one." Tristen would miss him.

Dinas touched Tristen's hair gently as if making sure it was really all right. Dinas then bowed formally and called to a serving girl to show him a place to sleep for the night.

Left alone, Tristen held his cup at arm's length, staring at its poor dented sides. Startled out of his stupor as a ranger shouted for more beer, Tristen watched the women as they rushed towards the men.

Tristen avoided the serving girls' ardent gazes, remembering his mother's words about keeping chaste. Sadly, women did nothing for him. Though he thought one was pretty, she did not stir any movement in his loins.

Tristen wondered if he should pleasure himself tonight and frowned at the prospect of doing it alone. He preferred he and Dinas doing it together. *No, I prefer having Dinas do it for me.* He imagined sharing his bed with Dinas every night while on the road, but it wasn't prudent.

Tristen rose to his feet, feeling exhausted and isolated.

The kindly matron hurried over. "Are you ready for a room, Your Highness?"

He nodded.

She winked and grinned excitedly, rushing away.

In a moment, another young girl appeared, one he had not noticed previously. She smiled shyly. "I shall show you to your room, Prince Tristen."

Following her up the narrow stair, Tristen gazed at the sway of her skirt with little interest.

At the far end of a dark hall she fumbled with the latch and key. Stepping back, she bowed low, waiting for him to enter.

After making sure it was empty, Tristen walked in and looked the simple room over. Only a wooden bed and a wash basin occupied the modest space. It had occurred to him to bring Caine, but he had decided against it, thinking Dinas would always be near.

“Is there anything you shall be needing, Sire?” she asked.

“Just fresh water to rinse the journey from me.” Tristen removed his cape.

Bending her knee politely, she hurried to the basin and lifted a pitcher to fill it.

Sullen and moody at this unpleasant turn of events, Tristen walked to the window. He could see the fires from his father’s troops, close at hand. A frown on his lips, he unfastened his scabbard.

The maiden rushed over to assist.

“Thank you. I’m exhausted.”

“My pleasure, Your Highness.”

Tristen allowed her to unlace his many leather garments, relieved he was being helped, for the long day had caught up to him. His fine mail was laid out neatly, his leather boots next to it. As he came closer to becoming naked, Tristen felt odd suddenly at being undressed before this strange woman. Holding her hand back as she went to unlace his leather leggings, he said, “Thank you,” telling her it was enough.

She shifted nervously. “I am to serve you, Sire. To cater to you like a mother.”

At the word “mother” Tristen bristled in anger, wondering whether to take insult. With his index finger, Tristen raised her chin to see if she mocked him. “Whose orders?”

“I cannot say. Only that I will be beaten if I disobey.”

“Do you often get beaten?”

Prince of Servitude

“No, Sire. But I would be honored to serve you. Please allow me.”

He swallowed nervously. Surely there was a manservant to be found. Or perhaps Dinas could spend a few moments with him. Tristen had no intention of being naked in front of a strange woman.

While Tristen paused to consider his options, the maiden went for the lacing on his leggings eagerly.

Immediately Tristen came back to focus and held his breath as his leathers fell to the floor. “My lady!” He cupped his hands over his groin modestly.

Ignoring his shyness, she took a sponge from the basin and began his bath, cleansing his face, washing the dusty road from his bronze skin.

Though he felt intimidated by her touch, Tristen reluctantly allowed her to help him clean up.

The maiden poured the water, making it run down Tristen’s back, rinsing him of soap. Tristen closed his eyes at the relaxing sensation, giving in to the pampering.

Moving slowly, the young woman scrubbed him. Tristen noticed a glazed look in her eyes as she drew close to his groin. “That is enough. Thank you.” Tristen stepped back from her as she prepared to wash him from the waist down, something he would not tolerate.

Her disappointment was evident as she handed Tristen a cloth to dry himself.

Tristen wrapped it around his hips and located a bright jewel for her, clasping it into her hand. “Go. Let me sleep now.”

“Are you sure I cannot be of any more service?” She leaned against him.

“No. You must go.”

Impulsively, she reached to kiss his lips.

In anger Tristen turned his face aside, pushing her, about to

scream he could have her beheaded for that act of aggression. Instead he bit his lip and said, "Please, respect your prince's wishes."

"I am so sorry, Prince Tristen. Please, accept my apology."

"Goodnight."

When she opened the door, Dinas stumbled in. After he found his balance, Dinas watched the woman leave and gazed back at Tristen. "Are you chaste no more?"

"How dare you think I would lay with a whore," Tristen growled at him.

Dinas reacted in surprise and shut the door. "Forgive me."

In complete frustration, Tristen rubbed his face. "This is impossible. Why is life so cruel?" All Tristen wanted was Dinas. Yet there was no way Tristen could have him and not end up imprisoned, let alone be the crowned prince.

"Cruel?" Dinas hurried to comfort him. "My Prince, tell me what you need and I shall obey."

"You were right to have us sleep separate. I should have brought my servant. I had no idea..." Tristen felt like he was rambling, but his confusion about his sexuality was beginning to scare him. He was to marry, to produce sons. Not fall in love with a noble. "Go back to your room. I am too weary for this." To finish his bath where the maiden had left off, Tristen tossed the towel aside.

Dinas hurried to assist, removing his cape and placing it the bed. "I am here now, my Prince. Give that to me." He knelt down in front of Tristen.

With a soft sigh, Tristen handed him the wet rag. "Just tell me, Dinas, do I need a servant after all?"

Dinas began scrubbing Tristen's thighs. "No. I am sorry. I will be here for you from now on."

"Do not be a fool. We cannot risk discovery."

"I am here to serve. You are my prince. No one can argue

Prince of Servitude

that.” Dinas rinsed the cloth in the cool water and gently cleansed Tristen’s genitals.

Staring down at the man he loved handling his balls gave Tristen an instant erection. “I adore you, my handsome friend.”

After bestowing a look of pure love and devotion on Tristen, Dinas leaned closer, as if he wanted to press his mouth against the prince’s cock. “If you only knew the way I yearn to cater to you.”

“What is it about the way you touch me that brings me so much sensation?” Tristen felt his knees weaken. “Pleasure me, Dina. Please, pleasure me.”

Dinas set the cloth down and positioned himself directly in front of the prince.

Tristen could see Dinas’ lip part as he drew nearer to the head of Tristen’s erect cock. Tristen’s cock throbbed in anticipation of...he did not know what. But whatever Dinas was about to do was making Tristen’s pulse go wild.

Suddenly Dinas paused as if he were afraid or hesitant of something.

Tristen expected Dinas’ hands to work him, instead the prince felt a soft exhale of breath on his hard length. He asked, “What is it? Are you too tired? I am sorry.”

“No, I am not too tired. I just...I just want—”

“What is it? What do you want?” Tristen backed away to be able to see Dinas’ face. “Come with me to the bed. It will be better there.” Tristen guided Dinas to lie beside him. “We cannot be found together in the morning. So do not fall asleep.”

Dinas nodded, a sad pout on his lips.

Tristen led Dinas’ hand to his hardness. “Please. You do it better than I do.”

Dinas scooted closer and gripped Tristen’s long, hard cock in his palm, stroking it and squeezing it.

Spreading his legs wide, Tristen closed his eyes and opened

his mouth for a deep breath of air. Though Tristen knew what was expected of him in the future, he had no need of maidens when he had someone who could do this to him.

Dinas studied Tristen's pretty face as he worked him efficiently. He heard the prince's gasps of rising bliss. Tristen's cock throbbed like a pulse. The amount Dinas wanted to taste the prince's seed, hold his thick cock in his mouth, was tormenting him.

Right before Tristen came, Dinas could not prevent the urge. He licked a clear drop of juice from Tristen's slit, sitting back quickly and checking to see if Tristen noticed.

Tristen's eyes were closed as he groaned in pleasure. He gave up his cum, spattering it over his chest and abdomen and squirting at the aftershocks.

As he recuperated, Dinas realized the prince had not seen his daring deed. He stared at Tristen's features in awe, relishing in the flavor of his prince still lingering on his tongue. While he milked Tristen's cock gently, Dinas wished things could be different and they could show the world they were lovers.

"Oh, my truest friend, I am addicted to your hands." Tristen laughed tiredly.

"I only wish—"

Tristen yawned. "You must tell me for what you wish in the morning, for my lovely Dinas, you have worn me out."

With a patient smile on his lips, Dinas used the damp cloth to clean the cum off of Tristen's flawless skin. "Go to sleep, Tristen the Fair." Dinas kissed Tristen's golden hair and brought the covers up around him before he headed to the door, glancing back once. Tristen already appeared to be deep in slumber. "Goodnight, my love."

Chapter Nine

The next morning Tristen was glad Dinas was there to help him with his many layers of clothing and armor.

“How did you sleep, sweet Dinas?”

“Would have been better in your arms,” Dinas said softly.

“So true.” Tristen kissed his cheek.

After Tristen was dressed, they headed to the ground floor and met several other men from their group who were hungry for fresh bread.

Harkening to the sound of horns in the distance, Tristen told Dinas, “Ready the men. We need to ride. Tell them to take some food with them. There is no time to eat leisurely.”

“Yes, Tristen.” Dinas hurried to round them all up.

Still preoccupied with last night and the sensations of Dinas’ hands on his cock, Tristen walked to the stable to retrieve his charger. As he sat on his high living throne the others of his light-armored band hurried to get in formation behind him.

Once they completed that task efficiently, Tristen signaled them forward through the town. A serving girl, the same one from the previous night, hurried to give Tristen his small loaf of bread. “Thank you,” he tried to smile at her but failed.

“Anything, my Prince.”

Tristen tore a piece off the crusty loaf and avoided her

ardent gaze.

Before they met up with the bulk of his father's troops the small band passed a few older homesteads, crumbling from neglect. Tristen caught sight of one of the rangers from the night before standing beside his black light steed. A sensation of warning shot through Tristen's stomach at the man's nervous glance.

While holding Dinas back, Tristen signaled to the others in his group to continue.

"What is it, Tristen?" Dinas asked, stuffing the last piece of his bread into his mouth.

Tristen didn't answer, walking his snow white, heavy-hoofed charger up a pathway to the house. The ranger looked up in fear and leaped onto his horse in flight. Two other men who stood hidden turned to see Tristen's approach.

Tristen was certain he spotted a red-haired soldier among them. Tristen unsheathed his sword, spurring on his horse. When Tristen came near only one man stood firm, another ranger. Tristen pointed his sword at the man's throat. His huge horse cast a shadow over the man's panic-stricken face.

"With whom were you speaking?" Tristen commanded. The man was silent. Tristen pushed in the tip of his blade. A small trickle of blood emerged.

Dinas rode to his side. "Tristen, what are you doing?"

"With whom did you speak?" the prince asked again.

The man's face was white with fear. "Sire!" he choked. "I know not his name."

"Of what was spoken here? Tell me or pray to thy maker." Tristen narrowed his eyes, hoping they appeared as cold as blue steel.

"Only where you ride. You seek your betrothed. That is all I know!"

"All?"

Prince of Servitude

“Yes! On my honor, Your Highness.”

Tristen withdrew his blade and the man grabbed his throat. “Come, Dinas.” Furious, Tristen reared his horse and thundered toward the troops. As quickly as he could he rode to the second division and addressed the captain.

The captain bowed. “Yes, my Prince.”

“Are all you men accounted for?”

“Yes, Prince Tristen.”

“All? Check again and report back.”

The man appeared puzzled. He bowed and left to obey.

Dinas moved his horse closer. “Tell me what you seek.”

“Wait.” Tristen raised his hand, his mood foul.

The captain called his men to form rank, riding by them carefully, he then cantered back to the prince.

Tristen waited in silence.

“All present, Prince Tristen.”

“All?” he repeated.

“Yes, Prince. Please, tell me what troubles you.”

“Nothing, Captain. Return to your men.”

He saluted and left.

Still brooding and silent, Tristen walked his horse to his squadron while Dinas obviously stewed over the riddle. “Tristen, please, you must tell me.”

“I saw the rangers speaking to a red-haired soldier. I thought it was Aldren.”

“Aldren? What would Aldren want with rangers?”

“That’s what I would like to find out.”

The cold winds and rain whipped them as the weather turned bad for the next week. The change in climate made the troops soggy and depressed. Sleeping in the forest in two-men tents, the army put up with the discomfort until the final days of

their journey. It wasn't until then that the storms finally passed.

Their spirits rose with the sun and their trip coming closer to an end. After two weeks of marching they made their way to Westland without any sign of the raids.

By the end of the second week they met up with a small band of King Ator's men. The allied army hailed King Renelin and conferred on the present state of affairs.

"Your Highness, King Ator is pleased you have made this trip. He is eager to see the prince, whom we have all heard tell so many tales." The captain grinned and glanced back at his own men with a wry smile on his lips. "No disrespect, sire, but we all wish to see if the stories are mere exaggeration."

King Renelin ordered August, "Find Tristen and bring him here."

August bowed and rode off.

Tristen and Dinas were relaxing in the tall grass while the rest of the troops took a break from the long ride.

At the sound of hoof beats, Tristen harkened and spotted August approaching.

"Prince Tristen, the king requests your immediate presence."

"Why so? Do we continue to ride so soon?"

"No, Your Highness." August's eyes shined impishly. "There is a small band from King Ator's castle who wishes to meet you." August paused before he added, "To see if you are good enough for their princess."

Tristen sat up. "So, they want to see if I am good enough?" He grinned like a fox. "Dinas, ride ahead, my handsome friend. I shall be there shortly."

Knowing exactly what his prince had in mind, Dinas mounted his horse, smiling wickedly. August appeared uneasy with the ruse.

Prince of Servitude

“August, a little jest! Get going,” Tristen scolded him.

Seated atop his heavy black charger, Dinas rode proudly to King Renelin and King Ator’s Royal Guard. The Westland army nodded to each other in approval, but Dinas knew they wondered of the stories of golden hair and sky blue eyes.

As if anticipating their compliments, King Renelin watched their reactions with a smile on his lips, then turned to see the prince. When he found Dinas, his grin dropped. “What foolery is this?”

Dinas reined his horse and replied, “Your Royal Highness, I was sent to present your son.” With all the ceremony Dinas could muster, he bowed and gestured behind him. King Ator’s men appeared discouraged to learn that Dinas was not the prince. Dinas could see them brace themselves. *You will not be disappointed my friends. Hardly.*

A moment later, Tristen rode up in a clamor of large, white feathered hooves. His massive horse snorted and stomped powerfully. The men were startled by the size of the beast and the tall, lightly armored man on its back. Seemingly fully aware of his appeal, Tristen removed his helmet and shook out his long, golden hair.

Dinas dealt with an instant erection and tried not lose track of his duty. He announced, “Prince Tristen the Fair!”

Tristen appeared coldly serious as he walked his horse closer.

“Your Highness.” The allied army bowed.

Pretending haughtiness, Tristen peered at them. “You are satisfied now?”

The captain of King Ator’s men replied, “Either you or the young noble would have pleased the princess. But you are truly as fair as all the tales that precede you. Welcome, Prince Tristen.” They all bowed low again.

Tristen met with his friend’s impish smile and winked.

With a long line of cavalry and footmen, the forces of Brandywine were led by King Ator's guards down the valley to the castle. The structure was enormous, solid stone walls rising to the heavens in spiraling towers. The drawbridge lowered over the moat with a noisy clanging of chains.

Tristen crossed the wooden planks, his gaze rising up the hundred-foot battlements to the colorful banners whipping the king's standard.

A horn sounded at the sight of the approaching men as they were led to a courtyard where they dismounted.

Tristen stayed Dinas as he went to follow the light-armored nobles. Tristen needed the security of him and made sure Dinas walked by his side.

King Renelin raised both arms in a greeting to King Ator. They embraced as old friends. The ancient king was tall and strong, sporting a long, snow-white beard. A large crown covered his head of rubies and sapphires, his robes were of crimson. They exchanged words together quickly as King Ator began to lead King Renelin away. Tristen thought perhaps the old king was anxious to fill Tristen's father in on the present raids.

King Renelin stopped King Ator. "Do you not wish to meet the prince? He is here with me."

Clumsily apologizing, King Ator's cheeks grew rosy at the oversight. "You will forgive an old man. My mind is on other things. Of course. Bring this boy to me whom they call Tristen the Fair."

Tristen heard the entire conversation, including his father's booming order to come forth. He approached the two kings with Dinas right behind him. Dinas bowed to the ground in respect as Tristen bowed his head appropriately.

"Your Majesty," Tristen said, "I am honored to be selected to wed your daughter. No finer blood could she have than

Prince of Servitude

yours.” He kissed the king’s ring.

King Ator smiled and patted King Renelin’s back. “You have done very well. Very well indeed.” He chuckled excitedly. “I’ll be the envy of all the kingdoms. Wait until my daughter sees this.” He beckoned to Tristen. “Come here, my son.”

Tristen drew near. To his surprise, King Ator loosened Tristen’s cloak, letting it fall to the ground carelessly. Tristen tried not to explode in anger while this old man inspected his body, turning him around and poking and prodding him in very private places.

Barely tolerating the groping, Tristen noticed Dinas’ amusement, seeing Dinas cover his mouth to hide his laughter.

Tristen jumped as a finger poked his side.

“Yes, very good.” King Ator appeared delighted. “You are perfect. All over, from what I can tell, and in excellent health. Come, freshen up, you and your noble. The princess is eager to meet with you.” King Ator took King Renelin’s elbow and they hurried off to discuss the raids. The entire area emptied until only Dinas and Tristen remained.

While Dinas laughed heartily, Tristen picked his cape up from the dusty floor and brushed it off. “What on earth was that all about?” Tristen asked.

“I thought he would open your britches to see if you were adequate.” Dinas doubled over. “I’m surprised he overlooked it.”

“He didn’t.” Tristen snorted. “He gave it a good squeeze!”

Dinas roared with laughter.

Tristen shoved him into some hay bales stacked in the courtyard. “Enough! At my expense, Dinas?”

But Dinas obviously couldn’t contain it, rolling in the soft hay, holding his belly as he choked in hilarity.

Tapping his foot, his hands on his hips, Tristen grew more annoyed. When he finally had enough, Tristen jumped on Dinas to cover his mouth and silence him.

They wrestled wildly in the dry hay while Dinas laughed non-stop.

It became rougher as they both let their sexual frustrations take hold. Tristen pinned Dinas to the ground beneath him and stared at the expression on Dinas' face. It changed instantly from humor to passion. Tristen felt their two hard-ons pressing together.

Dinas growled seductively and spun them around so he was on top.

The minute Dinas became the aggressor, Tristen felt a surge of pleasure to his groin that put him on the verge of a climax. Tristen began grinding his hips on Dinas hungrily. "Yes...Dinas," Tristen panted, closed his eyes, and felt each point of contact with his lover reverberating throughout his body. Helpless, trapped under a muscular man who was about to devour him, Tristen thought he might pass out from the intensity.

Dinas tried to see if Tristen still thought this play was part of the game. Dinas knew a very different game had begun. Using his knees, Dinas spread Tristen's legs wider and trapped Tristen's arms above his head so Tristen couldn't move. With the desire about to rush out of him, Dinas pumped his hips upward, simulating intercourse. *I want to fuck you! Fuck you!* Dinas knew this act was risky, illegal, and it was treacherous for them to be seen this way.

When Tristen began bucking wildly, Dinas couldn't believe the friction between them. It was like what they had experienced on the practice field, but something was different. Tristen was different. This prince wanted to be taken—by force. That realization floored Dinas.

"Dinas..." Tristen's cock pulsed like a beating heart and Dinas knew he was coming. The fire it lit in Dinas was like a burning forest.

Jamming his pelvis hard between Tristen's legs, Dinas

Prince of Servitude

ground his jaw and came, wishing he was inside his prince as the cum shot out of him.

The sound of a woman's gasp startled them.

Dinas froze as did Tristen under him.

Petrified that what he and Tristen had done was spied and they would both be punished severely, Dinas bit back his terror and looked. A beautiful, raven-haired woman dressed in a lilac-colored gown stared at them in amazement. Her tiny hand fluttered over her lips like a butterfly.

Neither he nor Tristen thought to speak or move. Dinas held his breath until the woman turned on her heels and ran off. Dinas released his hold on Tristen and they both sat up.

While Dinas tried to remove all the hay from Tristen's hair, Tristen asked, "Who was that?"

"No one of import, I hope." Dinas brushed the hay off Tristen's garments. "Women have big mouths. They gossip." Dinas paused in his actions and stared at Tristen. "We were just wrestling, right? She couldn't suspect anything more."

"Wrestling. Yes. That is all we have done." Tristen nodded nervously.

"It is your fault," Dinas said. "You started it when you pushed me."

"Me? You dare blame the Crown Prince?" Tristen grinned. He grabbed Dinas by the collar and they tumbled once again into the hay.

"See? You attack me and I get the blame. Typical monarchy."

"You are lucky you are so desirable," Tristen purred. "No one else would get away with your insolence."

Once more on his back and splayed out like a whore, Dinas gave up. "I am lucky. Yes, my fair prince, I am the luckiest noble in Brandywine."

Tristen's tight muscles relaxed as he lay over Dinas.

Dinas tried to get more of the hay out of Tristen's long hair. "Will we be staying in the same room?"

"I do not see why not. The other men from the army won't know. Not like when we are traveling on the road. I will insist I need you as my aide. Do you object?"

"No. But how will it look to the king?"

"You let me deal with Father."

"Okay, you know best. Let me up."

"No. Not yet." Tristen wriggled on him.

"Why not yet?" Dinas whispered seductively.

"I am not ready. Obey your prince."

Loving his weight on him, Dinas stroked the prince's long hair, staring at his eyes.

"I am once more hard," Tristen said. "I need your hands."

"Do you?" Dinas almost added, "So soon?" but didn't want the prince to know he was aware he already came in case it embarrassed him. "Not here, let us find the baths."

"You want to see me naked?"

"Always." Dinas grinned.

Tristen winked and stood, offering a hand to him. They were covered in straw from head to toe and tried to brush off the mess as they walked.

They went in search of a servant to direct them to the baths but kept chuckling at each other. Dinas knew they were thinking the same naughty thoughts. *We will be all right as long as we do not get caught.*

Tristen and Dinas soaked leisurely in one of the bubbling recessed pools in a massive bath area. Two servants attended them, scrubbing them clean. The noise of running water echoed in the large, rectangular room. Mosaics of colorful birds were depicted on parallel walls, while the other two were smooth, black marble tiles. The ceiling was domed with a skylight, now,

Prince of Servitude

in the night, only a sphere in which to view the stars.

Dinas reached under the churning water to touch Tristen's thigh.

Tristen grew excited and groaned at Dinas' caress.

So he was not overheard by the servants, Tristen pressed his lips to Dinas' ear. "I am trying to be good, but I yearn to do very naughty things. I cannot bear it any longer. Why is it I am a prince? Surely a common soldier could do as he likes and stay hidden." When Tristen felt the servant nudge his shoulder, Tristen shifted to accommodate the young boy as he shampooed his hair for him.

Dinas sighed loudly. "But you *are* a prince, soon to be wed to this kingdom's princess for the sake of peace and power."

Tristen grumbled as the servant rinsed his hair with clean water. "How can I when all I want is you?" Hearing his thoughts voiced too loud, Tristen twisted around, finding the young servant boy's blush.

Dinas said nothing, just giving Tristen a quick warning glance.

"Dinas," Tristen said quietly, "how am I to marry? I do not crave a woman's flesh." He ground his teeth. "Make me strong. Tell me it's worth this torture."

While the servant attended Dinas, Dinas splashed the water absently. "I cannot advise you. Who am I but a slave to you and your parents? All I know is there are laws that apply. We cannot do a thing about it or we shall be punished."

Once Tristen was rinsed of soap and stepped out of the bath, he thanked the servant who helped him to dry off. Though he didn't want to be parted from Dinas, Tristen was about to be led to the royal chamber. Tristen grabbed Dinas by the elbow and drew him near. "My love, I will find you after I am dressed."

Dinas nodded, a deep frown on his lips.

Clothed in his royal robes of blue velvet and white ermine,

Tristen grew upset. *I must accept fate. I have no choice.*

Another young man helped him with his cape and many lacings. Tristen barely acknowledged his presence he was so preoccupied. *Marry? Marry some strange woman? How? How!* A scream welled up in his chest. "I cannot!"

The servant jumped at the shout.

Tristen shook his head. "Ignore me."

"Yes, Prince Tristen." The young boy bowed and stood back, indicating he was done.

Tristen didn't want to appear too ostentatious to his host, so he wore only his sword and gold medallion. "Thank you. Which way to the main hall?"

"Just straight down that corridor and to the left. Shall I escort you?"

"No." Tristen wanted to be alone in his thoughts. "I shall find it."

Head down, brooding, Tristen walked the long stone corridor. He heard the whisper of slipper on stone. In reflex, Tristen grabbed the hilt of his sword as the shadow vanished around a corner. His heart pounded in fear, thinking of assassins, which included the strange incident with the rangers and the red-haired soldier.

Tristen followed the shadowy figure down the hall, always just catching a slight glimpse, unable to discern who it was in the dimness. In fury, he started to run, his sword clanging at his side. "Halt!"

When Tristen caught up to the fleeing apparition, he found the raven-haired woman struggling with a door latch. About to apologize for his mistake, Tristen was stunned when this same woman who has spied he and Dinas wrestling in the hay, lunged at him and pressed his back into the wall.

Tristen's eyes sprang open in shock as she kissed him. Before her tongue entered his mouth, he yelled, "What in the name of the king are you doing?" Tristen shoved her away.

Prince of Servitude

Ready to summon the guard to have her beheaded for the assault, Tristen watched her disappeared into the room she had been frantically trying to enter. He heard the latch close from inside and caught his breath. Confused, wondering what he should do, Tristen backed up and tried to calm his pulse. His heart was beating painfully against his ribs. He wanted Dinas to comfort him. Tristen had no idea of the laws of this kingdom and wondered if he did come forward to claim a strange woman kissed him, if he would be believed.

Thinking he heard someone coming, Tristen straightened himself out and walked away, losing all sense of direction.

When Tristen didn't show up at the feast, Dinas looked everywhere for him. Completely disoriented by the castle's maze of halls, Dinas could not get himself back to the feast or the royal rooms. It was odd here. Though Brandywine had an armed guard at every corner, every door, here in Westland there were none. Dinas heard a noise and peered down a darkened corridor. A tall man in royal blue robes with long flowing blond hair was wandering aimlessly.

"Tristen?"

Tristen spun around, the picture of guilt.

Dinas approached him cautiously. "You all right?"

Tristen's mouth opened as if to respond, but nothing came out but a silent breath.

"My Prince." Dinas couldn't read the look on his face, but he knew something was very wrong. Dinas drew near, reaching out for all that long luscious golden hair and brushing it back from Tristen's eyes. When Dinas felt the sweat from Tristen's brow he became concerned. "Are you ill?"

"What should I do?" Tristen eyes filled.

"Do? Tristen, what is it?"

"Something happened. I do not know the laws here. I have no idea who to tell."

“Tell me.” Dinas hugged him.

After Tristen rocked in Dinas’ arms for a moment, he said, “A maiden with raven hair.”

Dinas stiffened in jealousy.

“She pushed me against the wall of a corridor and kissed me.” Tristen appeared mortified.

“A maiden kissed you? Whom?”

“I do not know. I think it was the same maiden from the courtyard.” Tristen buried his face into Dinas’ neck. “It was revolting.”

“Calm down.” Dinas nudged him back gently so they could meet eyes again. “You are irresistible, my Prince. I don’t blame the girl.”

“It was wrong, wasn’t it? For her to do something I did not want?”

“Yes. Absolutely.” Dinas caressed Tristen’s smooth jaw and ran his fingers into his thick tresses. “But enough to start a war over? Or something we can forget? Hm? Think about the consequences. Did she do anything more?”

“No. Nothing. I pushed her back.”

Dinas shrugged. “Let us think about it. I do have reservations about creating bad blood upon our first visit.”

Tristen’s fear seemed to vanish. “You are so wise, my friend. What would I do without your counsel?”

“I will always be here for you.” Dinas held Tristen’s chin in both hands.

They exchanged a kiss of their own.

“Better now,” Tristen said.

“Good. Come, the kings are waiting. How do we find our way?”

“Wait. Pleasure me.” Tristen resisted his pulling.

“Now? Can it not wait for your chambers later?” Dinas

Prince of Servitude

looked around the vacant halls nervously.

Tristen groaned and rubbed his palm over himself. "It cannot. Your touch, your lips...what you do to me."

The thrill of exciting Tristen was too good to resist.

Dinas crept to a bend in the hall and took a good look around. Returning on tiptoes, Dinas said, "It is all clear. Come here, my Prince." He unlaced Tristen's leggings and urged him to lean back against the wall. "Oh, my lovely golden-boy." Dinas took in the sight of Tristen's nakedness, finding Tristen stone hard. Dinas quickly opened his own leggings and exposed his long cock. When he did, Tristen ran his hands through Dinas' hair, as if encouraging him to hurry.

Dinas' hands worked feverishly on their erect cocks. It only took a moment before Tristen came, stifling a moan. A second later, Dinas did the same. Both were panting as Tristen hung his head, trying to recuperate. Dinas rubbed the spill into the stone floor with his boot.

After fastened his leggings, Tristen whispered, "Are we mad?"

"Yes." Dinas made sure Tristen was presentable before attending himself.

They heard a sound coming from beyond the bend in the hall. Tristen fussed with his hair and cape nervously. Trying to appear casual, Tristen asked the passing servant, "Where is the banquet being held?"

The servant looked them over curiously. "Are you not the Prince of Brandywine?"

"Yes, I am."

Tristen's cheeks turned red and Dinas hoped his anxiety over what they had done wouldn't cloud his judgment. Dinas didn't want a simple kiss to a strange woman to endanger any relationships, especially one he shared with the Crown-Prince.

"Sire." The servant bowed. "This way."

King Renelin instantly found Tristen and Dinas entering

together. He did not appear pleased Tristen was late.

Dinas bowed low before the two kings as Tristen avoided any exchange of words with his father. Tristen followed Dinas to the wine flasks, reaching for one with a quivering hand.

“Calm down, my love.” Dinas lightly brushed his shoulder against Tristen’s.

“I’m a mess. I cannot calm down.” Tristen searched the hall. “Where is the princess? I should at least be able to lay eyes on the nightmare I have ahead of me.”

“I don’t know. Ask your father to point her out.”

“There are two empty thrones, Dinas. Is one for me?”

“It would be my guess. Please. Go to your father. I cannot answer any of your questions.” Dinas gave Tristen’s hair a caress, before sending him off.

Tristen guzzled his wine for courage, then made his way to his father and King Ator. “I’m sorry I’m late. I got lost in the castle. Have I missed the princess?”

“No, son. She is dizzy from a chill and wishes it be postponed one night.” King Renelin paused. “Do not worry, Tristen. I hear tell she is equal to you in your beauty.”

King Ator said, “Be patient, my Prince. She is worth the wait.”

“Yes, yes, of course.” Tristen lowered his head and walked away, sick to his stomach. He returned to Dinas who seemed to have found his appetite. Tristen glanced at his plate of food and it made him even queasier. “She has caught a chill or something.”

“Oh, well. Fear not. We shall deal with it at the time.” Dinas belched. “The food is fantastic.”

“I cannot eat. I am feeling queer. I need to take a stroll. Will you accompany me?”

Dinas paused in his chewing of a large turkey leg. “Now?”

Prince of Servitude

Can you not hold out until I finish? Tristen, I am famished and this is the first feast since we left Brandywine.”

“Yes. Of course. Eat your fill. But find my rooms later? I beg it of you.”

Dinas tossed the bone onto a plate and wiped his face and hands. “No. I will come. You want me to come with you so I shall.”

“It is all right, eat. Perhaps I need a moment alone. Find my quarters later.”

“I will be there within the hour.”

After bestowing on him an affectionate smile, Tristen left the hall. He climbed a stairwell to look out of the tower. The guards saluted him with a hand on their heart as was the way in Westland.

“Good warriors, tell me more about the raids.” Tristen tried to occupy his mind.

“You are the Prince of Brandywine, are you not?” one guards asked, his smile warm and inviting.

“Yes. I’m sorry. Forgive me for not introducing myself.” Tristen’s face felt like it was on fire at the amazing appeal these two iron-clad big men had. He bowed his head. “Prince Tristen of Brandywine, at your service.”

“Hair like spun gold, eyes like sapphires,” the handsome guard said. “It is true.”

Tristen’s breath caught in his throat at the lust in the man’s voice. Instantly Tristen’s body responded with cold sweat and a hard cock. Catching his breath in his excitement, Tristen fought to compose himself. “What are your names, my noble men?”

The dark haired man with the coarse shadow and brown eyes bowed. “Sir Lance, Your Highness, and my partner is Sir Phineus.”

Sir Phineus with mocha skin and dark eyes bowed in respect. “We are at your service, Your Highness.”

Images of these men stripping off his fine velvet and ermine and licking his naked skin embarrassed Tristen to the point of panic. “What...uh...” He struggled to keep his libido under wraps. “What about the raids?”

Sir Lance set his spear aside and leaned against the stone wall. He pointed across the nighttime landscape to King Telgras’ domain. “There. In the wood. That snake from Tenegar Castle keeps attacking our shepherds and farmers.”

“Yes,” Tristen agreed, “it is the same for us.”

“He does it in small raids so we cannot accuse him,” Sir Phineus said. “But we all know who is to blame.”

Tristen lost himself on their height, their powerful bodies hidden under the heavy plated steel. Each man wore a helmet with the visor open, much like the first suit of armor Tristen was fitted for before he left Brandywine.

Tristen licked his lips, imagining the tight walls of muscled chest under those breastplates.

“Are you weary?”

When Tristen’s hair was caressed he jerked his head up to meet with Sir Lance’s eyes. *How brazen to touch a prince without leave!* Tristen knew he should object, swat his hand down in fury. Yet he wanted more. So much more. “Perhaps.” Tristen felt shy under their ardent gazes suddenly.

In silence the enormous guard continued to stroke Tristen’s hair. The gentleness sent tingles right to Tristen’s crotch. Tristen closed his eyes and allowed the big man, and himself, the pleasure.

“You are so beautiful,” Sir Phineus whispered. “The tales that precede you are true. I have never seen hair so golden nor eyes so blue.”

As both men drew closer, Tristen caught a delicious masculine scent wafting up his nostrils. The urge to open his arms and shout, “Ravish me!” consumed him.

A scuff of a boot heel alerted all to a coming presence.

Prince of Servitude

The soldiers stood at attention as Tristen jolted backwards.

A captain approached. "You two are relieved. Go eat."

The men saluted and bowed low. Before they left Tristen caught two sets of eyes giving him inviting looks.

"My prince," the captain said, "may I escort you to your rooms? You must be weary from your journey."

"Yes. Please."

The bell tolled for midnight as Tristen was led to the royal chambers.

He thanked the captain and found his loyal friend waiting for him.

"Tristen, I have been worried sick."

"Do not worry for me." Tristen sat on the bed and pushed the hair back from his face.

"But I do. My Tristen, what is it?"

"I cannot marry the princess."

"You must. You have no choice."

"No. I cannot. It sickens me."

"What of the realm? Your father?"

"I don't care." Tristen reached to unclasp his cloak.

"No. Tristen. You will be exiled. Please do nothing rash. You do not need to love her, but you must marry Princess Lynette. Imagine what your parents will do." Dinas shook the prince by the shoulders.

Tristen turned away and collapsed on the bed. "I don't want her. I don't want a woman. Dinas, if you knew my deepest thoughts—"

"Hush. You are beyond exhausted and not thinking clearly." With loving care, Dinas stood Tristen up to help him remove his sword and clothing. "Come. Wash and sleep." Dinas escorted Tristen to the basin and used a damp cloth to cleanse him.

Tristen was spent. Every muscle in his body ached. His

bones craved sleep. Through heavy eyelids Tristen watched his best friend wash him like a servant.

Once Dinas had finished, he brought Tristen to the richly trimmed bed of satin and lace. "Sleep. I will see you tomorrow."

"Dinas," Tristen called, reaching out, "do not leave me tonight."

With his mouth forming a tight line, Dinas nodded, removed his clothing, and washed. He climbed in next to Tristen and squeezed him close as Tristen snaked himself around Dinas tightly, hiding over his shoulder. "I don't care if they discover us. I am tired of pretending."

Dinas rocked him and whispered soothingly, "Hush. We are young, my prince, only eighteen this year. What do we know of the world?" He kissed Tristen's cheek. "You worry, dear Prince, of a heart ache. Why do I fear there are more horrible reasons in this world to dread?"

It stopped Tristen's treasonous thoughts instantly. His breathing softened as he felt Dinas' smooth skin under the satin. "Whatever would I do without you, my beloved friend?"

Dinas smiled into his adoring eyes. "Let us hope you shall never find that out." Dinas kissed his lips lovingly. "Go to sleep. I will watch over you."

Tristen sighed and let go of some of his angst. "One more kiss before I close my eyes."

Without hesitation, Dinas obliged.

In the land of Troyar, beyond Westland, King Telgras sat upon his throne. A servant rushed into his chamber to tell of a scout's return. The king gestured to allow the scout entry.

"Sire." The scout bowed low. "Fifteen hundred men, five hundred of that on horseback from Brandywine have arrived at the palace at Westland. They plan to attack."

King Telgras jerked his head forward. "Attack whom?"

Prince of Servitude

“You, Your Majesty. Because of the raids on Westland.”

“Attack for the loss of a few sheep? What are your sources?” The king rose and approached the scout.

“A ranger, Sire.”

“You believe a filthy lying ranger?” Grabbing the man by the collar, King Telgras tugged him forward.

“Yes, Sire. He was informed by a traitor among the guard of Brandywine.” The scout caught his breath in fear.

King Telgras released him. “Go. Send in Captain Ulgress.” As he waited, King Telgras paced anxiously.

A large warrior with a shaven head, save for one shank at the base of his skull, came in holding a spear. He bowed low to the king.

“Ulgress, we are at war. Gather your men and plan an attack. We outnumber them now two to one and must strike before they gather more numbers. Go!”

Captain Ulgress bowed and left.

King Telgras hurried to meet with his advisors. “We are at war. Come up with a plan, you useless demons.”

They debated on strategy and timing as the king grew angrier with each foolish idea. Finally, all eyes turned to a dark figure, silent and seated in the corner. The king approached the bent form. “Speak!”

A skinny dried hand moved back the hood revealing an ancient being, so old it seemed gnarled as a tree. The voice crackled in the quiet. “I see a vulnerable place in Ator’s defense.”

“Go on,” the king demanded.

“He has sought the aid of Renelin.”

“Yes! We know all this.” King Telgras grew furious.

“Renelin has brought his son, Tristen the Fair, to meet his future wife, Princess Lynette.”

Rolling his eyes, King Telgras tapped his foot impatiently.

“Kidnap the prince and hold him for ransom. His father’s gold will buy enough weapons to hold them off or destroy them. Seek the son. He will fight his first battle on the field and is a novice. He will be an easy target for Ulgress and his men.” The voice trailed off.

Pondering this information, King Telgras raised his eyebrows and touched his square jaw. All the advisors watched to see his reaction. “And how will I know this son?”

“He is the fairest in all the land. Hair like mined gold, eyes like sapphires.”

Chapter Ten

On the evening of the second feast Tristen was advised the princess promised her father she would join them.

Tristen sat with his face in a goblet as Dinas tried his best to pacify him. A horn sounded and Tristen sank deeper behind his wine.

King Renelin asked, "Tristen? Where is my son?"

As if his life could get no worse, Tristen crawled lower under the table.

Dinas yanked him up by his cape. "Tristen, your father calls you."

"Tell him I am dead."

"Sit up." Dinas yanked him again.

"No. Do not make me, Dinas. I want to die."

"Curse you!" Dinas stood behind Tristen to get him to his feet, moving him to the platform.

"No! Dinas! Do not do this to me!" Tristen dug in his heels.

"Princess Lynette is here. At least look upon her." Dinas grabbed Tristen's jaw and forced him.

Tristen was beyond humiliation. He stole a quick glance, then turned away. "I have seen enough. Let me go."

"You could not have really looked or you would have seen, Tristen. At least she is pretty." Dinas turned Tristen around again. "Fake it with her. In the name of the king, do not do

this.”

Tristen stopped resisting. Dinas was pushing so hard that they both fell flat on their faces. The crowd roared with laughter. King Renelin rose to his feet in the noise, looking at his son in disbelief.

“It’s the raven-haired girl who assaulted me. This is a nightmare,” Tristen whispered to Dinas who had landed on his back.

“Shut up. Go act like a prince before the king kills you.”

The servants ran to help Tristen and Dinas to their feet. The noise of laughter was deafening. Dinas crawled back to his chair as Tristen stood alone in the center of the room.

“Tristen! Come forth,” his father bellowed.

Finding his legs, Tristen willed them to move. The princess locked into his gaze in total amazement. Stumbling up the steps awkwardly, Tristen couldn’t remove his eyes from her, nor stop the anger inside him about what she had done.

A wave of warnings from Dinas washed through Tristen. He would be exiled, lose his crown. He must fulfill his duty. He simply had to pretend. *Pretend. I must pretend I love this woman and marry her? Why me?*

“It seems your daughter approves,” King Renelin said.

When Tristen heard his father’s comment, he checked King Ator’s reaction. His was not yet convinced of a mutual attraction.

Cursing under his breath at the injustice, Tristen knelt before the princess. He reached for her hand. She gave it and Tristen kissed it.

The laughter in the large hall turned to cheers as fists, cups, and plates were all banged on tables in the absolute delight at the unity of the realms and the beauty of the young royalty.

The princess smiled down at Tristen. “Alas, it is you I so boldly kissed.”

Prince of Servitude

“Yes. It is I,” Tristen replied, though he wanted to scold her.

“So!” King Renelin waved to calm the crowd. “It is well done. They wed come the morning. Tonight we feast. More wine!” he summoned.

The princess rose to her feet and she and the prince walked arm in arm across the great hall. Dinas and the light-armored guards were on their feet cheering. A wave rippled across the room of shouts and pounding tables.

Tristen stifled his cringe of agony but not before noticing Aldren, dining with the regular army, bristle and look upon the princess with envy.

Chapter Eleven

At dawn three thousand men lined the hills of Troyar. King Telgras and Captain Ulgress stood centered. The king raised his hand and the line charged forward. Staying behind with the Captain, King Telgras said, "They have their orders. He is to be unharmed."

"Yes, my Lord." Ulgress whipped his horse and it broke into a run.

Tristen brooded while he dressed. He hadn't slept well, dreading a union he did not want.

In silence Dinas helped him with his cape.

A great horn sounded and the hall filled with the noise of scraping boot leather.

The two men stared at each other and ran out into the corridor.

Tristen grabbed a passing guard. "What has happened?"

"King Telgras! He attacks! On our own field! To arms!" The guard ran off.

Dinas and Tristen hurried back into the room to dress in their light armor. Grabbing their swords, they hurried to the castle gate.

Both of the kings' men were barking orders as the chargers were being led from the stable.

Prince of Servitude

“Tristen! Rally your men!” King Renelin called. “Ride!” His sword held high, the king turned his steed and cantered out of the gate.

In moments, the light-armored band was assembled. Their spirits high, they took off into the morning sunlight alongside the two kings. All five hundred horsemen were flanking them and Captain August had rallied the thousand foot soldiers. Behind them was King Ator’s army.

Tristen overheard his father dispatch a handful of messengers to engage all troops in Brandywine that were available to march to their aid. Tristen listened to the exchange of conversation between the two rulers.

“What has brought his force?” King Renelin asked Ator as they galloped their horses. “Why is he so foolish to attack us this way? On our own ground?”

“He dares not wait for your back up force. He felt threatened by your approach and wanted to call the first move.”

“We would never attack without cause! We came because of the raids!”

“This he obviously did not know.”

Tristen’s heart was jubilant as he felt the strength of his father’s army around him, and King Ator’s just beyond that. The first sight of banners appeared at the horizon. The dust was like a raging thunderhead over the enemy line.

Tristen gave a battle cry and the men roared making the blood pound in Tristen’s ears.

Arrows flew and a few men fell. Within moments the ground soldiers were engaged in hand to hand combat, fighting with sword and spear. The huge chargers plowed like tanks over the warriors on foot.

Dinas and Tristen fought side by side, slicing in two any man who came into their path.

The heavy armor made the enemy slow and Tristen’s light armor had a clear advantage. The troop was making excellent

progress and it seemed the tide was in their favor.

A spear shot out like a missile and Tristen's white charger was rammed in its chest, collapsing under him. Tristen leapt off of the horse to fight on foot. Dinas jumped down as well, to stand at Tristen's side. A few of his other loyal men had done the same. They formed a circle, trying to protect Tristen. Though they fought fiercely, never tiring of delivering the fatal blow, a giant horse smashed through the fray, its rider alien and huge. His looks brought terror to the light-armored nobles as they cowered before his sinister appearance. While they hesitated in battle, they were quickly taken by the strange captain's men. Try as he might, Tristen screamed for them to keep fighting, urging them on. "No! Keep going! Do not give up!"

With his attention distracted towards his men, Tristen felt a piercing pain race through his shoulder. In retaliation Tristen slashed his sword violently at the man that held the spear even though the wound cut his skin and his blood did pour.

Dinas became frantic. "Retreat! Tristen! Retreat!"

But it was too late. The small band had been cut off from the main battle and were surrounded by sharp spears at every angle.

Not willing to admit defeat, Tristen went into a rage, killing one after another until Dinas was hit by a spear and fell to his knees. In agony, Tristen dropped next to him to hold Dinas in his arms. "Dinas! I will get you out of here. Hang on!" When Tristen raised his head, he found thirty spear points aimed at them. An enemy soldier took Tristen's sword, then stood over him, studying him.

"Let me get him help! Please!" Tristen begged. "I'll do as you ask. He needs help!"

The monstrous captain dismounted. "Come, Your Highness."

"No! I cannot leave him," Tristen cried in anguish, holding Dinas in his arms.

Prince of Servitude

With a wave of his hand, the captain gestured to his men. The soldiers dragged the prince to his feet, pulling Dinas out of his embrace.

As the prince was captured, Dinas lay back, bleeding on the dirt. Their eyes met, but Dinas did not speak. Tristen went mad. "My Dinas! No! Do not take me from him!"

The force of many enemy men dragged Tristen away from the battle. They tied his hands behind his back, and placed him onto a horse with the captain, surrounded by spearmen.

Tristen looked back at his injured lover, tears flowing from his eyes at his helplessness to aid him.

The ugly captain called the retreat and the survivors turned and joined him and his captive as they rode back to the castle.

On his arrival at Tenegar Castle, Tristen was handled roughly and not a word spoken to him. To enrage him further, Tristen was bound at the ankles and his wrists were tied even tighter behind his back. Violently hauled through the dark corridors, the guards brought him to a chamber where Tristen was thrown painfully to his knees.

All fell silent.

As if he were deep in thought, King Telgras approached slowly, warily watching his captive until he stood before him. "They say you are the fairest prince in all the land. Show me your face."

Snarling at him, Tristen ground his jaw and made eye contact, knowing his cheeks were stained with dust and tears.

"You look like a beggar." King Telgras circled once around him and raised a strand of Tristen's hair, rubbing it between his fingers.

Not wanting to be touched, Tristen growled and tilted away.

"Clean him up and attend his wound. When he is presentable, return him to me."

Before Tristen could catch his breath, the guards grabbed him and hauled him to his feet. Stumbling from the force,

Tristen was escorted to another chamber with young slaves. When they removed his fine chain-mail, Tristen heard the guards marveling at the craft. Next Tristen's leather garments were cut off of him. As he was tended, Tristen kept his eyes on the three burly armed guards that watched his every movement.

Tristen was stripped and bathed and his wounded shoulder was medicated with an herbed poultice. The bindings on his wrists and ankles continued to torment him. Tristen looked at one of the young slaves, then peeked at the guard quickly. "What will they do to me?" Tristen whispered.

The boy spied back at the guard nervously and shook his head, biting his lip.

Rinsed clean, and dried, Tristen was rubbed down with oils and cinnamon until his body glowed bronze. He tried to feel the relief at the unusual scent of herbs which were massaged into his tense, sore muscles. Never had Tristen imagined using cooking spices as skin tonic. He had to admit this pampering was surprising. He was a prisoner of war. Tristen had no idea if his father would be so kind to his enemy.

Tristen's hair was combed and left flowing loose down his back. When the slaves were finished with their task, Tristen was helped to stand.

A huge armor-covered guard approached.

Tristen glanced down at himself in terror. "Where are my garments? Am I not to be clothed? Even a peasant is allowed to cover himself. I am the son of Renelin, son of Richard. How dare you humiliate me this way!"

His defiance enraged the guard and he slapped Tristen's face. "Be quiet."

When Tristen felt the men's coarse hands on him again, he struggled with the bindings furiously. But something else happened. Naked, vulnerable, Tristen felt his crotch tingle and his cock go rigid against his will. *No. Oh, by the life of the king, no!* The handling was so erotic, Tristen dreaded them realizing his aroused state, but it was impossible to hide his rigid cock

Prince of Servitude

protruding from between his thighs. Tristen twisted his hips to avoid his erection being noticed and knew his skin was pure red with his shame. *Why is this driving me wild? Why?*

Inevitably it drew a snickering comment from one of the big burly men. "Perfect." The man tried to get a quick feel of Tristen's cock.

"Do not touch me!" Tristen jerked his pelvis back.

"That'll soon change, my pretty prince."

Their laughter both terrorized and excited him to a new pique.

"Soon you'll be the one begging." Another large man toyed with Tristen's hair.

Tristen was taken by the four men back to the king's chambers. All the while Tristen cursed and growled profanity. But it was his own lack of control he was truly angry with.

Undaunted by Tristen's profane rambling, the king stayed seated at his writing table, a quill in his hand. King Telgras ignored the intrusion until he was quite ready, then stood, holding a parchment at arm's length. "What do you think, prince? This is to be your ransom note." He glanced up at Tristen and froze.

Tristen's long blond mane was in his eyes. It annoyed him he could not push it back. He curled his lip and tugged violently at the leather bonds. With everything Tristen could muster, he tried to rid himself of his erection. Hate. Rage. Anything. Nothing worked. The bondage and helplessness was something he craved back in Brandywine with his lover. *Dinas*. Instantly visualizing his best friend injured in battle, Tristen's body softened.

Smiling wickedly, the king approached him. "Quite an improvement. You resemble a prince once more. Kneel before your king." He pointed to the floor.

"You shall never be my King!" Tristen answered.

With a violent shove from behind from a guard, Tristen's

knees hit the hard stone. He grimaced in pain and struggled to free his hands from behind his back. "How dare you. My father will have your head for this."

"Will he? I think not."

"Unbind me! I demand to be clothed as a human being." Tristen tried to rise and felt the sole of a boot on his back.

"You demand?" The king laughed. "You are not in a position to demand a thing." He stepped closer. "You are lucky to be alive. You have been bathed and medicated, you pampered brat. More than you deserve. Hold your tongue or have it removed."

Tristen was seething, working hard to form a plan. He desperately wanted to kill this man.

King Telgras walked leisurely around him, admiring him. "Marvelous. You are worth plenty. You are not the type to be unclaimed for long." He nodded and the guards returned Tristen to his feet.

In complete hatred, Tristen glared at King Telgras' heartless face, chiseled as if from marble with his short trimmed black beard and jet black hair that fell in ringlets down his back. Tristen tried to estimate his age. He'd heard tales of this king of Troyar, that he was very young when he obtained the throne. Yet, even with a jet black beard, Tristen thought the king was very young, maybe not more than a few years older than himself.

Obviously loving his advantage, King Telgras moved to confront him. Tristen stood a few inches taller than did he, but bound and naked left Tristen feeling most definitely the weaker of the two.

King Telgras touched Tristen's hair. "What fantastic beauty. It's rare to see golden hair and light eyes in our world."

Tristen showed his teeth in a snarl, but that same rush of lust washed through his loins. The battle to not show his excitement was making Tristen shake with anxiety.

Prince of Servitude

“Since you are as pretty as a picture, we must hang you on our wall. Take him to the dungeon.” The king waved, then held up his hand. “Wait.” He lifted the gold medal from around the prince’s neck.

“No! NO!” Tristen went berserk trying to raise his arms to prevent it. The guards grabbed him from behind to hold him still.

King Telgras fondled the medal, inspecting its detail. “What a lovely gold piece. Does it mean much to you?”

“You cannot have it! Leave it be!” Tristen wrenched at the arms that held him.

The king snapped the chain with a tug. “Take him away.”

Tristen went crazy. “I shall kill you! Your head shall grace our battlement! You will die, Telgras, die!”

Jerked violently, Tristen tripped down the hall, held between two large armored men. He brooded with hatred as they descended the stairwells to the cellar. There Tristen was hung by his wrists and ankles and left with one guard seated on a chair near the door. Though he tried for hours to loosen the bonds, he could not. His arms ached and his heart and spirit were nearly broken.

Tristen exhausted himself with his struggle and finally leaned his head on his shoulder to stare into the dimness. It was then he noticed the lone guard watching him. They met eyes. The exchange, the sensual leering, made Tristen’s skin prickle and the goose bumps rise. *My Lord. What are the laws of this castle? Why do they look at me as if they want to devour me?*

Tristen recalled his own guards, and those of King Ator, giving him the same exact lusty gaze. *Do not just stare! Do something to me!*

After a slight surge of sexual demand brought his cock almost erect, the exhaustion finally caught up to Tristen and he closed his eyes.

G.A. Hauser

“Kidnapped?” King Renelin roared.

August bowed his head, unable to look the king in the eyes.

“Have they demanded a ransom?”

“Not yet, Your Majesty.”

The king paced wildly, pulling on his beard. “The forces of Brandywine will arrive in two weeks. We storm the palace then.”

“But, Sire, that will surely put the prince in jeopardy. We must wait and see the demands.”

King Renelin slammed his fists on the table. “Wait? If any harm comes to that boy I shall rip Telgras apart with my own hands.” He clenched them angrily. “See to it the queen does not get wind of this.”

“Yes, Your Majesty.” August felt infinitely guilty for his influence in bringing the prince to the battle. “Your son is wise and brave, sire, if he is alive there is a chance he will escape unharmed.”

“I hope you’re right, August. I hope you are right.”

King Telgras lay on his royal bed, thinking of his prisoner. He heard a light scratching noise at the door. “Enter.”

A young soldier came in and bowed low.

The king nodded to him and the youth lay his spear down and approached.

“Where is the queen?” Telgras asked.

“Retired for the evening, Sire, in her chambers.”

“Very good.” He curled his finger in invitation.

Chapter Twelve

By morning Tristen was in agony. His arms felt ripped from their sockets as they were forever over his head. They were numb and tingly like the rest of his body. Tristen heard the door and a heavy tread of boots. Three guards came into the chamber and removed him from his mounted position on the wall.

Tristen moaned and closed his eyes at the reprieve yet could not stand on his aching legs. Without compassion, he was forced to walk through the tight bindings of his ankles. When he spotted the slave boy he almost cried with relief.

Again he was bathed and fed, his wound tended, and his light peach fuzz of a beard shaved from his face. His aching muscles were massaged with cinnamon oil. Just when Tristen thought he could bear it and rest, he was taken before the king once more.

As if the guards were growing agitated with Tristen, they shoved him to his knees roughly even before King Telgras requested it.

The force of their throw sent Tristen's long hair covering his eyes. Looking up through it, Tristen found King Telgras studying a map.

The king peered over his shoulder, then stood and approached him. Obviously well trained and obedient, the guards backed away into the darkness by the door.

"Why were your father's troops summoned? What is their

next move?" The king stroked his beard.

Tristen glared at him.

King Telgras showed his teeth. "Why was your father summoned? What is his next move?" he shouted more fiercely.

Tristen screamed, "Unbind me! Give me my clothing! What is the meaning of this treatment?"

The king grew white with fury. "You spoiled brat. You have been treated more than fairly. Have you been tortured? Have you been starved? Have you been left in your own filth? You are bound. Yes! Your strength and prowess are well known. I am no fool to loose your limbs. You deserve no robes. You are my captive. You are my prisoner."

Tristen's eyes stung. *A prisoner? Have I not been imprisoned all my young life?*

"Why were they summoned? Where do they move next?" the king repeated.

Hating him, Tristen sneered in disdain.

King Telgras looked to his guards. One stepped forward and forced Tristen's attention back to the king. Tristen winced in pain. In his ear the big guard hissed, "Be careful, my beauty."

Against his will the voice sent the hairs standing on Tristen's arms and behind his neck. The sensation of pleasure ignited even though Tristen fought it. *No. No. Do not get aroused!*

The guard released Tristen's chin but Tristen felt the scratch of his armor on his back, his grip on Tristen's upper arm. The tingling of his skin from the presence of this big guard was making Tristen wild with desire and terribly confused.

King Telgras studied him and Tristen boldly returned his gaze. Neither spoke, assessing the strength of the other.

"Why do you make it difficult? Hmm? I do not want to torture you or mar your perfect features." The king placed his hand under Tristen's face and raised his jaw to the sunlight coming in through the window. "Beauty as fair as any

Prince of Servitude

maiden's," he mused contentedly.

At that seductive purring, Tristen's eyes narrowed. He spat in the king's face.

King Telgras recoiled and wiped his cheek with his robe. "Get him out of my sight," he yelled, "back to the dungeon."

The guards grabbed Tristen savagely, shoving him out of the chamber.

Once again, Tristen was hung in the dark, damp dungeon. Below him rats scurried and made him shiver. Raising himself up with his arms, Tristen tried to reach the bonds with his teeth but he could not. He ached from the strain; his shoulders were in agony. Forced to relax his muscles again, Tristen hung heavily. Hours passed in silence save for the dripping of water and the constant stare of the lone guard. "Stop looking at me."

The guard laughed. "You are lucky it is all I am doing."

"What does that mean?"

"Hopefully, very soon, you shall see."

Though Tristen's words were tough, he was frightened. He yearned for the touch of this man, some comfort, but couldn't imagine asking for it.

The eerie darkness reminded Tristen of the cave he and Dinas had explored many moons back. He had felt afraid of the closeness of the walls and his companion had been there to reassure him. Now Tristen thought of his beloved Dinas as he lay helpless on the battlefield and his tears did come. "Yes, Dinas, there are more horrible things to cry about in this life." He burst into a sob and heard it echo around him. *Do you not feel sorrow for me?* Tristen craved the guard to come near, caress him, kiss his skin. "Oh, what is the use?" He bit his lip. *I am helpless.*

Many hours passed in silence. The sound of the door opening made Tristen hold his breath for he knew not what fate awaited him. Squinting into the shadows, Tristen found a small form approaching, shrouded in a cloak, moving past the one

seated guard. The person was draped in richly embroidered fabric, interlaced with gold thread. Tristen stared wide-eyed as it moved with a strange unsteady gait. Not like any man he had witnessed. When the figure was only a step away, it drew its hood back.

Tristen gazed in bewilderment at a woman, past her prime, yet not horrible to look upon. Like someone's poor old grandmother. She reached out to touch him. Tristen gasped and flinched back. Her crooked smile showed her decaying teeth. He shuddered in disgust.

"Sweet Prince. Skin like velvet, hair like mined gold, eyes like sapphires," she chanted like she was casting a spell.

Tristen trembled involuntarily and tried to become part of the wall.

With a bold, wrinkled hand, she smoothed her palm up his thigh as Tristen struggled frantically to turn out of reach. She laughed at his vain attempts and he finally had to just hang still from the soreness in his arms.

She looped her finger into the leather at Tristen's ankles and tugged on it, pulling it tighter. When he flinched in pain it made her laugh.

"Leave me in peace. Why do you torment me?" The sound of his voice rebounded in the hollow room.

She grinned up at Tristen. "I have never had such a lovely slave at my mercy. Do you think a handsome prince would look upon me now?" She touched the golden hair of his inner thigh.

Tristen groaned and twisted away. "Let me be. Be gone with you. I am not your toy."

She laughed heartily. "Not yet. Not yet."

The guard came closer and Tristen assumed she would surely be beaten and thrown out. To his utter astonishment the guard bowed and addressed her as 'Your Highness'.

Tristen stared at her with his mouth agape. "You are the queen mother?"

Prince of Servitude

Grinning like a fiend, she turned back to reply, “I am the queen.” Her laughter echoed and faded as she left the dungeon.

Chapter Thirteen

Tristen was put through the same routine the next day. He was bathed, fed, shaved, and massaged, then taken to the king's chambers to be interrogated. When Tristen refused to answer the king's questions he was sent to the dungeon to hang for longer lengths of time.

On the third day Tristen thought he knew the process and wondered why King Telgras didn't give up. Tristen had no intention of revealing any information he needed.

Tristen was thrown to his knees in front of King Telgras and waited for the same tired questioning.

"Without torture you will not cooperate. This is quite plain now. What if I were to give you some news?"

Tristen stared coldly at him. "Release my arms."

The king rolled his eyes at this well practiced game. "You may want to brace yourself, sweet prince, for what you are about to hear."

"Nothing you say will affect me." Defiantly, Tristen raised his chin to him.

"Very well." Telgras smirked. "News traveled to me this morning by carrier pigeon of...your mother." He paused.

Tristen swallowed hard and tried not to flinch.

"It seems she was quite mortified to learn her son was being held captive." King Telgras paused for effect.

Prince of Servitude

Tristen felt the blood rush from his face making him feel faint.

“She has taken her own life with a sharp ruby crystal.” The king studied his eyes.

As the agony penetrated his bones, Tristen went rigid. A trace of pain flashed cruelly through him and his breathing grew labored. “You bastard!” Tristen roared, “You lying bastard!”

At the insult, the king slapped him hard. “How dare you raise your voice to me!”

Tristen pulled like a demon at the bonds, the leather cutting deeper into his already raw flesh. “I shall kill you!” he cried, “Not the truth! Not the truth!” Tristen gnashed his teeth and used all his might to free himself.

“You shall kill me? Just exactly who do you think you are? I think it is about time you learned who is the one who obeys orders in this castle.” With a wave of the king’s hand, four armed guards rushed over, lifting Tristen up off the floor.

Startled with the suddenness of the act as he was grabbed from behind, Tristen’s could not see for his eyes were filled with tears. Pain dominated his senses as his hands were stretched over his head and his thighs hit the bed. Tristen roared in raging fury until the aching in his arms and wrists became excruciating. His ankles were elevated and he was thrown on his face on the mattress.

Tristen had no idea what was going to happen to him. He struggled to get to his knees. His wrists were yanked to the wall at the head of the huge bed and the leather attached to a protruding hook. The sound of a sword unsheathing made Tristen freeze in fear. The bond was cut between his legs and a guard pulled one foot to either bedpost and retied him to it.

Tristen didn’t know what possessed him at that moment, but his body went wild. His cock hardened and pulsated against his will, even overcoming the despair from the news he had just heard. Tristen could not gain enough air. Gasping and trying to see through his tears and wild hair, Tristen stretched his chin

over his shoulder to find the king and four guards leering, and obviously very amused at the sight. "My Lord. What are you doing to me?" Tristen was terrified the king would see his aroused state. Tristen pushed his pelvis into the velvety bedding but it only made him want to rub against it. *Pleasure? How on earth am I feeling pleasure now? I am mad. I am truly mad.*

"Look upon him men. Have you ever seen a prince so fair?"

A hand caressed his bottom lovingly. Tristen closed his eyes and pressed his face into the pillows. *No! Do not stroke me. Oh, help me or I shall lose my seed. What is wrong with me?*

His cock throbbed and the urge to hump the bed overwhelmed him. Tristen clenched his teeth and tried to think of anything other than the intensity of the urge to come. "This is madness. I am a prince. You cannot treat me this way." *Please! I will be humiliated. Oh, no, no...*

One of the guards moved to the side of the bed, caressing Tristen's hair.

Tristen's heart was beating hard behind his ribs at what unknown act he was going to be subjected to. He lay perfectly still, listening, for he couldn't see everything that was going on behind his back. Tristen heard murmuring of voices and strained to look over his shoulder again. "What...what are you going to do?"

The same guard crouched beside him, licked Tristen's ear and chewed his lobe.

The rush of sensation to his cock was devastating. Tristen arched his back and jammed his hips hard into the bedding. "No..."

"Yes..." the guard replied, his breath brushing Tristen's skin.

A sound of a sword clanging to the stone floor was followed by the rustle of heavy garments. Tristen jerked his head around as far as he could, but couldn't guess what would happen next.

It was too still, too quiet in the room. Tristen felt the bed

Prince of Servitude

shift as someone climbed on it.

“Telgras,” Tristen asked, “what is happening?” Tensing his muscles at the suspense, Tristen cried out in shock when his inner thighs were stroked. The craving to climax began to win out over everything else in Tristen’s mind.

Tristen could only see the guard beside him, one who was combing his fingers through Tristen’s long hair adoringly. “Please. What will they do?”

The guard didn’t reply. Instead he tilted Tristen towards him and kissed his lips.

At the same time someone ran a finger over his rim. Tristen’s skin broke out in chills instantly. The guard fucked his mouth with his tongue.

Breathing deeply through his nostrils, unable to withhold the urge any longer, Tristen clenched his body and climaxed ramming his cock into the bed. He parted from the guard’s mouth and choked back his howl of pleasure.

“One.” Someone began to be keep count of Tristen’s orgasms.

“Oh yes, my beauty. You enjoy this. Good. Very good.” The guard smiled.

Tristen was grabbed by his hair and forced to the guard’s lips again. Tristen released his pent up inhibitions and sucked on the man’s tongue, whimpering as the aftershocks of the orgasm continued to rock him.

A slippery finger entered his back passage.

“Ah!” Tristen bolted back in surprise.

The guard held him firm, licking Tristen’s cheek and jaw.

“What is he doing?” Tristen asked the guard.

“Bringing both of you pleasure.” The guard traced his tongue across Tristen’s lips.

“How?” Tristen began humping the bed as the finger slid in and out of his ass.

“How?” The guard laughed. “Fair prince, you look sensual, but you are innocent. It is pure delight.”

The sensation heightened when a second digit slid inside him. Tristen was stone hard again and rising to the heavens. “Yes.”

“Yes,” the guard echoed, chewing on Tristen’s neck.

“Your beauty is beyond compare,” King Telgras said.

Tristen assumed the king was the one penetrating him. With Telgras’ words, the friction up his bottom increased.

“More,” Tristen uttered to himself, but the guard heard.

“He said, ‘more’ Your Majesty.”

“I intend on giving him more, Helbros.”

Tristen closed his eyes. Bound, helpless, with four men and the king touching him and watching this act, Tristen had no idea why it made him delirious, but it did.

How many nights did he fantasize about a guard taking him, ravishing him? Too many. And Dinas’ eager kisses, pleasuring him, their bodies rubbing against each other until they came...

Do not think of Dinas.

His hole was being worked until it was slick and open. Between the king’s internal massage and the handsome guard working his tongue into his mouth once more, Tristen was again on the edge.

The fingers were removed and Tristen wanted them back inside. Before he could decide what to do, a heavy weight rested on his back. Tristen’s eyes sprang open. The handsome guard kissing him was expressing deep passion, his brow knotted, his eyes sealed shut.

Something larger than a finger made its way inside him. Tristen grunted and parted from that hungry mouth.

“Relax,” the guard whispered, caressing Tristen’s hair.

“Is...is it the king?” Tristen panted.

“Yes, my beauty.”

Prince of Servitude

“Tristen...oh, my fair prince,” King Telgras moaned.

“Ah!” Tristen said, “It is too big.”

“Hush.” The guard wiped the dewy sweat from the prince’s face.

Tristen tugged at the leather straps on his wrists. “I do not understand.” Tristen bit his top lip as he stared into the dark eyes of Helbros. “He is pleasuring himself *in* me?”

Helbros smiled broadly. “What kind of place is Brandywine if you know not what my king is doing?”

That took Tristen aback.

King Telgras moaned in ecstasy and pushed inside Tristen deeper.

Tristen tensed up, about to protest this invasion. “In Brandywine these things are illegal.”

“Illegal?”

“Wait!” Tristen shook his head as his body trembled. “Tell the king it is too big.”

“If you let go, it will feel wonderful.” Helbros chewed on Tristen’s ear.

Tristen closed his eyes and made a deliberate attempt at releasing his tense muscles. “Untie me.”

“I cannot.” Helbros urged him to his mouth. “Kiss me, Tristen the Fair.”

A grunt echoed in the room as King Telgras pushed in to the hilt.

Tristen sought that kiss for reassurance. Both Helbros’ hands cupped his head and deepened their kiss. While Helbros’ tongue fucked his mouth, Telgras did the same to his ass.

As he grew more accustomed to the act, Tristen did indeed feel another spark of pleasure coming from inside. With his wrists tied together, Tristen was only able to lean on his elbows. Tristen boldly pushed closer to the guard and used his tongue to kiss him. Previously it had been only Helbros who had used his.

Why did I not know to do this with Dinas? Why?

Tristen's hips were elevated off the bed roughly by an unknown man. Tristen blinked and pulled back from the kiss. Keeping his gaze on Helbros' reassuring smile, Tristen choked as his cock was grabbed. "Ah!" He gulped. "The king?"

Helbros took a look. "No. Parmun."

"Who?" Tristen felt a wave of pleasure surge through him.

"Another guard."

Three men on him? "Yes." Tristen humped that tight callused hand.

"Yes," Helbros repeated softly. "Come, my lovely golden boy."

The king let out a roar as he plunged his cock inside Tristen. While it pulsed, Tristen assumed King Telgras had found his pleasure.

Tristen thought he was in a strange dream. None of this seemed real.

Telgras pulled out. Tristen heard his heaving breath.

When his balls were fondled, Tristen gasped, "Still Parmun?"

Helbros peered down to see. "Parmun and Lucas now."

"What is the last guard doing?" Tristen was about to combust. Three guards handling him? What of the fourth?

"Pleasuring himself as he watches."

That was the push Tristen needed. He closed his eyes and came, arching his back and wrestling with the leather straps as he writhed.

"Two."

While Tristen recovered, resting against the soft velvet, the room filled with men's throaty grunts. Warm spatter hit Tristen's back, bottom, and upper thighs. When he looked for Helbros, Tristen found him standing beside the bed shooting his seed.

Prince of Servitude

I am dreaming. I am not awake. Soon I will awaken in my bed in Brandywine and Dinas will kiss my cheek.

Coated with sweat and cum, Tristen struggled for breath.

Telgras climbed off the mattress. Tristen waited as the king was washed up at the basin by a waiting servant. Once he was clean, Telgras was helped with his robe and sword.

“Take him away.”

Helbros raised Tristen’s wrists off the hook as the other guards rebound his ankles together and stood Tristen off the bed.

“Wait. What is happening?” Tristen felt spent and imagined sleeping where he was.

Without a word, as if they were strangers, the four guards escorted him back to the dungeon. Once again Tristen was heartlessly secured to the wall. This time no one was left inside the chamber. He heard them latch the door as they left. “No. Come back. Do not leave me.” Tristen hung his head and broke out into deep, heaving sobs.

Chapter Fourteen

The next day two guards came for him and lifted his limp body off the wall. Left with a servant who bathed him, shaved his light beard, and oiled his aching muscles, Tristen began to feel better. He was fed bread, meats, and fruit. When he found four strange armed guards approaching, he panicked and scrambled, stumbling with his bound limbs.

With wicked smiles on their faces, the new guards picked him up off his feet.

“Where is Helbros?” Tristen asked in fear. “Parmun? Lucas? Who are you?”

“Be quiet. Why do you think you have power here?”

In the king’s chambers, Tristen was shoved to his knees and boot leather held him down.

“What demon are you?” Tristen asked. “After the intimacy we shared? You still treat me like this? I am not your average maiden for you all to seek your pleasure in.”

King Telgras gave a slight nod and Tristen was carried by the guards to the bed. Tristen struggled ferociously as they secured his wrists over his head. “What evil has possessed you?” Tristen said, “You share pleasure with those you love. You don’t do what we did and then continue to enslave them.” He shivered as his legs were parted and secured to the bedpost.

The king walked leisurely to the bed and gazed down his straight nose at Tristen. “You have seen my queen. Do you

Prince of Servitude

think her fair?" Telgras showed his disgust. "All maidens that come near me she beheads. Do you think I enjoy watching young girls die?" King Telgras ran his hand over Tristen's back to his bottom. "You are more beautiful than any maiden I could have wished to have, and you, she will never harm."

"You are the Monarch of The Damned! I will not let you take your pleasure in me if you continue to treat me this way."

King Telgras looked up at his guards and winked. Mirroring his expression, they returned it. "Can't I?" the king whispered, touching Tristen's golden hair.

"Where is Helbros?" Tristen pulled at the leather straps. "At least he showed love for me. He loves me." Tristen glanced over at the four strange men. "This is how it is to be?"

"Do we need a gag?"

"A gag? You threaten the Prince of Brandywine with a gag? It is not enough you enter me? Shoot your seed in me?"

"And you love it." King Telgras caressed Tristen's long mane.

That is neither here nor there, you still must love me. Swallowing down a closed throat, Tristen felt the bed shift as the king sat down. When his bare skin was caressed, Tristen shivered against his will, hearing the guards' heavy breathing as the games began.

Tristen closed his eyes and held back a whimper of pleasure. *No. I cannot enjoy this with four strange men. I am losing my mind.*

The clang of a sword and the rustle of heavy robes, Tristen knew the king was preparing himself for the treat of his ass.

A stunningly handsome guard crouched by Tristen just as Helbros had the day before. "Hello, my pretty prince."

As the excitement in him grew Tristen wondered if indeed he could get used to this, and...enjoy it.

"At least give me your name."

“Demands from a slave?” The guard smiled.

“A slave or a lover?”

Something wet and slippery once again dipped inside his rim. Tristen gasped and unsuccessfully hid his attempt at fucking the bed.

“I was told how you would react, *lover*.” The guard licked Tristen’s cheek.

With every ounce of strength he possessed, Tristen tried not to enjoy every minute of this madness. His prostate was massaged with two slick fingers and he went wild. “Yes, ah!” He bucked his hips against the velvety cover.

Laughter echoed in the chamber.

“Get over here.” The guard forced Tristen to face him, devouring his mouth with a hunger that consumed Tristen.

While fingers fucked him deep and fast, the guard did the same with his tongue in Tristen’s mouth.

Tristen tugged on the leather straps and his body jerked as he came. He clenched his eyes shut and paused in the kiss to withstand the intensity.

“Number one,” was spoken behind him. Tristen didn’t recognize the voice, so he knew it wasn’t King Telgras who was keeping score.

“Please,” Tristen said, “someone love me.”

“We all will love you, Tristen the Fair.” The guard chewed on Tristen’s ear.

“No...” Tristen tried to breathe normally as King Telgras’ weight on his back preceded the penetration from behind. “You are not *in* love with me.” Tristen flinched as Telgras entered him. “Please.”

“You are admired, adored for your beauty.”

“It is not the same.” Tristen felt pain at first as Telgras filled him. “Someone love me. I cannot bear it.” When his cock was gripped, Tristen hissed out a breath between his teeth.

Prince of Servitude

“It looks to me you bear it well, and willingly.” The guard grabbed a handful of Tristen’s hair and urged him back to his mouth.

Overwhelmed by the stimulation, the scent of male sweat, their heat, their grunting, and two penetrating him simultaneously, Tristen gave up fighting it. Soon the king’s raw friction morphed into pleasure, and the guard’s stiff aggressive tongue made his head spin.

Helpless and bound, naked and used, Tristen had found his heaven. His body was pure sensation, but the love of his heart and soul, not just his body, was creating a vacuum in him.

Hearing Telgras overcome with the climax, feeling the hot seed enter his body, Tristen moaned and thrust into the guard’s hand as it squeezed his cock mercilessly.

“Come,” was whispered into his ear.

Tristen obeyed.

He arched his back and strained at the bonds, shooting hot cream on the velvet under him.

“Two.”

Tristen dropped heavily to the mattress as the king pulled out. Lying still, catching his breath, Tristen heard rasping gasps instantly followed by the splashing of men’s semen on his skin. “Hold me. Someone please. Embrace me.”

King Telgras climbed off the bed and was tended by his servants. Tristen heard the king’s deep, frustrated sigh. “Take him away.” Telgras gestured with a flick of his wrist.

“No,” Tristen said as he was forced to his feet. A guard knelt to retie his ankles together. “Will no one love me?” None of the guards made eye contact with him.

After the soldiers removed Tristen and the king was seated at his desk, Captain Ulgress bowed. “Your Highness, the troop from the Royal Guard of Westland insist on knowing what ransom you demand.”

King Telgras looked up tiredly. "No ransom is demanded."

Ulgress held back a choking sound in his throat. "But, Your Majesty, they are willing to pay in pure gold. Ask and anything shall be yours."

"Tell them no ransom."

Ulgress bowed and left the room.

Dinas watched impatiently with the rest of the army as King Renelin and King Ator waited in Castle Westland for the return of the guard. Princess Lynette had been at Dinas' side ever since he was carried off the battlefield. He recovered from his wound well with her constant care.

When the guard returned with news of no ransom King Renelin went wild. "What does this mean? We must attack. Surely it means my son is dead."

King Ator tried to calm him. "The guard says he lives still. He was seen passing them, surrounded by spearmen."

"Send another envoy. I do not believe he lives. Why then would there be no ransom? Arrange a time when I can see him on the castle walls myself. Make it soon or I shall storm the castle and kill every soul."

Dinas cringed at the thought of Tristen no longer being alive. *No. You are all right. Please, Tristen, You must live!*

Another party was dispatched at once to King Telgras' gates.

Dinas dabbed at a tear in the corner of his eye and tried not to sob like a babe at the thought of anything happening to his dear prince.

Chapter Fifteen

By now Tristen knew the routine. He was broken and spiritless, his tongue kept silent, his eyes were distant. For five days the king had continued to take his pleasure in him, and each time there were four different guards accompanying him.

As if he were a wraith, Tristen moved through the halls like a soulless body. He was tired. He could no longer think clearly.

Led to the king's chambers, he knelt on the floor on his own, needing no force to obey. The guards stood by, anticipating the order to carry Tristen to the bed.

Tristen waited, his head bowed, until King Telgras touched his hair.

With a warm smile, King Telgras assisted Tristen to his feet. The king sat him down on the royal bed, caressing Tristen's face lightly. "My Prince, I enjoy making love to you."

Tristen didn't meet his eyes.

King Telgras stroked Tristen's lips with the tips of his fingers before he kissed them. "Fair Tristen," he sighed, "you have captivated all with your beauty."

Hearing King Telgras' words from inside a dark tunnel, Tristen raised his eyes slowly to the king's young face.

"I would loosen your bonds if you would answer my questions. But you do not. So, I cannot trust you until I hear what I need."

Tristen didn't move.

With both hands, the king held Tristen's face and crushed it to his own bearded cheek, groaning and kissing him hungrily, urging him back on the bed. Tristen rolled over obediently on his stomach and turned his face away.

King Telgras set him back upright again. He gazed long and hard at the prince. "Tell me, Tristen the Fair, why do you not cooperate? You have shared your body and still have not given me the information I need from you."

Tristen looked away.

With his index finger, King Telgras brought Tristen's gaze back. "Tell me why your father came to attack my kingdom."

"Leave me be." Tristen battled his emotions. "I am dead to my father now. My kinsmen. Dead. Like my beloved Dinas and...my mother." The tears started to pour down his cheeks. "I have killed them both."

In a comforting gesture, the king put his arm around Tristen's shoulders. "No, you are innocent. You did not kill them." He rocked the sobbing prince.

Tristen didn't know what was right any longer. Here he was being consoled by the man who held him captive, yet it did comfort him. He accepted what little there was to exist on in his new role as prisoner, for there was no nurturing, no food for the heart and soul. Tristen was used to being loved, nothing was of greater value to him. He rocked gently in the king's arms wanting solace, crying out for either.

King Telgras stood, walking to his desk and returning after he retrieved something. "I took this from you out of pride. You must take it back and find whatever peace you can in it." He replaced the medal around Tristen's neck.

"Release my arms so I may wipe my own tears."

"I cannot," the king said. "But this I will do for you, my Prince. I shall grant you a special favor." Lovingly, he cupped Tristen's face in his hands. "You shall be allowed to roam the

Prince of Servitude

garden at your ease. Come.” He helped the prince to his feet and called to his guard.

Given a cape of crushed blue velvet to cover his nakedness, Tristen was set loose in the lush flora and fauna. It was the first time since his capture that he was out of the dark walls of the castle and dungeon. The roses towered over his head, fragrant and sweet, but he never paused to enjoy them. Tristen struggled to walk with the leather on his ankles for it only allowed small steps. It infuriated him he was not free to strut like a prince.

The air was warm and the sun shone brightly. Tristen sat on a marble bench and hung his head. It drove him mad he couldn’t lift his arms to so much as push the hair out of his eyes or scratch his nose.

He remembered his brief period of freedom. It had been only five years since he escaped the prison of his mother’s chambers. It was too short a time to have lived. *If I have to spend the rest of my life in chains, I would rather be struck dead. At least then this shame will end.*

A lark sang gaily beside him but it did nothing to raise his spirits.

“Dinas. Oh, my dearest of friends. How I miss you.” A hot tear rolled down his cheek.

A young maid filled a pail of water, lifting the pump handle while she stared at the prince.

At the sight of a strange woman, Tristen was humiliated. He glimpsed down at his exposed body and had no way of tightening the cape to cover it. *Please, someone, strike me down. Kill me.* The embarrassment was too much to endure.

“Don’t cry, Prince Tristen.”

Tristen ignored her, terrified of the situation and his helplessness.

“Do not weep, sweet prince.”

In anger Tristen faced her. “You look at me and tell me not to cry?”

“You are the king’s favorite. He saves all the best for you. The choicest meats, the most expensive herbs, the rarest fruits and vegetables...”

“I am a prisoner. What does it matter if I get the best food? I am bound. Naked. Humiliated.”

Her eyes swept over his body quickly and a blush came to her cheeks.

Just before Tristen admonished her for taking advantage of his predicament, an idea struck him. “Dear maiden, do you think I’m fair?” He smiled at her. It felt so very odd to smile.

“Why, prince, there is none fairer.”

“Would you like to be mine? Forever hold me in your arms?” He winked and tilted his head.

Her eyes brightened and she nodded. “Yes. What maiden would not? But why do you speak nonsense to me? You belong to my king.”

“I shall love you instead. I shall take you to my wonderful castle and you shall rule by my side. I will cover you in gems and gold.” *Please untie me, please untie me.*

Her eyes misted over.

“All you need do is release my hands. That is all and we shall fly from here like the wind. Would you like that? I shall make it a vow.” Through his breaking heart, Tristen knew he would never fulfill any of his words. Still he smiled at her like she was the most beautiful maiden on earth.

Eying him hungrily, she groaned and peered around the garden. “I am frightened, Prince Tristen, of King Telgras.”

“I will protect you. Come to me, my love. Kiss me and we shall be lovers forever.” Tristen puckered his lips, leaned towards her, praying she did not use her tongue for he would gag.

She glanced around nervously, then went for the promised kiss.

Prince of Servitude

Tristen allowed a quick peck and turned his back to her, struggling to shrug off the cape from his shoulder. "Come now. Quickly, my love. Release my hands and we shall fly." His heart was pounding, victory was near.

Tristen waited what seemed like a lifetime, then turned to ask why.

The girl was on her face with a red feathered arrow in her back. Tristen jerked his head up to the high window of the castle wall and found King Telgras there with his bow.

Hoof beats came next, distant and strong. The sight of the guard coming over a ridge in the grass made him gasp in horror. Tristen rose to his feet, running as best he could with the short strides, hopping and leaping to the woods beyond the garden.

The sound grew louder behind him as he stumbled to the thick pines.

Tristen was hit from behind by the shoulder of a charging steed. Again his knees took the pounding as he fell to the ground. He cried out in pain and then rolled to his side to be able to see. With all his strength Tristen struggled to kneel upright and jerked his head back to clear his vision of his long hair as it covered his face.

Great horses encircled him, stomping and snorting impatiently. Tristen connected to every rider's eye, awaiting their move and recognized them all. Only three he knew by name; Helbros, Parmun, and Lucas.

"Helbros," Tristen called but it was faint and he didn't know if the armed guard heard him.

"And where does the pretty prince think he's going?" one asked.

"Not far in those straps," another answered. They all laughed.

"I think the king is too soft on him. He does not think he is being treated well enough," the same man mocked. "Well, Prince, I suppose it is up to us to teach you exactly whose slave

you are.”

Against his will Tristen’s body went rigid. The craving he had for these men to touch him was beyond anything he could compare. Perhaps it was hunger—a love-starved man craving passion to sate his need. Tristen had no idea why being vulnerable to a band of warriors was enough to make his cock throb and climax with simply the thought alone. But staring at those muscular men in their steel helmets with swords and gleaming chest-plates made him ooze pre-cum instantly.

Tristen trembled, falling backwards to his elbows and tried to inch away, only to meet another set of hooves moving dangerously close. While Tristen stared at the circle of handsome soldiers around him, he couldn’t hide his erection which stood from his body like a stiff rod.

Lucas jumped off his horse and came near. When he did Tristen caught Helbros’ eyes and called, “Helbros! Please!” Five more guards dismounted and moved in on him menacingly.

Captain Ulgress appeared behind them on his horse. “King’s orders. Don’t bruise him. Take your pleasure and return him to his chambers.”

With those words ringing in Tristen’s ears, Ulgress spurred his horse and rode away.

Tristen again looked to the only man he felt a bond with. “Helbros!” Tristen felt the blood drain from his face in anxiety. “Come to me...”

The attractive man smiled proudly as if being summoned by name was an honor. He dismounted and approached.

“Please.” Tristen licked his dry lips.

Helbros knelt down beside him, pushing Tristen’s hair out of his eyes. “My Prince.”

Four of the guards encircled him, holding him tight. One slashed the leather bond of his ankles and spread Tristen’s legs apart.

Tristen was pushed back against the ground, face up. He

Prince of Servitude

kept his gaze on Helbros. It was the only thing keeping him from panic. "Help me."

"Do you need my help?" Helbros swiped at the clear fluid flowing from Tristen's slit. After he sucked it off his thumb, Helbros said, "You have found bliss, haven't you, Prince Tristen?"

A wave of pre-orgasmic pleasure surged through Tristen at Helbros' touch and lewd act. "Yes."

After a soft chuckle, Helbros repeated, "Yes."

Parmun raised Tristen's thighs off the ground and pushed Tristen's knees against his chest, exposing the prince's ass. "Yes, indeed."

Tristen gasped and met Helbros' eyes. "Is that his tongue?"

"It is." Helbros combed his fingers back through Tristen's hair. "He is enjoying it. Are you?"

Tristen heard Parmun's moans as he licked Tristen's ass and balls. "I...I..." Tristen couldn't believe what they were allowed to do in Troyar. These same things would have had you beheaded in Brandywine. When Parmun's tongue entered his body, Tristen bucked in reflex at the stimulation. His actions encouraged the guards to join the fun.

As men's lips, coarse jaws, and tongues ran all over Tristen's exposed skin, Tristen spun into a climax even though none of the men were contacting his cock.

"Beautiful," Helbros said. "Number one."

The cream continued to flow from his cock as Parmun's tongue fucked him like a miniature cock. Lucas began lapping at the prince's cum as it spattered his chest.

Tristen could not catch his breath. "I...I had no idea..."

"I can see what we do amazes you." Helbros kissed Tristen's dewy forehead. "Is nothing legal in Brandywine that creates pleasure?"

"Where is Brandywine?" Tristen moaned as Parmun's cock

replaced his tongue.

Two of the guards he had met previously, but didn't know their names, knelt up next to the prince and began pleasuring themselves as they watched Parmun hammer into him.

"By the gods." Tristen's eyes widened in awe at being allowed to witness what had been going on behind his back in the king's chambers.

Men. Big handsome men with their cocks exposed from below their armor, working themselves until white cream shot from their slits to coat his skin. It was too much to ask for.

Tristen, his hands bound and trapped behind his back, began humping upwards against Parmun's body. "More."

"I am there." Parmun closed his eyes and sealed his pelvis against Tristen's ass.

Tristen felt hot throbbing inside him and his own cock bobbed and grew hard again. Once Parmun pulled out, Helbros urged Tristen to his lips. As they sucked on each other's tongues, another cock entered Tristen's slick passage.

Tristen broke the kiss to see who it was. The guard who would not give him his name but shared his kisses was kneeling between Tristen's thighs.

"Do not worry, Prince. I will give you 'more'."

"Am I mad?" Tristen labored to breathe, staring at Helbros.

"You are male. And men are hungry for pleasure." Helbros licked Tristen's cheek, finding his way to his lips. "Especially young men like you."

His insides being stroked with hot friction, Tristen's cock throbbed and seeped more pre-cum.

Tristen didn't know who he was any longer; Prince of Brandywine or slave of Tenegar Castle. Put to the choice, Tristen didn't know if he could go back to his old life. How, when there is freedom to choose? How did you go back to being enslaved by laws?

Prince of Servitude

The guard's cock began to thicken and throb. Tristen felt as if he were a vessel being filled with milk and honey. Hearing the guard climax and feeling his pleasure was driving Tristen wild.

After the guard had come, everyone sat back to catch their breath for a moment.

Tristen peered around the circle of men as they recuperated and toyed with their long cocks, making sure every drop of their cum landed on the prince's skin. Tristen looked back at Helbros as if waiting for instruction or a kind word. Tristen's cock was stiff, protruding from his blond bush.

"My turn?"

Biting his lip, Tristen nodded.

Helbros exposed his erection from his armor, removed his helm, and straddled his iron-clad legs over the prince's face.

Tristen had no idea what to do. A large engorged cock was nudging his lips, smearing stickiness across his cheek. Suddenly Tristen's length was in a hot wet hole. He peered down and found Helbros sucking him to the base.

"Ah!" Tristen felt a powerful jolt of pleasure and pumped his hips upwards.

Lucas aimed Helbros' cock at the prince's mouth. "Open wide, Tristen the Fair."

"What?" Tristen was dazed as Helbros' tongue wrapped around his dick.

"Suck."

While Lucas pointed Helbros' imposing cock at Tristen's mouth, Tristen resisted. This was too bizarre to believe. Helbros paused and said, "I'm waiting."

Tristen caught Lucas' eye. Slowly Tristen parted his lips. Lucas pushed the head of Helbros' cock against them. "Open your mouth."

Tristen obeyed.

Helbros thrust inside. "Better."

It gagged him at first. Tristen closed his eyes and couldn't move away. Tristen's hands were still trapped behind him and yet Lucas made sure Helbros' cock stayed put. Meanwhile Tristen's own body was being served.

Helbros fucked Tristen's mouth.

The scent of Helbros' sweat and raw masculinity filled Tristen's nostrils as the taste of a man saturated his tongue.

"Nice." Lucas used two fingers to work the base of Helbros' cock as he watched closely. "Are you sucking?"

Tristen tried to nod.

"Good. Give him a good one, Prince Tristen, as he is giving you."

Yes, he is certainly pleasing me. Tristen felt Helbros' tongue running up and down the length of his cock while inside his mouth. Tristen tried to do it but could not. The size of the rod in his mouth made it impossible to do anything but suck and not choke.

Helbros' hips began moving faster and his sucking on Tristen's cock grew stronger.

"Ready yourself, Prince," Lucas warned.

"Hmm?" Tristen opened his eyes and his mouth was filled with hot liquid. Having no alternative, Tristen gulped it down. The throbbing of Helbros' cock lit the fire in him. As Helbros deep-throated Tristen and his balls and ass were massaged with wild abandon, Tristen gave up his load. With a dick still in his mouth, Tristen moaned and jerked his hips off the ground, coming hard and growing light-headed with the force of it.

"Two."

Lucas removed Helbros' cock from Tristen's lips.

While Tristen panted to gain air, Helbros spun around and sucked at Tristen's mouth and tongue.

Cold steel pressed against his spattered skin, but Tristen felt

Prince of Servitude

the heat and dampness of Helbros' crotch against his own.

I am lost. I know not who I am or what I am any longer.

Tristen whimpered, sated sexually beyond his dreams. Once Helbros sat back to see his face, Tristen caught his sexy smile.

"Well done for a first, Tristen the Fair."

Tristen didn't know what to say. He felt numb.

Parmun asked, "Everyone take what they wanted?"

Tristen didn't know if he could handle any more. He closed his eyes and turned his face into his shoulder to hide.

"Come."

Opening his eyes groggily, Tristen was assisted to stand. His chest and abdomen were coated with sperm and his ass and the backs of his thighs were sticky with pine needles and dirt. "I cannot walk." Tristen's head slumped forward and his knees buckled.

"We are here."

Tristen was no longer aware of reality or fantasy. Several men helped him to the back of a horse. Tristen leaned against the man in the saddle and by the scent of his long dark hair he knew it was Helbros. His armor against Tristen's skin felt as cold as the chill that passed over the prince's heart.

Limp and spent beyond his reckoning, Tristen was left in a room with a servant who assisted him into a hot bath. He lay back and soaked as the dirt was washed from his body. Massaged and given strong wine, his mind was blank. Tristen couldn't even find himself anymore or remember who he was.

He was taken to the king's chambers and carried to his bed. Tristen closed his eyes and slept horizontally for the first time in days.

Chapter Sixteen

“August, you must let me go. I will ride to Tenegar Castle myself and see the prince.” Dinas struggled to sit up from a cot in the House of Healing in the castle at Westland. He held the light bandages under his arm while Princess Lynette looked on in concern.

“No, brave Dinas. You must stay and rest. You will ride again soon.” August persuaded Dinas to lie back down.

Dinas rose up again instantly. “August, I insist I am well enough.” The moment Dinas found his feet the blood drained from his face and he swayed unsteadily.

Princess Lynette gasped and held Dinas steady, urging him back to his seat. He lay back quickly again and closed his eyes as the dizziness passed.

“Noble Dinas,” August said, “stay and rest. I will personally bring the news to you.” August left the room.

Dinas held back a sob of frustration and avoided the princess’ concerned gaze. It seemed Princess Lynette was his new shadow and refused to leave his side while he recovered. Dinas did not know if he was grateful or sensing her growing fondness of him. Either way, Dinas tried not to show her too much attention.

Dinas bit his lip and missed his prince so much, the ache under his arm from the spear did not compare to his broken heart.

Prince of Servitude

Tristen opened his eyes. He could tell by the angle of light coming from the window that it was dawn.

King Telgras was watching him. When he noticed Tristen was awake, the king helped Tristen to sit up and raised a chalice of wine to his lips. Tristen drank it thirstily.

“When I was four I was wed to Queen Leda,” Telgras said. “My father’s first wife bore only females. He had them all exposed and her banished. Of his second wife he beheaded, for she was barren. With the third I was born. My mother died in childbirth. By then my father was an old man and frightened his line would perish. He found Leda, for her father owned a good sized parcel of land, not to mention a huge dowry. The poor thing was homely and no man would accept her hand. Her father was a high-born noble and it pained him greatly. He had always been a favorite of the king. He offered me in marriage in exchange for her gold and land.” King Telgras paused and gave Tristen more wine which he accepted.

“When I was thirteen I had to consummate our marriage. I was forced to lie with her so she may beget an heir. She was more than twice my age. I hated my father to have wed me to a hag when beautiful maidens abound. He took them himself until he was no longer able to pleasure them.” King Telgras waited.

Tristen’s licked his lips and met King Telgras’ eyes, wondering why he thought suddenly to reveal his history.

“I found the maiden’s flirtatious eyes when I was sixteen. I enjoyed sneaking them into my chamber for the pure delight of them. I found one girl hanging in my dressing chamber, and another drowned in my bath. A third was poisoned at my evening meal.” King Telgras refilled the cup and drank some of the wine.

Tristen tugged at his bound wrists, annoyed he couldn’t remove his hair from his eyes or wipe the wine from his mouth.

“Leda was enraged with jealousy. She had spies and found every maiden I had bed. Luckily the numbers were few, for she

missed not one. I grew furious and refused to be near her.” The king set down the chalice and his eyes became distant. “My solitude was great for many years. Then...a young servant smiled at me sweetly. In just the right way, perhaps. I was a starving man. I took advantage of his willingness. I waited. He was spared. I tried a soldier, then one of the Royal Guard. No corpse was found in my chambers or my bath. I did not know if she knew and allowed it, or did not know. I assumed the former. It was then I found out it was common among the fighting men. I had whole units of male lovers. My eyes were opened to an amazing phenomenon.” King Telgras once again met Tristen’s eyes.

“Dear prince, I have had to be content this way ever since. I tried once again with the maidens, thinking her eye had turned away. Again she was found dead, in my bed.”

Tristen let his gaze soften, the wine enriching his somber mood.

“I tell you this so you will know. It was not always like this for me here. It has become this out of necessity. But you, fair prince, are a pleasure to me. Truly a pleasure.” He touched Tristen under the chin lightly. “I am devoted to you. I forever crave to be near you.”

“How old are you, Telgras?”

“I will be twenty in the month of the lion.”

“And you now have an heir?”

“Yes, two sons.”

Tristen nodded and dazed off once more.

“Why did your father come to attack me, Tristen?”

“He did not come to attack. He merely came to see about the raids. We heard there were looters and feared for King Ator’s safety.”

“You came not to attack?” King Telgras asked.

“I tell you we did not.” Tristen studied his face.

Prince of Servitude

King Telgras thought about this new piece of information.

“Your Majesty,” was called from the hall.

“Enter,” the king replied.

Captain Ulgress came in as Tristen and the king reclined together on the bed. The captain lowered his head awkwardly.

“Yes?” the king asked impatiently.

“More guards from Westland, Your Majesty. They demand your audience.”

“Show them in.” King Telgras stood and held the hilt of his sword.

In humiliation, Tristen turned his body away from the opened door, trying not to peek but unable to prevent it.

Six heavily armed guards surrounded the two young nobles. Midus, a loyal friend of Tristen’s, was the first to see the young prince, naked, bound, and atop the king’s bed. He gasped in horror at the sight, causing Tristen to flinch at his reaction.

Aldren came in closely behind Midus, watching each spear-point nervously. When he too spotted the prince, he grinned in delight.

King Telgras studied them. “You have entered. Speak.”

Tristen could see Midus trembling as he bowed politely to King Telgras while he stared at his prince. “Your...Your Majesty...” he stammered. “Good King Renelin seeks...uh, proof that his son, Tristen, still lives.” Midus paused and wiped his forehead. “He will not take any word as true.”

It pained Tristen to be seen by his own men while naked and bound. He tried to keep his head bowed and his eyes turned away.

“He asks you to permit Prince Tristen to stand on the battlement for all to see, or...” it seemed Midus found words hard to speak, “he will attack and kill all who are found inside these walls.”

When Tristen summoned up his nerve he met his friend’s

eyes only to see a tear running down Midus' cheek.

The king observed Midus first before he turned to address Tristen. "My Prince, your father doubts you live. Shall we give him proof?"

Tristen sat mute.

"Maybe a lock of your precious yellow hair will convince him."

At the sound of that hated voice, Tristen got to his knees and growled at the red-haired youth. King Telgras held Tristen back as Tristen's chest rose and fell rapidly and his eyes burned. Then Tristen found Midus' loyal gaze. The pity in them almost killed him. "Dear Midus," Tristen whispered softly.

Unable to control his emotions, Midus choked and wiped his tears. "Tristen, my Lord."

Tristen smiled sadly. "Tell Father I live."

Aldren covered his smirk with an armored glove. "I will tell him you do more than just live, Prince. That you have become the king's favored fuck!"

Midus turned to Aldren in fury, going mad at the accusation, and went to draw his sword. The guards held their spears to Midus' throat.

Helpless to do a thing, Tristen tensed his muscles against the leather bonds. He felt the king's grip on his arm tighten.

"Go! Tell your king Tristen will be on the battlement at twilight. Take them away."

In complete frustration Tristen watched Aldren's eyes as Aldren grinned in delight. It made Tristen quiver at the mixture of anger and humiliation.

The moment they were alone, King Telgras raised the chalice of wine to Tristen and he drank it down thirstily.

The two nobles were escorted out of the castle. Midus waited for them to be alone, then drew his sword, turning on

Prince of Servitude

Aldren who leapt onto his horse and spurred it into a swift canter. Intending on skewering Aldren, Midus sheathed his sword and prepared for the chase. An arrow came from out of the brush and pierced Midus' arm. He cried out in pain as his horse galloped in the direction of Westland.

Dinas sat up as the princess fed him his afternoon meal. He ate reluctantly, but Princess Lynette forced him to finish. He was in misery, though his wound was healing well. Dinas felt like a man robbed of his very life, his flame. A minute wouldn't pass without him seeing again and again that alien man with the shaved head lifting Tristen to the back of his horse. It was the last thing he remembered before passing out. When he awoke he was in the House of Healing with the princess by his side.

"Enough." Dinas pushed the plate away and stood, shaking and unsteady, but forced himself to walk around to the others who lay wounded, some fatally. He hoped his visits lifted their spirits. When finally he was drained of energy, Dinas crossed to the window and stared at the distant towers of Tenegar Castle.

The princess stood beside him.

Dinas noticed a lone horseman riding toward the gate. Its rider was leaning forward over the charger's neck. Dinas panicked and went for the stairwell, holding the walls to steady himself.

"No, Dinas. You are weak, you must stay." The princess tried to hold him back.

"Leave me be." He refused angrily and made his way to the front gates.

When Dinas arrived the kings were speaking with Aldren and it caused Dinas to feel a deep knot in his stomach at the sight of his venomous face. Aldren looked over his shoulder anxiously as Midus was helped off his horse. Dinas rushed to Midus and tried to help him stand, seeing Midus was fading fast. In the darkness of the shadows, Aldren had backed away.

They carried Midus on a stretcher to the House of Healing to remove the arrow. The medics gave him strong wine to prepare him. Midus screamed from the pain when it was pulled free and the wound was cleaned and a poultice applied.

Dinas knelt by him and dabbed a cloth on his wet face. "Sweet Midus, what of Prince Tristen?" he pleaded desperately. "Does he live?"

His eyes watery from pain, Midus turned to face Dinas with tears running down his face. Dinas feared the worst. "He lives and seems in good health."

Mouthing a thank you to the gods under his breath, Dinas found the medal to bring to his lips to kiss.

"But...but..."

Dinas caressed his friend's damp hair back from his brow. "Speak to me, Midus. But what?"

"Tristen is bound by the wrists and ankles. Naked. No garments or robes." Midus struggled to speak. "Why, Dinas? Why was he atop the king's bed?"

Dinas froze in shock at being told something impossible to believe. Before he could press Midus for more, Midus closed his eyes to rest.

The princess appeared and tried to urge Dinas away. "You are weak. Come and lay back down."

"No. I must see the king at once."

"What has happened?" She stared at Dinas in horror.

"Sweet princess, do not be alarmed. Our prince lives still." He kissed her hand and hurried down the hall to the kings.

"Aldren said he will appear on the battlements at twilight," King Renelin relayed to Captain August. "We will gather a large band to set up camp and wait. I want an adequate show of force. All horseman and two thousand troops." He rubbed his red eyes. "If he does not show by nightfall, we invade."

Prince of Servitude

“Yes, Sire.” August bowed, thinking he King looked worse for wear. “Did Aldren say why Midus was shot from behind?”

“It wasn’t an arrow from Tenegar Castle. It came from the wood outside the kingdom. Aldren’s tale didn’t convince. He knows not the origins of feathered arrows. He claims Telgras ordered his men to kill them both. I know this is not so.”

“What of the prince, Your Majesty?”

Renelin curled his lip. “He said he lives, but...”

August stood patiently, his heart beating in fear.

In violent rage, the king shoved everything off his table, the wine goblets, the maps, all went crashing to the floor. He roared in anguish, the sound vibrated through the castle. August tried to stand strong, in fear of what he knew not.

“He has become the king’s pet!” King Renelin spat out the words. “He is naked and bound.” King Renelin threw the table on its side and it heaved and groaned. “A boy so pure and untouched, no woman has he had. That filth in Tenegar has had him. My poor prince,” he sobbed, “My innocent boy.” Covering his eyes, he then grew furious. “I shall tear Telgras apart!” he roared. “Like the vermin he is he shall die in pain!”

August felt his throat close up. He could neither swallow nor speak. A sorrow and compassion were behind his wet eyes. He turned and left the king to ready the army to march.

With a thirst that could not be sated, Tristen drank more wine until he was dizzy. King Telgras put aside the chalice and sat next to him on the bed.

“Who is this red-haired noble that he does torment you? A man so full of jealousy would never last in my court. Why is he allowed to live?”

“Aldren.” Tristen ground his teeth. “I have wanted to kill him many times for his insolence. You shall never know what it did to me just now to see the pleasure in his face.”

“He must have been the traitor in your ranks.”

Tristen turned quickly to the king. "What traitor?"

"A scout first came to me with the tale that your father planned to attack. He said he learned it from a ranger who in turn learned it from a traitor in your ranks." King Telgras poured Tristen more wine.

"Oh, August, why did you spare him?" Tristen cried.

The king offered him another sip.

"Release my arms and I will serve myself," Tristen said.

The king replied, "I enjoy serving you, Tristen." He raised the goblet and Tristen drank deeply. The wine was very strong in his empty stomach.

A trickle spilled down Tristen's chin. Telgras cupped the back of Tristen's head and licked it off of him, then kissed him hungrily.

Trying to block everything from his mind, Tristen kissed him back.

When they parted, Tristen tried to see out of the window. "How long until twilight?"

King Telgras stood and leaned out of the window. "It is only just past the noon sun." Returning to him, the king caressed his hair. "Does it frighten you? The thought of facing your own people?"

"You know better than to ask. I feel a fool." Tristen frowned bitterly. "More wine please?"

The king chuckled softly. "I am the fool, my beauty." He gave Tristen another long sip from the chalice. "Are you getting drunk? Drunk to forget?" King Telgras put the goblet aside and smoothed his hands over Tristen's chest, drawing closer to Tristen's lips. He urged Tristen to lie back on the bed, kissing him passionately.

Tristen was dizzy from the sweetness of the wine. Opening his mouth wider, he kissed back. "Release my hands so I may touch you."

Prince of Servitude

The king closed his eyes. "I cannot."

With as much movement as he could manage, Tristen tried to curl against him, kissing King Telgras' throat and jaw. "Why can you not?"

"I do not trust..." The king shivered and held him tightly in an embrace, crushing his robes against Tristen's nakedness.

"But I would hold you in my arms. Let me hold you."

King Telgras moaned in agony and clenched his jaw. "I cannot."

Tristen kissed King Telgras on the neck and pulled at his robes with his teeth

The king shivered and sucked at Tristen's shoulder like a starving man.

Wanting the act, Tristen rolled to his stomach and knelt with his bottom raised high.

"Oh, Tristen!" Telgras yanked off his robes anxiously, smoothing his palms over the slope of Tristen's ass. King Telgras sucked on the skin there, nipping Tristen.

His cock hard and hungry, Tristen spread his legs wide, trying to entice him in.

The king pressed his face into Tristen's ass crack and lapped at him, squeezing a cheek in each hand as Tristen writhed underneath him.

Tristen was teased to a frenzy while King Telgras entered his ass with a slippery liquid on his fingers. "Yes." Tristen craved the guard. He wanted Helbros by his side, Parmun and Lucas groping him, but he had a feeling his request for more men might insult the king.

King Telgras elevated Tristen's hips off the bed and impaled him, reaching around to get a hold of Tristen's rock hard cock. Worked inside and out, Tristen felt the rush of an orgasm gripping him quickly. Tristen shot cum onto the bed under him as the king ejaculated simultaneously. While his own cock pulsated in the king's palm, Tristen felt King Telgras'

throb in his ass.

They lay panting and sweating as they recovered.

Finally King Telgras rose off the bed, summoned a servant and was assisted in cleaning and dressing. More wine was brought to the chamber as the king ordered the servant, "Wash and refresh Prince Tristen."

While the young boy brought over the basin and a cloth, Tristen watched the king lean out of the widow to judge the hour. "Once you are tended we shall dine and perhaps have a rest. By then we shall be ready for your father's troops."

Tristen nodded, but felt sick to his stomach from nerves. The young lad used the soft cloth to scrub Tristen's face, working his way down. Tristen turned to the king. He was surprised to see a contented smile on Telgras' face.

Once Tristen was tended, the king brought him to dine in another room, feeding Tristen as if he were Tristen's slave.

After inspecting the sky from his high window, King Telgras said, "It is time." He nodded to Tristen who was lying on the bed coming around from a deep nap.

A commotion was heard outside his door. Helbros came in and announced, "The queen seeks audience, Your Highness."

The king paled and replied, "Delay her entry and return quickly, Helbros." The guard acknowledged him and left the room. The moment Helbros returned, King Telgras urged him with both hands on Hebros' back. "Hide the prince in this chamber."

Tristen glanced at the king once before he ducked into the little room with Helbros.

The king straightened the bed and took a deep breath. "Show her in."

Another of his guards opened the door, bowing as Queen Leda walked in with a rustle of fabric, her fragrance overpowering. The king waved his papers like a fan. "What is it

Prince of Servitude

you wish?"

"I was down in the dungeon and found no fair prince. What have you done with him?"

"He is allowed to roam the gardens and be with the servants to bathe and eat, check there."

"His father seeks him at twilight. It is almost upon us. Why do you not summon him now?"

"Yes, I shall. I have work to do first."

Queen Leda drew closer as King Telgras stared over his papers at her.

"I want him at my disposal," she said.

"You what?"

"I want him at my call. If I wish to be entertained."

"He is not a jester; he does not entertain."

"He needn't perform. Just keep my company. I think him fair to look upon. I want him to come to my quarters."

"Really?" He grew angry. "I'll not have a handsome naked prince in your chambers. Enough. Leave me. I am too busy for this nonsense." King Telgras turned away.

"He will come to my chambers. I will have it no other way."

"We shall see. Now be gone. I have serious work to do. Do you realize we are on the verge of war? Why do you think of your own pleasure at a time like this?"

Narrowing her eyes at the king's bed, she sneered, "We all need our pleasures." Then she bowed and left.

In relief the king sighed and peeked out of the door after her, instructing his guards, "Keep her away from me."

"Yes, Sire."

King Telgras returned to the hidden chamber and opened the door. Blinking in the dimness, he found Tristen on his knees with Helbros' exposed cock in his mouth. "Well!"

"Sire." Helbros bowed and moved his hips back.

“Carry on. But make it quick. Tristen’s father awaits.” The king folded his arms and leaned on the door frame.

“Prince?” Helbros held his cock up towards Tristen’s mouth.

Tristen enveloped it and continued where he left off.

“We have a very willing participant, don’t we, Helbros?”

“We do indeed, Sire.”

King Telgras smiled.

Checking the position of the sun, Dinas sat on the grass, waiting impatiently for it to dip behind the mountains. King Renelin had set up camp in the shadow of Tenegar Castle, constructing a large tent to house the leaders and their nobles.

When a messenger ran to the tent, Dinas stood and leaned into the entrance flap to hear the news.

Through panting breaths the young boy announced, “The prince will be on the battlement at any moment.” All rose to their feet.

Dinas spun around and struggled to get to the front of the huge crowd of soldiers from both kingdoms. He found nothing on the battlement and looked over the anxious mob to King Renelin for his reaction.

King Renelin squinted up in the dimming sunlight. When the king shouted, “Bring him down to me so I know he is sound!” Dinas jerked his head back to look closer. Indeed Dinas caught a glimpse of blond hair flowing over a royal blue cape.

“You see well enough!” Telgras replied.

King Renelin bristled in anger. All the men were whispering to one another in shocked tones. King Renelin looked around in frustration. “If I cannot exchange words with my son I shall tear this castle down stone by stone!” he roared.

Tristen and King Telgras seemed to confer. Dinas held his breath but was so glad for the sight of his prince he was nearly

Prince of Servitude

in tears.

“Your request is granted, on condition.” Telgras strained to be heard.

“Speak,” Renelin answered.

“He will be surrounded by spear and any who seek to rescue him shall watch the prince impaled immediately. Are my conditions clear?”

The king showed his teeth. “Clear!”

Tristen vanished from the battlement as King Renelin lowered his head and returned to the tent.

Dinas dabbed at a tear at the corner of his eye. *My love. My Prince.* He held back a full-blown sob. The murmur of voices was great as the men waited. Then, suddenly the area went completely silent.

Dinas pushed a few men aside to get his look. When he laid his eyes on his lover, Dinas was overwhelmed with sadness at Tristen’s expression of gloom.

Strikingly beautiful, standing tall, and appearing resigned to his fate, Tristen was led outside the castle walls. Twelve Royal Guards pointed their spears at him as he walked slowly with bound ankles, to his own army. The cape blew back revealing his bronze skin and his hands tied with a leather strap behind his back. Though Tristen had made his face a mask, Dinas could tell he was torn with fear and humiliation.

Tristen’s personal Royal Guard parted for Tristen’s approach and bowed low, their faces grim and angry at what they saw. Dinas knew their state. He was a wreck watching this fiasco as well.

Tristen tried not to look at the men he had ridden into battle with and stared only at the beige tent as it flapped in the light breeze. Tristen entered it and was directed to the center as the spear points pressed gently against the velvet cape and into his skin.

The moment King Renelin noticed his son's nakedness he jumped to his feet removing his own cape to cover him.

With every advancing step the king made the spear points were pressed firmer into Tristen's flesh.

When Tristen flinched in pain, King Renelin stopped short. "I cannot tolerate this! He must be decently covered." He took another step and the spears drew upward.

Tristen winced. "Father, what does it matter? I am here. Speak." Tristen couldn't meet his eyes from his shame.

Obviously infuriated, King Renelin threw his cape back over his shoulder and sat down heavily. "What they tell me. Is it true? Tristen, how is it you have not killed him? How do you survive it?"

"I do survive. I cannot kill a man with my arms bound, Father." Tristen exhaled tiredly. "I am fed. I am bathed." Even as Tristen spoke his voice was not his own. It lacked all emotion. *Am I dead? I feel dead inside.*

"I will storm the castle. Just say the word. I will string Telgras up from the towers!" The king's eyes blazed.

The fighting words caused the small band of soldiers to push their spears deeper into Tristen's body. He flinched in pain and withstood it. "Why shed needless blood. You see I am whole." *Get me out of here! I cannot stand them staring at me like this.* Tristen gazed down at himself as the cape gapped. He was growing erect and had no way of concealing it.

"You are whole? Are you?" The king sneered. "I think you have been held captive too long. You lack the will to escape or fight to save you from your daily torment."

"I am not in torment," Tristen replied. "You must forget me and beget a new heir."

King Renelin rose to his feet. "What?" he thundered.

The guards dug in their spears and Tristen again reacted in pain.

"Beget an heir?" King Renelin stepped off the platform.

Prince of Servitude

“Your mother is dead, boy.”

At the reminder, Tristen shivered in grief.

“If I were to remarry and start anew, how many years do you think I have? Use your head.”

Tristen swallowed hard. “I am sorry for you.”

“He has fed you poison in your veins as well as into your body.”

Not able to tolerate the disgust in his father’s expression, Tristen lowered his eyes. “I am defiled, Father. I am not worthy of anything. Let me be.” Tristen knew each deed he had done in Troyar was illegal in Brandywine. How could he return?

The king grabbed the hilt of his sword as if he meant to kill his son.

Tristen held his breath and tensed up as too many sharp objects were near cutting him.

Telgras’ Royal Guards looked at one another in confusion. Finally two pointed their weapons at King Renelin in warning to keep back.

After a pause, King Renelin sat on his throne. “I fear you are truly ruined, my fair son. You have forgotten your life as it was, your beautiful princess and your kingdom of gold.”

A tear rolled down Tristen’s cheek. “I am sorry.”

“You do what you can in your predicament. I shall find a new heir.” He waved him out.

“Yes, Father.”

When Tristen emerged from the tent, his soldiers bowed to the ground to him in respect.

“Tristen!”

Spinning around at a voice he would know anywhere, Tristen replied, “Dinas? You live?” Tristen ran to him without a thought. The spearmen took off after him and repositioned their weapons.

Dinas embraced him, inhaling him and squeezing him tight.

“Oh, Tristen...my Tristen...”

At the familiar touch of his true love, Tristen started to weep. “I thought you had died. My sweet Dinas, the sight of you is like pure gold.”

As if he did not care who spied, or what the crowd thought, Dinas kissed his face and leaned back, looking down at his nakedness quickly. Next Dinas looked at King Telgras’ guards who were all shifting nervously as they pointed their spears. “I cannot stand seeing you bound and treated like this.” Dinas glared at the men around him.

“Dinas, my heart is whole again.” Tristen sobbed.

Dinas touched the hilt of his sword.

Tristen noticed him glance around at the other young nobles and his father’s army and had a feeling Dinas was forming a strategy to free him. “Dinas, please. Do not do what you are thinking,” Tristen warned. “I cannot be King of Brandywine now. What use is there?”

“Tristen. Stop this talk. What use?”

King Telgras’ guards started prodding Tristen away. It was taking too long.

“Tristen!” Dinas cried. “I will fight them. Tell me to fight them.” Dinas drew his sword.

Tristen was forced to step away. “Do not fight. It is worthless now.”

Dinas’ eyes blazed in rage as he followed behind the small band of spearmen as they made their way back to the castle gates. “Tristen, we can save you. Please. Ask it of us.” He looked imploringly at the men around them.

King Renelin emerged from the tent. “No. Let him go.”

At that direct order, Tristen peered back at his best friend. It appeared Dinas’ heart was breaking.

Dinas continued to follow the prince through the crowd. “I cannot stand losing you again. Not this way. You must marry

Prince of Servitude

Princess Lynette and claim the throne. She grieves.”

Tristen tried to say something to comfort him, but he knew not what to say. As he was forced back into the castle Tristen tried to get a last glance at Dinas.

“I grieve,” Dinas sobbed. “Come back...” His words faded as they drew apart. Tristen caught sight of the tears as they ran from Dinas’ eyes.

It was too painful to see. Tristen held back a sob of his own and returned to the castle’s dim halls.

When the prince finally approached the gate King Telgras flew down to him to receive him, hugging him and leading him inside as the enemy troops outside watched in anger.

King Telgras brought Tristen to his chambers quickly and sat him on the bed. “What passed? Will they attack?”

“No, Telgras. I told my father to beget a new heir.”

“What?” The king’s jaw dropped.

“I am no longer his heir. That is all.” Tristen lowered his head.

King Telgras paused, removed his dagger, and walked behind Tristen. He slashed through the bonds of his wrists and then his ankles.

Tristen raised his hands slowly to his face and touched his own hair and skin, then he rubbed his wrists and arms as if they were foreign to him.

The Royal Guards of Troyar surrounding them, King Telgras stood back as if to judge Tristen’s reaction to his freedom. The king set his dagger down and said, “You are free. Now what?”

Tristen covered his face and dropped to his knees. His deep sobs echoed in the chamber.

“Helbros.”

“Yes, Sire?”

“Take the prince for his bath and meal. Return him to me

after.”

“Yes, Your Majesty.”

Helbros and Lucas helped Tristen to stand. With a hand on each of the prince’s arms, they were as kind as nursemaids as they urged Tristen to his feet.

While he was led out, Tristen fought back his sobs for his beloved Dinas.

The clamor of the great horses and metal echoed at the gates as King Renelin led the way with his captains. The large group of men dismounted once inside the castle walls. Everyone was silent. No speech. No laughter. No tears.

Princess Lynette grabbed Dinas’ knee. “Loyal Dinas, speak of what has passed. What ails all? I fear the worst.” She started to cry. “Where is my Tristen?”

Dinas gazed down at her in the torchlight. He didn’t reply. His horse was steadied by another noble as Dinas slid off the saddle in discomfort, holding his wound. Once Dinas was breathing easily, he leaned on the princess for support and they walked out of the crowd.

Princess Lynette helped Dinas to his room and removed his armor and sword for him. When he lay back on his furs Dinas called her name.

Princess Lynette sat at his side, trembling. “I am frightened. Why is everyone so silent? My Tristen must surely be dead.”

“No, sweet lady. He lives still. Of this I have seen and touched for myself.” Dinas brushed back her long hair from her face.

“Then speak. What has happened to bring so foul a mood? The kings are greatly disturbed.”

“Lynette, our Tristen has been changed by his captivity.”

“Changed how?”

Dinas took a deep, painful breath and looked aside. “He is

Prince of Servitude

being held captive by King Telgras himself.” He searched for the right words. “In his very chamber. Do you see?”

She stared at his lips as he spoke, but still seemed to not understand.

“So beautiful is he that he has enticed the king to...to...”

She shook her head in bewilderment.

“King Telgras loves him like a maiden and Tristen appears to have accepted his fate. He has refused to fight and has asked his father to bear a new heir.”

“No. You are wrong. He wants to come back to me.”

“He is confused, my love. You must realize he has always been a captive. Tristen was free only for a few years after his mother kept him prisoner in her chambers. He has forgotten freedom.”

“But why, Dinas?” A tear fell from her eye.

“Why? Maybe because he is like a precious jewel that everyone seeks to own and protect. For whatever reason he is captive once more, with one more damaging to his sweet pure soul.” Dinas sighed. “Yet he is pure no more.”

Lynette fell on Dinas and buried her face in his hair. She sobbed hysterically as Dinas rocked her gently in his arms. “I must go to him, Dinas. I will make him remember.” She sat up and wiped at her eyes. “I will disguise myself as a messenger and seek audience with the king. You say they are always together? He will surely see me then.”

“You mustn’t.” Dinas shook his head. He knew the shock between hearing the tales and actually seeing Tristen were worlds apart for her.

“I see no other way. While he is captive he will remember us less and less.”

Dinas closed his eyes at the sensual vision of Tristen standing naked and erect before him, his arms bound, a cape of royal blue around his shoulders, and his hair longer and more golden than he ever remembered.

“You are weary and I am making it worse,” Lynette said, “I will leave you to rest.” But instead, she drew closer. “You feel welcome against me,” she whispered, “the heat of your thighs.”

Dinas opened his eyes and found she was staring at him. Suddenly she focused on the gold medal which hung from its chain and lay against Dinas’ throat.

When she clasped it between her fingers, Dinas nudged her off the bed, off of him.

“May you never live to regret your actions, princess, for come the dawn we will be held accountable for two kingdoms.”

Appearing insulted at his rebuffing, Lynette said, “Goodnight, Dinas,” and left.

Dinas held the gold charm, cupping it in his hands. Looking to the ceiling, he cried, “Oh, my beloved prince. I shall ride and bring you back with me and reunite you with your princess.”

Chapter Seventeen

By first light the next day, King Renelin called Captain August to his quarters.

The king thought August appeared pale and depressed. Seeing Tristen captive had darkened everyone's heart. The entire army looked the same.

"Make ready to ride to Brandywine. Gather the troops."

"Yes, Your Majesty," August muttered. "Then all is indeed lost."

The king ignored the comment, knowing how fond August was of his son.

Next on King Renelin's list was bidding farewell to his friend, King Ator. Along with an escort of Brandywine's Royal Guards, King Renelin found the old gray-bearded king in the hallway.

"Ator, I have a new proposition for you." King Renelin embraced him quickly and met his eyes.

"I do hope to find something good in all this mess," King Ator said.

"A queen is now needed desperately in Brandywine. Can I ask for the princess' hand in marriage?"

King Ator raised his eyebrows in surprise. After a short pause, King Ator replied, "I see that as fair, and I thank you, good friend, for your kindness. I shall inform the princess at

once so she may ride with you.”

“Good. The gods be with you, good King.”

“And you.”

When Tristen opened his eyes he found King Telgras sleeping beside him. Sighing sadly at his lot, Tristen climbed out of bed, washed himself in the basin, then drank the wine that was left from the previous night. Free from all bonds, Tristen reached over his head, stretching his back. He moved to gaze out of the window, seeing the sky was gray and a thunderstorm was approaching. Heat lightning crackled in the distance and the air was charged with static electricity. A threatening breeze blew back his long hair.

Tristen felt warmth on his bottom.

King Telgras stood behind him, pressing his hips into the prince’s backside. Tristen pushed back gently, letting a soft breath escape his lips.

“You seem at peace, Tristen.” King Telgras wrapped his arms around him and kissed the back of Tristen’s neck through his golden hair.

Lowering his head, Tristen wondered whether it was truly peace or just surrender.

The king rocked him. “Are you content?”

Tristen gave him a weak shrug.

“I am content, Tristen. I am a man who has finally found my happiness.”

Tristen wondered. *Am I content? Or did I just forget everything I was before this?* He envisioned Dinas on top of his black steed, his brown loving eyes and his will to fight to free him. Tristen’s heart ached for him now.

Still facing the open window and the hills beyond, Tristen mouthed, “Oh, my beloved, I yearn for you.”

“What do you need? Tell me and I shall find it.” King

Prince of Servitude

Telgras turned Tristen around and tugged playfully on his long hair, pushing the ends against Tristen's nipples.

Tristen read the adoration in the king's eyes, wanting so much to please him now. This was all there was. Who else would love what he had become? Only another like him could love him now.

"I need nothing. I have everything I need." Tristen tried to make this sound genuine and smiled.

Dinas unburdened his horse and set it free. He stole across the fields and stood gazing up at the castle wall and a high window. Rubbing his hand over his wound, Dinas stretched the tender muscle there. He probed the stones, beginning to make progress up the uneven wall, his soft deerskin boots finding footholds. The muscles under his arm tore at him as he tensed them through the pain and kept his grip sure. The moon peeked out through the dark clouds, then disappeared. The heavens were black and thick and an ill wind was stirring. Dinas feared the rain for the stones would become slick. Glancing down once, the height brought anxiety. Dinas' only driving thought was Tristen. As he drew close to the gap of an open window, he felt a spray of drizzle from the sky.

With a last effort Dinas met the ledge with his fingers and shimmied up in agony. He crawled into the darkened chamber, lying back on the floor to recuperate until the searing ache subsided. He waited for his eyes to grow accustomed to the dark and then rose to his feet to peer out into the corridor.

Moving in the dim hallways, Dinas hid as each torch gave off the light that would expose him. He heard voices approaching and slipped into a doorway until the guard walked by. One man hung back and turned his way. Dinas covered the man's mouth and plunged a dagger into his side, dragging him into the vacant room.

When the guard lay dead, Dinas undressed before stripping him and adorning himself in the uniform of Troyar's Royal

Guard, carrying his spear and wearing the helmet as was the custom. Now he moved about more freely as he sought the king's quarters.

While Tristen hid again in the tiny chamber, he could hear Queen Leda once more inquiring about him.

It seemed King Telgras could no longer put her off. After getting rid of her King Telgras opened the chamber door which hid Tristen.

"I ask you, Prince, for a great favor. Could you once again hang from the wall so the queen could see you there? I promise it will be quick."

"What choice have I? I dread being poisoned by her out of jealousy."

"Yes. There is always that." King Telgras tied the leather around Tristen's wrists and ankles.

A strange guard escorted Tristen to the dungeon and hung him on his place on the wall. This time a board was provided so Tristen's weight did not strain his arms.

Tristen wondered how King Telgras would explain to the queen that the bonds were no longer needed.

"Good and secure?" the guard mocked.

"It's only temporary. Do you not know I am a free man?"

"Free?" The guard laughed. "You do say bold things."

"Bold?" Tristen peered down at the board he stood on. "This is for show only."

When the guard moved closer, Tristen's body went wild with excitement. He hated to admit he preferred to be bound and helpless when it came to sexual play. Especially with a handsome armed man.

"You will always be a slave." The guard licked Tristen's erect nipple.

Tristen whimpered, hardly hiding his attraction. "No."

Prince of Servitude

“Yes.” The man obviously found the reaction amusing. “Do you think you have power here?”

“Some. Yes.” Tristen’s cock had gone rigid and he was about to beg to be touched.

“No, Fair Tristen, you have nothing. You are but a toy.”

“I am not. Ask the king. He will tell you how important I am.” Tristen held his breath as the guard used the back of his hand to stroke Tristen’s hard cock, making it bob.

“There is one who has greater influence than the king.” The guard peered behind him first, then licked Tristen’s slit.

Tristen groaned in pleasure. “Who has greater influence than a king?”

At a noise near the door, Tristen and the guard harkened.

Queen Leda entered the chamber surrounded by her own guards.

The first guard whispered to Tristen, “She is the true ruler of Tenegar Castle.”

“Surely you are not serious.”

The guard gave Tristen a wicked smirk. “Quite serious. Her force is twofold larger than that of the king.”

Gaping in amazement, Tristen watched her walk over. “But that is not possible. It was Telgras’ father that was the former king.”

“Is that what he has told you then?” The guard’s eyes twinkled mischievously.

Tristen couldn’t believe what he heard.

The queen came forth through the gloom and approached the prince.

“Hullo, Mother.” Tristen smiled, hoping it sounded endearing.

She cackled in delight. “Take him down.” She gestured.

“Take me down?” Tristen was set on his feet and kept his

eyes on Queen Leda's guards who were smiling too gaily for his comfort. "Where are you taking me?"

The queen led the way through the dimness of the dungeon and once again Tristen was forced to walk with his bound ankles. Desperately he tried to remember what the king said would happen next.

Tristen kept peering over his shoulder at the guards who were chuckling behind his back.

Like a recurring nightmare, Tristen was shoved roughly by the soldiers and stumbled with his bound limbs. Losing his balance, Tristen fell through the doorway to his knees. When he raised his eyes, Tristen realized he was in an elaborately decorated bedchamber lit by three wall torches. The room stunk of strong musky perfume. Tristen looked around as the guards filed in, noticing devilish grins on their faces.

One of the queen's maidens removed the queen's cape for her. Queen Leda walked to a cushioned settee in a shimmering purple and gold gown. When she was comfortable, she nodded her head and her men stalked the prince.

If they expect me to lie with that beast, they are insane! Tristen struggled to his feet and backed away, hitting a wall, expecting the worst. "No. You cannot be serious." Tristen felt bile rise in his throat. Just the overpowering scent of the queen revolted him, not to mention she was old enough to be his grandmother. As the men encircled him, Tristen slid down the wall to his rump, curling into a ball.

A young maid played a soft stringed instrument as the queen was fed fresh fruit. "What's the hold up for my night's entertainment?" the queen asked.

"A reluctant slave, Your Majesty." One of the guards gripped Tristen's upper arm.

"Delightful! I love a good fight." She coughed as she laughed.

The men handling him roughly made Tristen's skin break

Prince of Servitude

out in a cold sweat. He was brought to his feet and his arms were raised over his head in the middle of the room. The leather from his wrists was attached to a dangling hook. As it stretched him almost to his toes, Tristen moaned and started to tremble. His cock rose thick and hard.

“Perhaps not so reluctant,” a guard said.

Two of the guards stood near him, taunting him, taking turns stroking his cock.

When Tristen pushed his length through one rough palm another one was waiting. The feel of the Royal Guards’ hands on him was already more than he could bear. He was about to shoot his seed all over the tapestry-covered room.

Tristen heard Queen Leda’s amused laughter and gawked at her. Like an over-sized cow, she was fed a morsel and smiled at him with rotting teeth. “Why, Prince Tristen, I should think I am doing you a service. Aren’t you eager for affection after hanging on that wall for so many hours?”

Tristen was swung back and forth as another guard joined in. Male hands caressed him everywhere at once. Even though the men’s touch was pure pleasure to Tristen, being observed by the queen as her nightly performance was too humiliating to bear. “No thank you, Your Highness. I do not wish this kind of service.” A hungry finger groped him, prodding his ass. Tristen broke out into a sweat.

“Nonsense. Everyone needs this kind of release, time and again. Just ask my guards.”

They grinned at him. Tristen gulped audibly.

“You have hung too long on that wall.” She ate another mouthful of fruit.

Stretching as far as the leather allowed Tristen said, “Keep your hands off me. I am not a stage act.”

The guards roared with hilarity.

The one who spoke to him earlier in the dungeon said, “You still have not learned. She is the ruler absolute.” Seductively, he

ran his hand over Tristen's bottom, then addressed the queen. "What is your pleasure, Your Highness."

"Charming Chronos, what is yours?" The queen drank from her wine goblet.

With a lustful smirk, Chronos turned back to Tristen, grabbed a handful of his hair, and urged Tristen to his lips.

Tristen twisted his face away and gasped. "Please. Your Highness, I beg of you. Not like this."

The queen laughed heartily as her maids all got to their knees to watch the action.

"I don't believe this." Tristen blinked in awe at her enthusiasm. He could never imagine his mother behaving this way.

The leather of his ankles was cut free. As Tristen fought to keep his legs closed, two more guards rushed over to assist in opening them.

Chronos breathed in his ear, "She loves it when I force men. You are giving her exactly what she craves."

Queen Leda raised her cup. "Be a good prince and give us a good fight, will you?"

Never in his wildest dreams as a boy in Brandywine did Tristen imagine such things occurring. Especially to him. He wasn't sure he was happy he'd found out.

"This whole castle is filled with illegal decadence and sin. You will infuriate the gods. One day it will crash down on you."

The chamber filled with riotous laughter.

"And you, Tristen, will be with us among the ruins. So, enjoy!" Queen Leda nodded to her men to get on with it.

Chronos stepped back from Tristen and unlaced his leggings. He gestured to one of the maidens and she hurried over and coated his stiff cock with grease.

Tristen watched in disbelief. This was like an evening at the playhouse for the queen.

Prince of Servitude

It was obvious by the color of his engorged cock that Chronos was hot and very excited at the idea of fucking him. Two guards steadied Tristen as Chronos made his way behind him.

A hot tongue lapped at his rim. Tristen couldn't hide the shivers of excitement it created. As his cheeks were spread and Tristen was licked from his balls to his puckered hole, Tristen closed his eyes and arched his back. "Yes."

"Yes!" was echoed by the guards in a chorus as they descended on him.

Deep penetration followed.

Tristen inhaled sharply when another guard knelt down in front of him and took his cock into his mouth, while another kissed him and yet another chewed his erect nipples.

At the surge of sensation, Tristen grunted loudly, peeking only once at the hungry ogling from the women in the room. Tristen rode the wave to a climax and closed his eyes again because the room started to spin. The scratching of iron mail on his back and legs, the hands that explored him, and the hot hungry mouths eating every part of him was an overload to his senses.

Tristen was gone. The ecstasy began to overcome him. He opened his mouth, parting from the kiss to inhale a deep breath as another guard, who couldn't stand by any longer, pleased himself, spraying cum all over the prince's legs.

A third guard knotted up Tristen's long hair in his fist, kissing him and eating at the prince's throat and smooth jaw.

Unable to hold back any longer, covered in hot chills as that mouth drew hard and fast on his length, Tristen came just as liquid heat entered him from behind. "Ah, ah!" Tristen shouted out like he had never come before.

The queen applauded as the pleasure washed over Tristen. Her maids were cheering to his gasps.

Chronos gave his hips one last thrust, then rested his head

against Tristen's hair. "Oh, my Prince, my magnificent Prince," he moaned as he stroked Tristen's skin.

The guard on his knees looked up at Tristen, toying with him softly. The one beside him caressed Tristen's torso and arms lovingly, as he purred, "There has never been one like you before. Never."

Dinas wound his way from door to door, listening intently to each one. When someone passed he stood at attention, then continued on.

He approached a guard by an enormous brass plated entry and wondered if it could be the king's chambers. Attempting to seem official Dinas said, "The captain calls to you. He asked me to stand guard in the meantime."

The guard looked at him suspiciously. "Why does he call to me?"

"I don't know. Go see for yourself." Dinas nodded aside confidently.

The guard shrugged his shoulders tiredly and stood, then padded down the hall. Dinas waited a moment before he peeked into the keyhole. When he focused on the events inside, Dinas gasped. Standing straight, he looked right, then left, then back through the keyhole. "Oh, my Prince," he moaned. "My poor Tristen."

When Tristen shimmer in pleasure it brought a chill over Dinas' skin. "Oh, my poor, beautiful, luscious, sensuous Prince. *Ohh...*" Swallowing in a gulp, Dinas had to blink when his eye felt dry from the air that traveled through the opening. After rubbing it to moisten it, he crouched to watch more. He jumped out of his skin when he felt a tap on his arm. In panic, Dinas looked into the eyes of the guard he sent away.

"The captain is nowhere to be found." He smiled knowingly. "You sure that is what you wanted?"

"I...uh..." Dinas stammered nervously.

Prince of Servitude

“It could have been you in there with the prince. You only need to be with the queen at the right time. If you want him badly, she’ll see to it you’re in there next time. She’s easy on us and likes to give us what we want.”

Trying not to show his shock, Dinas nodded, then bowed. “Right...yes, I shall talk to her.” He walked down the hall mumbling, “What kind of place is this?” Dinas wished he had remembered his wineskin.

Checking behind him first, he found a vacant wall and leaned against it to think about what to do next. How was he going to get Tristen out of this one?

Chapter Eighteen

Tristen was exhausted. The guards had coaxed him to come once again and he could no longer respond, thinking only of sleep. Tristen hung heavily on the leather straps. The queen gestured to have him unhooked. Chronos secured Tristen's ankles together and carried Tristen to her bed where the prince collapsed. Queen Leda raised the covers over him and waved her attendants out.

After a brief nap, Tristen woke. He tugged at the leather bonds on his wrists in aggravation. The queen's loud snoring was shaking the walls. He squirmed to the edge of the bed, sliding off, and managed to walk in small baby steps to the door. He opened it with both hands still tied behind him and peered out. A guard was dozing on the chair right outside.

Biting his lip, hoping to not wake him, Tristen slipped into the hall and tiptoed back a few paces, then turned to make a dash to the king's quarters.

He ran head first into a guard. Sheer panic overwhelmed Tristen as a hand was placed over his mouth. Powerful arms lifted and carried him to a vacant room. The door was quickly closed and latched behind him. Tristen stared in fear at his new assailant. A match was struck and a torch lit. The room danced into light. Tristen cowered against a wall until he found that beautiful, brown-eyed man smiling at him.

"Dinas? How is this possible?"

Prince of Servitude

Dinas knelt by him and cut off his binding straps. "Tristen, I am so glad to find you. I had no idea how I was going to get you away from the queen."

Tristen rubbed his wrists. "How did you get in here? Why did you come? How did you know I was with the queen?"

Dinas laughed. "Shall we escape first and talk later?"

"Escape? To where?"

"My Prince, what kind of a question is that?"

"You do not understand. I cannot go back. I have given up the throne."

Dinas sat down with him on the floor. "I know what you did. I still want to take you away from here."

"But where to? Do you not see? These acts, they are illegal in Brandywine. I am defiled. I have no place I can live without shame but here."

"Here? In this pit of sin? I cannot believe what goes on here. You do not belong here."

"Dinas," Tristen said, "That is why I do belong here."

After a deep sigh, Dinas gazed into the prince's eyes. Delicately, as if he were petting a kitten, Dinas raised his hand to dig into Tristen's golden hair. "It is long, like a maiden's."

"He will not allow it to be cut." Tristen lowered his eyes.

"And he makes sure you are clean shaven." With the back of his hand, Dinas caressed his cheek.

"Yes."

Dinas moved closer to him. "And you still aren't allowed garments." He touched Tristen's skin.

Tristen bit his lip and shook his head, then looked up at Dinas' eyes. "I cannot go back."

"When we were younger we used to be inseparable. Do you remember?" Dinas combed his fingers through Tristen's long soft waves of gold.

Tristen nodded.

“We used to ride together on the grassy fields. We would hunt gems in caves, lay in the sunshine after our javelin practice...and sleep together in your bed.” Dinas cupped Tristen’s jaw. “Remember how I explained to you about the pleasure of your own body?”

Tristen met Dinas’ eyes.

“How I yearned for you then.”

Tristen parted his lips in surprise.

“Did you never know? Did you never wonder?” Dinas reached for Tristen’s left hand and held it tightly.

“You? You yearned for me?” Tristen asked.

“Would you believe me, beautiful Prince, if I told you I crave to have you like King Telgras does?”

Tristen shook his head in denial.

“Yes. Believe it. I am in torment for you.” Dinas swallowed his sob. “And now, in this place, I see the freedom Troyar has to bed men to men when in Brandywine it is punishable by jail or death. So, I ask myself, why? Why do I feel this?” He paused. “And now. Look upon you. With your flowing yellow tresses and bronze velvety skin. I am in torment again.” Dinas wiped at his eyes roughly. “Who is more defiled now, Prince?”

Tristen was touched by Dinas’ confession. Slowly, he raised his hand to his friend’s cheek and wiped away the tears. Dinas grabbed Tristen in a rough embrace and kissed him passionately.

The heat scorched Tristen, lighting him on fire. To be touching someone he loved this way? *Oh, this is what it was meant to be. Not being forced to lie with others, but to be in the arms of someone you love, cherish, and truly adore.* Tristen groaned from the sensations of Dinas’ firm hands holding him, his mouth sucking at his.

Dinas pulled back for a breath, panting. “I love you, my Prince. I cannot live without you.”

Prince of Servitude

“Will you love me now?” Tristen slid his hand into Dinas’ tunic.

“Let us fly away from here. Then I will love you as you deserve.”

Tristen wanted his mouth once more and leaned closer. Dinas found it hard to resist.

Suddenly someone called out Tristen’s name like the roar of a lion. They sat up in fear.

“The king!” Tristen gasped.

Dinas jumped to his feet and hurried to the window to look down. He removed a rope from his belt and secured it inside the room, then Dinas reached out for Tristen.

Tristen hesitated, deathly afraid of anything outside these walls.

“Come, my lover.” Dinas held out his hand. “I love you, my beautiful Prince. Come away with me,” he pleaded.

Needing no further convincing, for he knew he felt the same, Tristen hurried to him and they climbed out of the castle, repelling off the wall. Dinas grabbed Tristen’s hand once they landed and they flew over the grass and into the woods.

When they were in the relative safety of the forest, they stopped to catch their breath. Dinas removed his armor and helmet, discarding it, giving his tunic to Tristen.

“Thank you, my love.” Tristen slipped the soft leather over his head.

“Come, we need to keep moving.” Dinas clasped Tristen’s hand.

As quickly as they could in the blindness of the rainy night, they walked through the pitch darkness until they could no longer hear the bells and the turmoil from the castle they left behind.

They came upon a campsite of rangers. While the rangers slept, Dinas stealthily stole a horse. He held it steady as Tristen

G.A. Hauser

mounted it. Dinas hopped into the saddle in front of him and they sped over the hills.

“Where do we head now?” Tristen clung to his back.

“Somewhere we can be together.”

Closing his eyes from his weariness, Tristen felt the warmth of his beloved in comfort.

Chapter Nineteen

With the speckled sunlight shimmering through the tall canopy of trees, Tristen awoke groggily. They were in the woods, sleeping at a camp they had made. Tristen squinted at the brightness and tried to move his arm to block the glare from his eyes. He grunted in annoyance as once again his hands were tied behind his back.

“What?” Tristen struggled to sit up and growled angrily. A shadow passed him and he glanced up to see Dinas standing over him. “Dinas! Why am I bound? Untie me. What is the meaning of this?”

Dinas reached for Tristen, helping him stand. Dinas steadied the horse and gave Tristen a boost onto it. After he climbed on in front of Tristen, Dinas spurred the horse, still not answering his prince’s questions.

“Dinas, what in the name of the king are you doing to me?” Tristen grumbled and shifted on his naked bottom in the saddle angrily, then realized the direction they were taking. “No! Dinas, do not dare take me back there. As your prince I demand you release me.”

“I will take you back to Brandywine where you will inherit the throne. Your kingdom is waiting.”

Tristen let out a miserable groan and rested his head on Dinas’ back. “Traitor.” He pouted.

“No, quite the opposite, my lovely. I am going to make sure

you are a king.”

After two weeks of traveling, August spotted the towers of Brandywine Castle. King Renelin seemed preoccupied and angry while the men of the guard were silent. A troop of living dead.

The great doors were thrown open and the king dismounted, giving his steed to a servant as August did the same. They turned around to a standing figure and the king grabbed his chest in alarm. Queen Olympia was there waiting.

“What sorcery is this? We had news of your death!”

“Where is Tristen?” the queen asked.

“He is with that fool of a King in Tenegar Castle,” he spat.

“Fool? You are the fool! All of you!” She pointed at the army as they averted her eyes. “How dare you leave him unguarded? I will execute all of those responsible.”

“It was I who commanded him to ride. We had him in our camp, yet he refused to return with me.” The king turned a deep shade of red. “Why did you send news of your death?”

“When I heard he was captive I thought the news would enrage him and give him strength to fight.”

“It did the reverse. He felt he had no reason to return.”

“What of the princess? Was she not worthy of his return?”

As August observed in silence, King Renelin seemed to just remember his promise to King Ator. “She is among us now. Place her near your rooms so you may tend her.”

“Why is she here?”

“Without a queen and heir what was I to do?” he said. “My son is a disgrace.”

“Disgrace? For being held prisoner? You had better tell me what has passed immediately!” She stepped forward quickly.

“I am sick to death of it. See August if you wish your story. I am going to my chambers and I do not wish to be disturbed.”

Prince of Servitude

August flinched as the king said his name.

The queen summoned, "Captain August! Come forth!"

Inhaling for courage, August stepped apart from the lingering crowd as they unburdened their horses. Bowing low, he could not look her in the eye.

Queen Olympia appeared to be trying to keep her voice calm, but it didn't work. "It was you who persuaded me to allow my son to leave. It is you who must now bring me the news and pay the consequences."

August knew eventually it would all be brought to rest on him. "He is being held captive at Tenegar Castle. King Telgras keeps Tristen by his side. He is naked and bound and," August fought to get the words out, "loved like a maiden." His eyes lowered, August tried to be strong in spite of what would be a major storm.

The queen was silent, then as if an eruption she could not control emerged, she slapped him across the face. "You shall die for these lies."

Not reacting to the blow, August withstood it. "The truth is, Your Highness, that he was offered the chance to come home and refused."

Her eyes burned into his. August knew she wanted to see him beheaded. He could almost feel the blade at his neck. It was because of him that Brandywine no longer had an heir to the throne.

"You are to go back. I do not care what you have to do. You will bring him back to me or you will die."

"Then I must die. A whole army and the king couldn't do as much."

"Where is Dinas?"

A call rang out for Dinas but the soldiers shrugged innocently when he did not materialize.

"I do not know. He wasn't among the ranks when we departed," August said.

“One brave man among you? One loyal man to bring me back my son?” she said in fury. “Get out of my sight before I have you beheaded.”

August bowed and walked away from her, thankful to keep his head.

Dinas was seated at a campfire, finishing eating the rabbit he had cooked. He fed some to Tristen, whose hands were still bound. Raising his gaze to those resentful eyes now and again, Dinas somehow felt like he was indeed a traitor to drag Tristen home against his will.

The sound of a distant trumpet was heard. Dinas leaped to his feet and climbed a tree to see an army riding in the distance, torches blazed like fireflies in the night sky. He scraped his bare chest as he hurrying down, stomped out the campfire and sat close to Tristen, watching his eyes.

As if he were about to explode, Tristen sat stiffly, then started shouting out at the top of his lungs. Dinas clapped his hand over his mouth and flattened Tristen into the dirt. “Do you want to see me executed?” he breathed in Tristen’s ear. “Because that is what will happen to me if I am caught with you.”

Tristen twisted away from his hand. “Do not take me back. I beg it of you as my loyal friend. I am defiled. I can no longer be with the princess, nor do I want to.”

Dinas set his elbows on either side of Tristen, trapping Tristen underneath him and enjoyed their mingled body heat. “You are not defiled. Let her decide that. Do you realize her love for you is greater than the disgust you have for yourself?” Dinas heard the sound of hoof beats. He covered Tristen’s mouth again and listened, pressing down hard against him.

Tristen sighed and closed his eyes.

After a while, the guard passed. Dinas removed his hand once more.

Prince of Servitude

“You said you loved me,” Tristen challenged him.

“And so I do. More than life itself.” He kissed Tristen’s lips.

“How will you bear seeing me wed?”

“It is because I love you that I want to see you wed. You fool. I want to see you take your rightful place as king.”

“Why?” Tristen narrowed his eye at him.

“Why?” Dinas choked. “Poor Prince, it will take you a while to get right again, I fear.”

“Shut up and kiss me.”

Dinas did.

“What will you do after I am married when I want you to come to my chambers?”

“I will come.” Dinas caressed Tristen’s hair.

“Even after I am king?”

“I always obey my King,” Dinas purred into his ear.

Tristen lay back and stared at the stars.

Dinas tried to keep them warm in the cooling night air. With Tristen’s bare legs and his bare chest Dinas knew they were both feeling the chill. Dinas wrapped his arms and legs around Tristen tighter. “We need proper clothing. We are both too cold.”

“Do you want the tunic for a while?”

“Why? Do you want the leggings?”

Tristen gave him a sly smile. “I would rather have a bare chest.”

“Uh, yes. Me too.” He cleared his throat. “I will find us clothing. I know there is a village close by.”

“Telgras may have burned the village seeking us.”

“Let us hope not. I wish your father hadn’t withdrawn his force. King Ator may have a problem defending himself alone.”

“I am cold.” Tristen’s teeth chattered.

Dinas sat up and rubbed his legs to warm them.

“Please untie me. I am sick to death of being bound.”

With both hands on his shoulders, Dinas massaged Tristen’s aching muscles.

“It would be easier to untie me.” Tristen grumbled.

“I am no prince, but I am not an imbecile.”

“Look at me. Do I look like a prince?”

Dinas paused to admire him in the moonlight. “Yes, even half naked and covered in dust I am afraid you do.”

Tristen rolled his eyes at the folly, then blinked when he felt Dinas’ hand on him. “What are you doing?”

“Trying to keep you warm.”

“You are going to keep that warm?”

“Yes.” Dinas lay back down along his side and stroked him gently.

“It does feel nice.”

“Does it make you forget the bonds?”

“What bonds?” Tristen replied.

Dinas chuckled softly and kissed his hair.

“Make love to me.”

“Now? Like this? In the woods?” Dinas ran his hands along Tristen’s hard shaft, enjoying the feel of it in his palm.

“Yes, fuck me senseless.”

A laugh caught in Dinas’ throat. It was so unlike his old Tristen to speak this way. Dinas didn’t even know the prince had the word “fuck” in his vocabulary.

“Get me to my knees.” Tristen nudged him.

Dinas checked the surrounding area before he helped Tristen to balance. Tristen spread his legs and leaned forward without the support of his hands. “It’s awkward, Tristen.”

“Untie me,” he snarled.

Prince of Servitude

“No!” Dinas answered stubbornly. “I’ll hold you up.” Dinas knelt behind him, encircling his arm around Tristen’s waist, clutching his hard cock tightly.

“If I start to fall, let go, or you’ll yank it off,” Tristen warned.

Dinas kept fisting Tristen’s cock.

Tristen twisted over his shoulder and asked, “Well?”

“I’m sorry. You want me to what?”

“Stick it in.”

“Stick what in?”

Tristen moaned in annoyance. “Where is Helbros when I need him?”

“Who?”

“Dinas, I want you to make love to me.”

“Aren’t I?” Dinas jerked Tristen’s cock harder.

“No. Not like that. Put yours in my bottom.”

“Oh?” Dinas shivered. “Is that what they do in Tenegar Castle?”

“Yes, I love it. You see? You can’t. It’s illegal. Right?”

Dinas released Tristen’s cock and lay side by side with him. “I would do it in a minute.”

“Then?”

“We are filthy and I am afraid I’ll harm you.”

“I want my big rough Royal Guards.” Tristen pouted and thrust out his hips.

“Your guards?” Dinas couldn’t follow Tristen’s train of thought. Then he remembered Tristen in the queen’s chambers. “You mean.” Dinas paused but Tristen did not answer. “You want many men? At once?”

“You see? Do you think I am defiled yet?”

Dinas flopped to his back and looked up through the canopy of trees to the starry sky.

Tristen shimmied closer and rested on top of Dinas' chest. "Put your finger inside me while you pleasure me. I'm hot and bothered and need release."

"My finger in you? Is that good?"

"Heaven."

Dinas felt his cock throb at the thought of entering Tristen's body. It certainly was something he wanted to do. After giving it some thought, and Tristen's persuasion of his dick rubbing against his legs, Dinas faced Tristen on the dewy forest floor.

After spitting on his hand for lubrication, Dinas pushed his index finger inside Tristen's butt.

"Grab me." Tristen moaned.

Dinas nuzzled into Tristen's long silky hair, wrapped his palm around Tristen's thick cock and thrust in his finger as he worked Tristen's rod.

In moments Tristen arched his back as he came.

Dinas continued massaging Tristen, his own cock pulsating under the leggings.

After he ejaculated, Tristen took a moment to recuperate.

Dinas released his contact with him, staring at him.

Once Tristen had slowed his panting breath, he said, "Let me suck yours."

"Suck?" Dinas' skin broke out in goose bumps.

"Yes, bring it here."

"But—"

"Dinas!"

Quickly unlacing his leggings, Dinas knelt next to Tristen, aiming for his mouth. "Just put it in?"

"Yes. I can't hold it. My hands are bound." Tristen glared at him.

"Yes. Right." Dinas moved closer, brushing the head of his engorged cock over Tristen's lips. "I will surely come."

Prince of Servitude

“That is the idea.” Tristen licked him.

Dinas almost passed out. “The Prince of Brandywine is licking my loins. I must be dreaming.”

“Push deeper. Pretend you are making love.”

“You’re certain? What if I lose my seed in your mouth?”

“That is again, the idea!” Tristen groaned. “I do wish you’d unite me.”

“No. I will do it. My pleasure, Tristen, believe me.”

“It will be if you ever let me get on with it.”

Dinas watched in astonishment as Tristen seemed to delight in sucking him. The sensation was so strong, Dinas felt the urge immediately to come. Thrusting his hips into that hot, wet hole, Dinas’ body began to tingle. “I’m there, Tristen.”

Tristen went mad sucking hard and fast.

Dinas grunted and jerked his pelvis forward, deeper into Tristen’s throat, releasing his seed. Dinas had no doubt the sight and sensual touch of his Tristen’s mouth on his body had changed him forever.

As Dinas’ cock softened, Tristen lapped at his head and slit.

“By the gods.” Dinas panted.

Tristen dropped to his back and caught his breath. “You see? Illegal in Brandywine. What nonsense.”

Dinas took a while before he regained his senses. Finally he laced up his leggings and cradled Tristen in his arms. “Now that you have done that I will want it daily.”

“I know.” Tristen grinned. “And I’m nice and warm again.”

Dinas held him closer. “I love you.”

“As I love you.”

They slept cuddled tightly together. Dinas imagined they looked like a sensual statue of gods of love in the dim cast of the moon.

Ulgress signaled his men to sound the trumpets.

After the warning blast, King Ator's men lined the battlement of Westland Castle.

Ulgress could see King Ator as he gazed across the moat at the many men gathered for war. "What do you want?"

"Tristen!" Ulgress announced.

"Tristen? He is not here." King Ator leaned over his castle wall and repeated, "The prince is not here," King Ator yelled. "If he has escaped he did not come here."

Captain Ulgress faced his men to see their reaction.

"Should we doubt his word?" Lucas asked the captain.

The captain addressed King Ator, "Do I have your vow?"

"On my honor," Ator replied. "But, if you wish war, a war you shall have!" His men drew back their bows.

Upon seeing the number of trained archers awaiting the signal, Captain Ulgress waved his men to retreat and gathered them together. "We chase a king's fancy," he said. "Do any of you wish to sacrifice your lives for the king's pet?" He glanced around the circle of eyes. Captain Ulgress knew many of the men present had sexual contact with Prince Tristen. He wondered if they were as motivated to get the prince back in his binds as King Telgras was. "I say we return now and give up this folly. If King Telgras persists in this action, I say we refuse him." The men of the army were silent, the horses shifting and snorting under them. "Do as you wish. Ride all the way to Brandywine and confront the strongest lord in the land. I bid you farewell." Captain Ulgress reined his horse and headed back to Tenegar Castle.

The army fell into rank behind him.

"Wait here with the horse and let me get us some clothing, all right?" Dinas said.

"Where do you think I will go? I cannot even mount the

Prince of Servitude

horse to ride away.” Tristen made an obvious gesture to his bound hands.

“Come here.”

“Where?” Tristen glared at him.

Dinas removed a strap from the horse’s saddle.

“No. No, Dinas, I’ll stay here, there is no need—”

Ignoring his protests, Dinas nudged Tristen against a tree and tied the strap around his chest, securing him to the trunk.

“This is what I get from my loyal servant.” Tristen shook his head.

When he was through, Dinas stood back to have a look. “Oh, my Prince.” He covered his smile.

“What?” Tristen was exasperated.

“Look at you.”

Tristen shifted his legs nervously. “I hope the tunic is long enough to cover me. Is it? Or am I hanging exposed below?”

“Uh...” Dinas rubbed his own hard cock through his leggings. “Dear Prince, there is too much of you down there to cover I’m afraid.” Dinas laughed.

Tristen snarled, “I will get even with you for this.”

“Who would ever think you are the Prince of Brandywine. It is quite funny if you think about it.”

“Shut your mouth and get me some clothing.”

“I shall be quick.” Dinas jogged off.

Tristen tried to get comfortable against the tree. He bent his knees tiredly, but could not slide down to a seated position. In frustration he leaned his head back, trying to rest quietly. The horse grazed beside him. Tristen said his thoughts out loud, “The beast is free to do as he likes. The prince? Bound again. There is no justice.”

A few moments later Tristen startled from a nap. He found a middle-aged woman standing before him, watching him

curiously.

“Are you a criminal or a victim?” she asked in a shaking voice.

“I do not know.”

She stepped closer. “What has happened to you? Where are your clothes?”

Tristen tilted his head, knowing he must look filthy from sleeping in the woods.

“You are very handsome. Are you hungry?”

“Yes, I am very hungry.”

She dug through her basket, taking out a piece of bread, then walked nearer timidly. “Why are you bound? Are you dangerous?”

“You ask me questions I cannot answer.”

“Why can’t you answer? Are King Renelin’s men going to come for you and take you to the dungeon?”

“They may.” He nodded, knowing the reality of that statement and dreading her recognizing him.

She offered the bread to him. Tristen bit off a piece and watched her as he chewed.

She stared down at his legs, then again at his face. After feeding him another bite she raised the edge of Tristen’s tunic.

In complete horror, he twisted away. “My lady!”

She blushed. “Forgive me. I was curious if you were truly naked under there.”

“It would have been proper to ask.” He tried to cross his legs nervously, attempting to recover some dignity.

“Yes, that would have been proper, but yet, less enjoyable.”

He widened his eyes in surprise, but couldn’t help but smile at her impish grin.

Once she finished feeding him the bread, she uncorking a jar of water for him. He drank thirstily, the water running down

his jaw and neck.

“You are filthy,” she said, “Will they give you a decent bath?”

“I am hoping for one soon. I am not used to being dirty.” Tristen shifted his weight to lean on his other leg.

She lost herself on him a moment, then set her basket down. She removed the cloth off the top and poured water on it until it was soaked.

Tristen studied her curiously until he guessed her intentions. “No, my lady, please, it is quite all right.”

“It’s no bother.” She washed his face, working her way down his neck.

When the cool water trickled against his thigh, Tristen jumped in reflex.

She knelt down beside him, like one of his servants would do, and slowly ran the cloth over his hip and leg.

Tristen gulped down a tight throat as her hands washed his cock and balls gently. “Oh, my lady, no. Do not touch me there.”

“I am almost through.”

Tristen ground his jaw and tugged at the leather on his wrists in humiliation.

Dinas carried a pair of leggings and boots, wearing a new tunic and feeling much better to be properly clothed. He hurried through the woods to Tristen and stopped short. A strange woman was kneeling before him. “What is going on?” Dinas muttered under his breath.

Tristen’s head lay back on the tree trunk and his expression was filled with what Dinas perceived as pleasure.

“What are you doing?” Dinas shouted.

Both Tristen and the woman jumped at the sound of his voice. The woman panicked, grabbed her basket, and raced out

of sight.

Dinas approached him. "You are sexually insatiable."

"She was washing my legs."

"Sure, Tristen." Dinas loosened the strap that secured him to the tree.

"Why do you say 'sure, Tristen' like I am a liar?" Tristen asked, "What has your dirty mind told you?"

"Step into this." Dinas held out the leggings for Tristen.

"You don't believe me." Tristen hopped up and down to help Dinas get them up his thighs. "I do not like the touch of a woman. Why is that impossible for you to understand?"

"It isn't. I just know what I have seen with my own eyes." Dinas cupped his palm over Tristen's cock and balls and pushed him against the tree.

Tristen glanced over Dinas' shoulder in paranoia. "What are you doing now? That woman will be watching you."

"Tucking you into your leggings."

"You are not. You're taking advantage of me being bound."

"Yes." Dinas licked the clean skin of Tristen's neck, massaging his growing anatomy in his hand.

"All right, pleasure me quickly, now that you have me so hard."

"Even though your village woman watches us?" Dinas squeezed that lovely organ. He didn't care if the whole army of Troyar was there witnessing it.

"Even though...oh, yes." Tristen squirmed and pushed his hips forward, hungry for the pleasure.

Using both hands, one on Tristen's cock, the other massaging his soft, hot balls, Dinas had the prince shooting out his creamy seed in seconds.

Just after Tristen's moans subsided, they heard a small gasping sound and turned to see the village woman vanishing into the trees.

Prince of Servitude

“Oh well.” Dinas shrugged and laced up Tristen’s new leggings.

“And you say I am sexually insatiable,” Tristen said.

As they passed through a village, Tristen asked Dinas, “Can we stop for a proper meal? I’m famished.”

“I will bring you something once we are outside the gates.” Dinas spurred the horse to trot. “I wish there was another route. I fear even this far from Troyar we will be spotted.”

“Please stop. Let us treat ourselves to wine or ale. There. That inn.”

“No. Tristen, it is not safe.”

“I said stop. Dinas, I am very hungry. Stop!”

“What are you doing? Tristen, you are more trouble... Stop yelling at once or you will get us captured.” Dinas hoped it appeared as if he were one of the king’s guard taking a prisoner back to the castle. Anything else would be lethal.

“You are the impossible one. What harm is there? I will be a captive again soon enough, in my father’s dungeon.” Tristen rested his head against Dinas’ back.

“No. No one shall ever make you a prisoner as king.”

“What makes you believe my father will allow me to inherit the throne? Dear Dinas, he will never permit it. You are leading me into a prison or a death sentence.”

Hoping against all hope that was not the case, Dinas frowned in frustration. He knew if Tristen would just come back to Brandywine, things would work out. Somehow.

“Dinas, you realize I have never lain with a woman, nor do I intend to. I am no good for my princess. I crave armed guards.”

“You and Princess Lynette must marry. I will not let you throw away a kingdom.”

“We passed by her castle in Westland days ago.”

“She is not there. She is with your father in Brandywine.”

“What?”

On the edge of the village Dinas caught the eye of a ranger and a shiver of warning washed down his back. “Tristen, turn your face away.”

“Which way?”

“To my left, now!”

Tristen hid against Dinas’ shoulder. “You think this will conceal me? How many men have long, golden hair to their mid-back?”

Thinking those exact thoughts, Dinas spurred the horse into a run.

At the unexpected surge forward, Tristen gasped. “You almost made me fall off. Warn me next time.”

“Sorry. I’m becoming nervous as we close in on Brandywine’s territory.” Dinas slowed the horse when it began to tire and followed a trail into the darkened woods.

“You poor beast. Two men on your back, you can only go so far.” Dinas made sure he was beyond the well-trodden road before he stopped. He slid off and reached to help Tristen down.

“Why is Lynette in Brandywine when I am not?”

Dinas sat him down and pushed his long hair back from Tristen’s face. “Your father has offered to marry her.”

Tristen went ashen. “Marry Princess Lynette? Why?”

“With your mother dead and you denouncing the throne, he felt he had no choice.”

“My father? Marrying Lynette? But he’s an old man.”

“Yes! Does it make you angry? Do you not feel the need to go back and stop this?”

With growing agitation, Tristen tugged at the leather straps. “He cannot betray my mother’s memory. I would sooner kill him.”

Wishing he had thought of it earlier, Dinas sighed with relief. “Yes, that is exactly what he is doing. You need to stop

Prince of Servitude

him. The king needs to show your deceased mother respect.”

“Let me go! Untie me!” Tristen started struggling to get free.

Relieved the fight was over, Dinas moved behind him and sliced through the leather.

In that instance, they raised their heads to a company of rangers. Dinas jumped to his feet and quickly stabbed the one closest to him in the chest. Unarmed, Tristen dodged a sword and body slammed the man into a tree. When the ranger dropped the weapon, Tristen grabbed it and cut into the man, making sure he was dead.

The duo fiercely fought the two remaining rangers. Dinas managed to get past the man’s long reach and push his dagger into the villain’s heart.

Dinas spun around just as Tristen swung the blade and hewed the last man almost in half.

Dinas was shocked they had been tracked so far from Troyar. He was angry and now spent of energy as he and Tristen caught their breath and eyed the darkness waiting for more to attack.

“Perhaps it was only four.” Dinas grabbed Tristen’s tunic. “Come. Let’s find their horses and get out of here.”

A short distance away the rangers’ sturdy mounts stood waiting.

They leapt on two of them, galloping in the night to the boundaries of Brandywine. Only the sound of hoofs betrayed their direction.

Chapter Twenty

Feeling filthy from the journey and in need of a meal and a proper bath, Tristen stood before the gates of his castle.

The minute the guards spotted him they cheered in joy and opened the heavy iron doors, allowing the prince and Dinas to ride inside.

“Prince Tristen!” The guards rushed to help him off the horse and embraced him. “Welcome back.”

“I do not know how welcome I shall be with Father.”

“Your mother will be pleased.”

“My mother?” Tristen peered back at Dinas quickly.

“She lives, dear Prince, and is presently with your father in his chambers. Word is she thought you knowing she was dead would bring you back.”

“Thank you, Jonas.” Tristen squeezed his guard’s hand and asked Dinas, “Will you come with me?”

Dinas appeared frightened. “The queen lives?”

“Yes. Dinas, surely she will reward you for saving me.”

“Perhaps I should seek Lynette and tell her of your return.”

Tristen knew Dinas was worried about the reception he might get from King Renelin. “All right. Let me face Father first. I shall find you.”

Dinas kissed Tristen’s cheek. “Good luck.”

Prince of Servitude

They parted ways and Tristen jogged to his father's quarters. Along the way the men of his army cheered and reached out to touch him. When Tristen arrived at the doorway, three guards stared at him in awe. Anticipating their response, Tristen said, "Yes, it is me."

"Your Highness." They bowed low and opened the door for him.

Tristen entered the chamber and spotted his parents in a debate.

At the noise, his mother spun around. "Tristen!" With both her arms open, Queen Olympia rushed to embrace him, wailing in joyous relief.

"All right, Mother. Let us calm ourselves." Tristen rocked her and tried not to get too emotional as she cried.

She brushed at a tear. "I knew you would return to me."

"I was informed as to why you sent word of your death, Mother, but it nearly destroyed me." Tristen met her eyes, then released her and stepped back.

"I am sorry, Tristen, it was meant to do the opposite."

Unwilling to discuss it further, for that was the least of his worries, Tristen gazed at his father. The king's beard bristled with his grimace. Tristen stepped before him and bowed. "I am your legitimate heir. You need not bear another."

"You, beggar?" King Renelin roared, "*You?* You who came to me with the stench of Telgras on you? *You* who told me with his own tongue to beget another heir? You come to me now to claim your place? It is too late. I have decided you are unworthy for Ator's daughter and unworthy for the crown."

The queen hissed like a cobra at King Renelin. One look from Tristen silenced her.

"You cannot believe I was in my right mind. I did what I had to do to stop needless bloodshed. I did what I did to survive."

"It would have been worth one hundred deaths to tear you

away from that vermin. No! Do not tell me what I witnessed with my own eyes. You had the chance and yet you returned to the snake who defiled you. You are unfit for the crown.”

Tristen fought the tears of emotion. “I will marry Lynette and take my place in this kingdom.”

“You will not decide who shall marry. You have no power here.” The king’s veins bulged as he gave his order. “Guards!”

A troop filed into the room quickly. Tristen grabbed the hilt of his sword in reflex.

The queen said, “He is your own blood, Renelin. How dare you challenge his right to the throne?”

“He gave up that right himself.”

A dozen armed men looked around the room in confusion.

“But, Father, I was a captive. Surely you can see I was not myself.”

“Nor will you ever be. You cannot remove what has happened to you or be pure again. Take him to the dungeon.”

The guards hesitated in confusion. “Sire?” one asked nervously.

Tristen cried, “You blame me? I was the victim. I was bound. Forced against my will to perform. Did you think of me and the torment I bore? I came back hoping against all hope to set things right. Would my own father condemn me to the same prison I so recently escaped?”

As if conjuring up a spell in her head, the queen glared at the guard, daring them to lay one a hand on her son. When they appeared greatly intimidated by her presence, she growled at the king, “So help me, Renelin, if you do not let things get back to right in this kingdom it will fall down around you.”

Tristen noticed his father felt the potency of her force, shuddering from her threat. Her words held more power than Tristen’s could ever hold. Queen Olympia was capable of poisoning, and quickly.

Prince of Servitude

“Father, have I not been punished enough? Please. I will kill myself if I have to be held captive for a moment longer.”

All attention was on the king. He sat back heavily in his chair, the fabric of his cloak raising the dust around him.

With great reluctance, Tristen raised his eyes to the Royal Guard. Men, his friends and peers. They were shy to Tristen’s gaze. Some looked away, others gave him hesitant smiles.

Knowing no other option, Tristen knelt before his father and lowered his head. “If I am not to be your heir, do me the service of ending my misery now.”

The queen stepped forward instinctively, then paused.

Tristen removed his sword and lifted it to the king, bowing his head.

King Renelin took the offered sword and addressed the men watching them. “You, men, would you would obey this king?” He gestured to his son. “Would you follow him in battle? Speak up.”

Tristen fought the urge to cover his ears and closed his eyes, praying for loyalty.

Silence followed. No one answered.

The king walked past Tristen to his Royal Guard.

Unable to prevent himself, Tristen turned to watch their reactions.

King Renelin approached one guard at a time and waited for his answer.

It was obvious the men were afraid to cross their King.

“Would you obey him even after he has lain with that snake in Tenegar Castle?” He looked at each. “Would you embrace him as your king even though he is guilty of sodomy? Defiled? Wretched? Filthy—”

“Renelin!” the queen scolded.

The king replied, “Well? That is the truth. Tristen will be your king one day. What say you? Will you follow him into

battle and obey him as king though he is guilty of breaking the law and should rot in the dungeon?"

Warm tears ran down Tristen's cheeks. He would not obey a man of that description, how could he expect the guards to?

"Well, Sire..." one guard finally found his tongue. "It weren't 'is fault he was captive." He spotted Tristen's tears and turned away in embarrassment. Men did not cry in Brandywine.

"And you?" The king walked to the next man.

Tristen had thrown the javelin with him in the warm summer months and the man had idolized him, telling him so. "I'm sorry, Your Majesty. I would follow Prince Tristen where ever he led."

Tristen closed his eyes in relief as each man admitted it made no difference to them in the way they felt about their prince.

Once he listened to every armed guard, the king found his throne once more. "Leave my sight. You are free to roam the castle. I will give you my answer once I have considered it more."

The entire company of men bowed in turn, left and closed the door.

The moment Tristen was outside the chamber the Royal Guard surrounded him to congratulate him. Tristen was warmed at the sight and thanked each guard by name.

The queen waited until they had all given their praises. She said, "It is done. Your father never ponders his negative responses. Come, let us get you bathed and dressed properly. Where is Dinas? I take it he is the hero who has rescued you?"

Tristen blushed. "He is. He was afraid of the king's wrath, Mother, so I suggested he not accompany me."

"Wrath? He shall be rewarded and promoted," the queen replied.

"Thank you." Tristen felt some of the weight lift from his shoulders.

Prince of Servitude

“Dinas! Oh, my dear Dinas.” The princess embraced him and held him tight. “What news? Tell me what I yearn to know.”

“He is here.”

She laughed out loud and spun in a dance of joy. “I knew you could do it. I knew he would return to us. Dinas, you should become a god for this feat.”

“I do not think the title ‘god’ is quite appropriate.” He held her hand to calm her down. “Lynette, you must pay attention to me now.”

“Yes, anything.”

“Tristen isn’t the same sweet prince you once met.”

“I don’t care. I will love him more for all he had to endure to return to me.”

Dinas made his face a mask, thinking of how he had to tie Tristen up and force him. “Yes, he has come back but, please, be patient with him. He feels defiled, unclean from what has happened and may not race to your door. Don’t be insulted. I beg it of you. Give him the time he needs to recover. He will come to you eventually. I promise. But, please, do not force it.”

Like a child her eyes were wide. “I will wait, even if it takes forever.”

“Well, let us hope it is not quite that long.”

“You are the dearest friend.” She kissed his cheek.

If you knew your prince craved the scratching of cold armor on his skin and a cock up his bottom, you may not think me a friend. Dinas tried to smile but couldn’t. “Let me go. I need a meal and a bath desperately.”

“Yes. Thank you, Dinas. Thank you.”

He bowed and left, in search of news on how Tristen had done with his audience with the king.

“And you say there was no way to prevent it?” The queen asked.

Refreshed and clean, Tristen sat on her bed, once again in his royal robes, his long, blond hair left spilling down the blue velvet. “I was bound at the wrists and ankles constantly. An armed guard at my heels. When it first happened, I didn’t know what was being done to me.”

Queen Olympia held her hand up, obviously not wanting to hear any of the details.

Tristen stood and walked to the window to look out at the watch fires. “I never thought I would be here with you again. When I heard news of your death...” He choked up. “Telgras told me...he...he told me right before the first time he...”

“Shhh.” The queen came up behind him. “Have you seen the princess yet? She is here for you.”

Tristen lowered his head and covered his eyes.

“What is it, Tristen. Is she not beautiful?”

He said nothing to betray his thoughts.

Queen Olympia touched his shoulder, turning Tristen around to face her. “You must put this behind you now.”

“I cannot.”

“Yes. Time will heal you. Come, let me take you to her.”

“No. You stay. I shall go myself.” Tristen could see the anxiety in her expression. *You have reason to worry, Mother. I have no desire for her.*

Tristen walked down the corridor, listening to the click of his boot heel on stone and holding the hilt of his sword when he came upon a group of guards.

As they all patted his back and cheered him, Tristen smiled in absolute pleasure and allowed them to kiss his hand. A hot blush warmed his cheeks at their attention and support.

“Prince Tristen, we will always be loyal to you. Forever.”

“Thank you, kind Philip, and I will be your loyal prince.”

Prince of Servitude

Philip knelt down and held Tristen's hand.

Instantly Tristen had lurid thoughts and felt a cold sweat from his desire. Images of opening his leggings and exposing his hard cock so the men could touch him plagued him.

As Tristen's chest began to rise and fall rapidly, Tristen forced himself to look at the many faces of the men sworn to protect him. Each soldier was gazing at him, a slight smile on their lips of contentment.

Wanting them, dying for them, Tristen cleared his throat nervously. "I never want to part company with you again."

"You are going nowhere, Prince."

"Thank you." Tristen's skin was on fire. Before he begged them to tie him up and have their way with him, Tristen forced himself to continue on.

When he looked back, many of the guard were lingering, giving him adoring glances.

By the gods, give me strength.

Tristen stood at Princess Lynette's door, a knuckle ready to knock. *No, I cannot face her. I have no right to her. I am foul. A foul thing who wants to lie with men.* The guards could accept him. And why not? It was nothing to them. What contact would there be? No. With her it was intimacy. She would think all men were like him. She would never have another and he could never fulfill his duty to her.

Completely disgusted with himself, Tristen turned and walked away, winding his path to the tower, deep in thought. He stood at the high wall that surrounded the top of the castle. It was midnight and a low moon showed its ominous face. Running the gold charm on its chain, Tristen raised the medal from his chest and kissed it, thinking about sacrificing a goat in the early hours to mend his broken spirit. It wouldn't hurt to appease the gods.

A delicious warmth and a familiar scent mixed with his own from behind.

"I was wondering where to find you. I never would have thought you would be here."

"Here you have found me." Tristen sighed and leaned back against Dinas.

"Why do you seem so sad? You have your kingdom back, or so I am told, and a beautiful princess to marry." Dinas kissed Tristen's hair, wrapped his arms around Tristen's waist, and squeezed tight.

"Hold me." Tristen nuzzled against him. "Still I think of throwing myself from this tower."

Dinas turned Tristen around to face him. "Do not speak like this."

"I am no closer to her door now than I was at Tenegar Castle." Tristen embraced him, resting his chin on Dinas' shoulder. He was starved for loving hugs and knew Dinas would never push him away.

Dinas nuzzled Tristen's hair. "You should have seen her face when she heard the news you were back." Dinas caressed Tristen's body lovingly, lifting his golden hair in his fingers. "Still you do not cut it?"

Humiliated by everything he would be accused of now that he was back in Brandywine, Tristen covered his face.

Dinas hugged him tightly and rocked him. "What is it, my gorgeous Tristen, why do you still mourn?"

"I mourn, dear Dinas..." He lay his hands on Dinas' shoulders and stared into his eyes. "For a loss. My own. I do not feel capable of the tasks that lay ahead. I am not whole."

"You have only been back a few hours. Soon you will heal."

The urges rising, Tristen stared at Dinas' face in the moon's glow. With his hands behind Dinas' head, Tristen drew him to his lips.

"We must be wary of the guards." Dinas leaned back. "Tristen."

Prince of Servitude

“Please. I know I can love you. I am starved for affection. Love me. Love me as I want to be loved.”

“You can love Princess Lynette too. You must let it happen.”

“I cannot.” Tristen went for his lips.

Dinas glanced up and down the solitary walls. Tristen knew the area was vacant. Dinas stopped resisting and kissed Tristen with all the passion he contained.

Though Tristen was aware it was wrong, impossible to do here, and he never intended continuing this type of behavior, Tristen couldn't resist that kiss. Yet the danger of being discovered and the king finding out, was as real as the sword that would detach his head from his neck.

How, when he knew these things did he let it go on, Tristen did not know.

Lost in passionate desire, and Dinas' eager tongue, Tristen moaned.

Dinas panicked when Tristen slid his hands inside Dinas' leather leggings. “Tristen, be discreet. Surely one of the tower guards will pass.”

“Come to my quarters then,” Tristen whispered, molding and squeezing Dinas as he grew hard in his hand.

“We cannot go there.”

“You used to sleep in my bed every night.” Tristen felt crushed.

“That was before.” Dinas tried to pry Tristen's hand out of his pants.

“No one is around.” Tristen was burning for Dinas' caresses. He wrapped his free arm around Dinas' neck for more kisses.

“How do you know? Do you realize the risk? This isn't Tenegar Castle. Here these things are not done.”

“But we shall do them. If I cannot have you, I will ride back

to King Telgras.”

“Stop. Not here.” Dinas tugged Tristen’s hand out of his leggings.

Tristen relented and grabbed Dinas’ wrist, dragging him to the tower room and closing the door. In the hollow stone chamber, Tristen unlaced Dinas’ leggings. Once Dinas’ cock was exposed, Tristen undressed quickly. “Come here, lover.” With the clothing lying beside him on the floor, Tristen beckoned.

Dinas appeared petrified.

Tristen was about to give up and find a willing guard. “Dinas?”

Dinas rushed to him and crushed Tristen in his embrace, inhaling him and tasting Tristen’s neck and shoulder, running his palms over Tristen’s rounded bottom.

Tristen nudged his cock against Dinas’ hot crotch, closed his eyes and groaned. *This is easy...oh yes, this love is so easy.* Falling to his knees before Dinas, Tristen took Dinas into his mouth and sucked him deep into his throat.

“Tristen!” Dinas gasped as Tristen’s fingers massaged inside him and a lapping tongue circled his cock. “My Prince, how I adore you.”

Tristen stopped and spun around, bracing himself on the stone wall. “Take me.” When Tristen felt the pause was too long he begged, “Take me! I have made you wet from my mouth. Please hurry before it dries.”

Still Dinas didn’t approach him.

Cursing under his breath, Tristen forced Dinas on top of him on the floor and spread his legs, facing upwards. Tristen pointed Dinas’ cock at his rim and thrust to get him to penetrate.

Dinas cried out in shock.

“Quiet!” Tristen spit on his own fingers and moistened Dinas’ length again. “Now push in.”

Prince of Servitude

Dinas' rasping breaths echoed in the small chamber as Dinas inched his way inside Tristen's back passage.

"Yes." Tristen closed his eyes and clung to Dinas as their bodies met. "Pump your hips."

Slowly Dinas obeyed and the friction turned to pure pleasure for Tristen. "Harder. Dinas, fuck me."

Dinas moaned in either agony or bliss, Tristen did not know which, but soon Tristen was getting what he wanted. "Better."

"Tristen..."

Dinas' cock swelled and throbbed. "More." Tristen found Dinas' hands and led them to his erect body.

Dinas clamped onto Tristen's cock and rode him to the stars.

Finally feeling what he craved from the man he loved most in the world, Tristen began to rise. The climax overwhelmed Tristen and his lover. Dinas' seed spewed into his body as Tristen gave his up as well, spattering them both with the creamy streams.

With a deep masculine grunt, Dinas gave one last lingering thrust into Tristen.

The moment Tristen returned to earth, he said, "Now you see."

"And now I am doomed to crave you forever." Dinas pulled out slowly.

"Good."

"I'm not so sure, Tristen." Dinas sat back on his heels and wiped his sweaty face.

"Why is it I am?" Tristen smiled contentedly.

Chapter Twenty-one

In the morning sun the next day Tristen renewed his practice with the sword and spear. Feeling light and happy from an evening of loving, the sunshine and freedom warmed his heart. Being out of doors took on a whole new meaning for him.

To his delight, Tristen was greeted once again by his men with hails and waves, smiling at each, remembering all their names. Tristen felt his hope and heart rejuvenated. Dinas was in his accustomed place on the grass observing.

They had been exercising for hours and Dinas was obviously very tired. Tristen assumed Dinas was even wearier from the brief sleep of last evening after he and Dinas had made love repeatedly until exhaustion.

Tristen felt like himself again as he admired his own body, taut and bronze, his long hair flowing down his back, his face cleanly shaven. *Yes. I am whole. I am not evil or defiled.*

His freedom made him feel invincible. Tristen sliced the air with his sword waiting for an opponent to challenge. A few of the men were preparing themselves for so noble an adversary.

Smiling broadly, the sweat glistening on his chest, Tristen was about to bow to his sparring partner when he heard a voice that made him spin around quickly.

Aldren's smirk of superiority was aimed his way.

The men in the area closed in, making a tight circle around the two men.

Prince of Servitude

Aldren sneered, "So glad to have you back among us. There are so few maidens around with any great beauty. Maybe we could call on you to service us. That is why you let your hair grow long, is it not? To look like a maiden and attract a nice, hearty soldier?"

Tristen's skin grew hot and he panicked at those thoughts actually being put to voice, true or not. Tristen scanned around, wondering which way the tide would turn when the blood started to flow.

Dinas pushed his way into the tight ring of men. "I am sick to death of this old rivalry. This time you deserved what is coming to you, Aldren."

Tristen knew he could count on Dinas, but what of the others? Trying to avoid antagonizing the army, Tristen said, "I think you had better quiet your tongue, Sir Aldren."

"My Prince," Dinas said, "you are showing more restraint than usual."

Aldren taunted, "Come on, pretty Prince. Show us all how you took it up the ass." Aldren pushed out his pelvis and toyed with the lacing of his leggings.

Tristen's throat went dry at so bold a comment. He peered down at the lewd gesture and tightened the grip on his sword.

"We are all eager to hear the tales." Aldren laughed. "Tell us how they passed you around like a whore. Do not be shy, Prince. Was it a good fucking?"

Though his veins felt as if they were full of ice, Tristen took another step toward Aldren, trying to sense the attitudes of the men around him. "You had better take it all back."

After a quick survey of the group of men, grinning at them, Aldren was obviously enjoying himself. "I hear you are avoiding your beautiful princess. Could it be Telgras has taken away your cock, as well as your virginity?"

Tristen could bear no more as Aldren passed over the invisible line Tristen had drawn. With a lethal lunge with his

long reach, Tristen sliced open Aldren's throat.

The look on Aldren's face was of absolute disbelief. He fell, clutching the gap which gurgled with air and blood.

Tristen spun around to the soldiers, readying himself for battle. "Who will be next?"

Dinas stood by his side, his sword raised as Aldren died on the field.

When nothing was heard but Aldren's death rasp and he lay still, the men went into action. The lifeless corpse was picked up and carried away.

A guard came over to Tristen. "Do not worry, Sire. We'll dispose of the body and no one here has seen a thing. We'll make it look like he was killed outside the kingdom. Rangers did it. Over a bet. Terrible thing."

Tristen stared at him in surprise. "Thank you, Kirk."

Kirk blushed deeply at the gratitude given to him by his Prince, smiled, then hurried to help the others in the deception.

Dinas touched Tristen's hair lightly. "They love you, you know."

"Yes, but, why?"

"Why? You are their prince."

Tristen wasn't sure of anything anymore.

Chapter Twenty-two

“They have set the day of the wedding and feast,” the queen said to Tristen as she stood in his chambers.

Tristen curled his lip in annoyance. He hadn’t even been to see the princess in the three days, avoiding her at all cost.

“Do not look so funereal. You need to marry. Especially now.”

“Especially now?” Tristen glared at his mother. “I do not want this conversation to continue. It is making me sick.” He moved to the door.

“Tristen,” she called. “Try to behave. It will all work out now. It must.”

An icy feeling grew in Tristen’s gut at the lies. He left the chamber and wandered the halls, looking for Dinas. He found Dinas chatting with Leonas, a Royal Guard, about the story they had told the king about Aldren’s death. At Tristen’s approach, Dinas and Leonas smiled. The guard bowed and greeted Tristen.

Tristen whispered, “Father has told Remous about Aldren. He seems to think Remous wasn’t surprised to hear it. Maybe he is deeply relieved to be rid of such a son.”

Dinas said, “You think too much on it. It isn’t in your hands now.”

Tristen asked, “Are you free? I need to speak with you.” He touched Dinas’ arm. “Good-eve, Leonas.” Tristen waved to the

guard.

“Sire.” Leonas grabbed Tristen’s hand and brought it to his lips, lingering with his kiss.

Once the contact had been broken, Tristen touched his hand where the guard’s lips had been. Tristen led Dinas down the corridor, peeking back at Leonas. “It is as if they are all in on some private joke. There is laughter behind their eyes.”

“They are merely overjoyed at your safe return. Why do you look into it more?”

Tristen couldn’t shake off the sense of mockery, but chose to set it in the back of his mind, escorting Dinas to his chambers. Tristen locked the door behind him.

Dinas sat on an embroidered chair and waited as Tristen paced. “What is on your mind, Tristen?”

“I cannot marry Lynette.”

Dinas expressed his disappointment. “You must. The wedding day has been chosen.” Dinas paused. “You haven’t even seen her since your return. At least go and tell her yourself.”

Tristen dreaded it. “No.”

Dinas stood and walked towards him. “Do you know she cries every night? That she is in torment because she is the only one you have not seen since your return? You have greeted every one of the soldiers in your father’s enormous army, yet you neglect her.”

“I neglect her because of who she is. A pure princess. What am I but a defiled thing with no need for female—”

“Stop. After all this? After days of forgetting your captivity and breathing free air you still refer to yourself as defiled?”

Staring into Dinas’ handsome face, Tristen suddenly needed his kiss. He reached out for Dinas, but Dinas pulled away.

“No. That is part of the problem. You get your satisfaction from me so you do not yearn for her arms. It must stop. Why

Prince of Servitude

don't you see it? In order to become king you must do this. Only then will we be free to love one another, to change rules and laws. If you do not marry her and please the king and queen, beget a blasted heir first, then I will not allow you to lay with me again."

Tristen was crushed. He turned a cold shoulder to Dinas. "Then there will be another who will."

"You are talking foolery. One proposition to a guard and you will be exposed."

"You are wrong. I have seen it in their eyes from the time I have come back. You are very wrong indeed, my friend." Tristen could read the jealousy hot in his lover's cheeks as Dinas tensed his muscles and ground his teeth.

Tristen was about to leave the chamber and find a willing guard when Dinas lunged for him and threw Tristen on the bed violently. It caught Tristen by surprise, instantly exciting him in its passionate play. Tristen didn't resist, hoping for a good rough bout of sex. Dinas pushed Tristen to face into the furs that lined his bed. "Yes..." Tristen shivered and pressed his hard cock into the mattress, humping it happily.

When Tristen felt his hands being drawn behind his back and bound, he struggled at first and then wondered if it was to heighten his thrill. He hadn't mentioned to Dinas how much he adored being bound up. "Take me. Take me, my love," Tristen begged and writhed.

Dinas tightened a leather strap around the prince's wrists. When it was secure, Dinas hauled the prince to sit upright.

"What are you doing?" Tristen waited as Dinas caught his breath. "I enjoy it this way. Let me just take it up the ass from you."

"Oh, Tristen," Dinas moaned. "You really don't think of the big picture." He inhaled first, then picked Tristen up and threw him over his shoulder. He proceeded to carry a kicking and screaming young prince out of the room.

“No! I know what you’re doing! Dinas, no! I am your prince. I order you to put me down.”

“Not until you face your future wife.”

Tristen whimpered in anguish. “I am doomed.”

“Shut up and play the game.”

As they neared Princess Lynette’s chambers Tristen began to go insane. “No! I refuse! Guard!”

“Be quiet, Tristen! Why do you not stop and think of your kingdom for one minute?”

Dinas slammed Tristen’s legs into her door, causing a loud bang.

Tristen could hear the maidens’ startled reaction from outside. The door opened and Princess Lynette appeared in her lilac gown.

Dinas carried Tristen into her room and tossed him on her bed, wiping the sweat off his face from the effort. Both he and Tristen were perspiring from the struggle. Dinas rubbed his thigh where one of Tristen’s kicks had made contact.

Princess Lynette appeared shocked. “Never would I guess it would take my prince to be bound and carried to finally come to my door.” She inhaled a deep breath. “All the joy I had envisioned when I first set eyes on you, Prince Tristen, has vanished.” She glared at Dinas and waved her maids out of the room. Once they had left she said, “Surely I could have been spared this humiliation.”

Dinas shook his head. “No. It was in desperation or you know I would never have done it.”

They both looked down at Tristen who was on his belly, hands behind his back, growling into her bedding.

She approached him, sitting next to Tristen on the bed. When she leaned closer to see his features more closely, Tristen quickly faced the wall.

Dinas sat on the opposite side of him and twisted his head

Prince of Servitude

back to the princess. Tristen fought as best as he could, snarling in anger at the betrayal.

“Go on, Tristen,” Dinas urged, “Tell her what you told me only a moment ago.”

Tristen could see Princess Lynette holding her breath, preparing for the worst.

As he looked at her, her beauty, her purity, Tristen felt her sorrow. Unable to bear it, he buried his face in her pillows and wept.

She caressed his hair. “Cut him free this instant.”

Dinas slashed through the leather with his dagger. Tristen raised his arms up slowly and covered his face in shame.

“My prince, don’t cry. It will be all right now. I love you, beautiful Tristen. My noble prince.” She leaned over and kissed his hair.

Enraged at being forced to face what he found intolerable, Tristen twisted to her abruptly, the tears stinging his eyes. “No! Not noble! Defiled! Do you hear me? *Defiled!* I am not fit for you. I am not fit for you to even set eyes on.”

“Dearest love, nothing you did in your captivity means a thing to me. You are my pure, sweet man, don’t ever think otherwise. You didn’t do those things of your free will.” She kissed his cheek.

Tristen leveled his gaze at Dinas and sneered. “Not all in captivity.”

Dinas popped out of his stupor and stared at Tristen. “Think, Prince. Think and listen to your forgiving princess.” Dinas gestured to Lynette.

“Lynette, you must reconsider this marriage. I’m really no good for you. I don’t want to go into the details. Just believe me.”

She laughed. “Silly Tristen. No. I shall not simply believe you. When will you see I do not care what you did or have done? As long as you love me. I so very much love you.”

In agreement, Dinas shoved Tristen. "See. I told you she would forgive."

I do not love her! Grinding his teeth, Tristen said, "She only forgives what she does not know."

"I do not care, Tristen. Get that through your thick blond head. Do you still want me?" She shook Tristen and made him look at her.

Pausing to stare at her bright, brown eyes and raven hair, Tristen did think she was pretty, just the wrong sex. About to say "no" he felt a jarring hit on the back from Dinas in encouragement. "Ouch!" Tristen snarled at him.

"Tell Lynette you will marry her and claim your kingdom." Dinas held up his hands in defense as Tristen threatened a retaliatory punch.

Lynette ignored their argument and hugged Tristen from behind. "I am so happy. I have my dearest Tristen back."

Tristen glared at Dinas in hatred as Dinas turned away.

Chapter Twenty-three

The day of the wedding feast came as Tristen was dressed in royal splendor, covered in gems and gold and his long hair was trimmed once again to its shoulder length. He wore a diadem of platinum and sapphires and his sword was jewel encrusted and at his side. On his way to the banquet halls, Tristen found an old friend waiting to escort him.

“August. You look well.” But Tristen thought age was beginning to show in his sturdy face.

“I’m very well now that you’re back where you belong. It has been a long hard road, dear Prince.”

“Yes, but a road that has ended well. Come, time to celebrate.” Bravely, Tristen hooked August’s arm and they walked to the hall.

The room was filled with candles and music. Rich foods and wines were being served to overflowing plates. The survivors of the light-armored guard were present with Dinas in a place of honor. Tristen gave everyone his best smile as the veiled princess marched proudly up the platform to his father and mother.

The blood ran cold in Tristen’s veins as he repeated words he did not believe. Love? Bound by honor? Trust? Tristen knew none of those words he would obey, least of all love and trust.

Each evening Dinas sat with him and attempted to convince him of the need for this marriage. But every bone in Tristen’s

body rejected it.

It was a lie.

Tristen didn't want to live a lie, harm Lynette, and crave hot sex with his Royal Guard while tied and helpless. But that was the truth.

The wizened old advisor waved his hand and muttered some oath. Tristen had stopped paying attention and lost his gaze on one of the soldiers whose armor fit him just right, his helm removed in respect, carried in his left arm, his right hand holding the hilt of his sword and a bulge under the leather of his leggings that Tristen would sell his kingdom of gold to nuzzle into.

"Prince?"

"Hmm?" Tristen woke from his daydream.

The princess was waiting for his response. "Yes." Tristen decided that word would suffice. The minute the old man continued, Tristen's attention was back on the armored man. When they met eyes Tristen was surprised to see him smiling. The guard gave his mound of manhood a discreet squeeze and Tristen felt the sweat break out on his skin. "Yes." Tristen licked his lips.

"Tristen?" Princess Lynette asked.

Tristen realized he had said the last word aloud at an inappropriate interval and shook his head. "Disregard."

The ceremony was completed and Tristen was obligated to kiss Lynette, which he did, lightly. Their hands were bound by a velvet ribbon. Tristen shook it off abruptly and harkened to the crowd as they began chanting, "Long live the King! Long live Prince Tristen!"

Tristen escorted his new bride to the head table which was set up for the feast. His temples pounding, his stomach in knots, Tristen kept the wine goblet to his lips and did not stop drinking. The food didn't appeal at the moment. No one seemed to notice his sour mood but Dinas. Tristen glanced at his parents

Prince of Servitude

who were jovial and laughing together. Princess Lynette was beaming, the perfect virgin bride whose dream had come true, and the rest of Brandywine Castle's occupants appeared to be enjoying a festive occasion. Music played loudly, food was brought out in an eternal line of platters to feed the horde, but Tristen could only gaze at Dinas. *Look what you have done to me?* Tristen wanted to die. He couldn't go through with this charade.

A young servant approached Tristen and bowed.

The strong wine going to his head, Tristen nodded for the boy to speak.

"A gift, Your Highness, from an admirer."

Setting the goblet aside, Tristen thought they had already enough "things" to fill another castle. The gifts were many and overly extravagant; Gold, silks, tapestries, weapons, all beautifully hand-crafted for the newlyweds.

"What gift, young Sam, do you offer your prince?"

"Not I, Your Highness, for I know not from where it came. It was delivered to me by messenger and I was instructed to give it to you. It is a wedding gift that is to bring you great pleasure."

Princess Lynette looked on, a soft smile on her lips. She exchanged glances with Tristen and then he nodded to receive it.

A small crowd gathered. Dinas stood by, a silver chalice at his lips as he observed.

Tristen tilted the object side to side, feeling its odd weight and shape with curiosity. He untied the string and loosened the plain paper.

Sickness coursed through Tristen as the object rolled off his lap to the floor. He heard a woman's shriek and then covered his mouth for fear of echoing it.

There, on the floor, was the head of the King of Troyar. His unseeing eyes locked their gaze on Tristen who only

remembered them in passion and anger.

King Renelin roared with laughter. "What a joyous day! The revenge is complete. Find out the bearer of such a gift and reward him greatly."

About to vomit the wine he had consumed, Tristen left the room though he did not remember rising to his feet. People called after him. Dinas shouted his name.

When Tristen reached the castle wall, he grew sick over the side. Once he'd emptied the contents of his stomach he collapsed against the cool stones. The wind swept his blond hair across his face. "Telgras..." he sighed. "To what did you owe this end?"

Tristen remembered his tender moments, the raising of the wine to his lips, the bonds being cut, and the passionate embraces that satisfied his sexual craving.

Tristen had no doubt the queen was responsible. Perhaps she would now wed a king who was more willing to be in her bed than Telgras was.

The thing was removed quickly from the floor as Dinas and Princess Lynette exchanged glances. Inhaling for strength, Dinas watched as Tristen fled the commotion left behind as the guests exchanged their views of the spectacle.

King Renelin appeared furious with Tristen's response. "Where has he gone? I am humiliated by a son who cannot feel joy at the defeat of so treacherous an enemy." King Renelin ordered, "Display this trophy on the castle's main gate."

Dinas walked the corridors quickly, an idea where he would find his Tristen. The prince was escaping to the castle walls a great deal lately. It was becoming the place to locate him. Deep in his heart, Dinas grew worried that the events that had colored Tristen's young life would forever be imprinted there. He tried to dispel those thoughts through his faith in Tristen's strength. But more and more a dread was growing that Tristen wouldn't

Prince of Servitude

bear up under the strain.

There Tristen was, his back against the stone masonry, his face in his hands, his knees bent up tightly to his body, his platinum crown shimmering in the dim moon glow, the blond hair underneath, equally gilded. Dinas could only marvel at this man's immeasurable beauty and the urge to possess him totally. Dinas envisioned King Telgras' torment and could well imagine how unbearable King Telgras would be to live with after Tristen's escape. How could there be another equal to this?

Dinas waited.

Tristen look up when he heard a scrape of Dinas' boot leather.

"I am sick. I loved him, Dinas."

"Not love."

"He was my first. I was his to please, to torment."

Dinas sat next to Tristen and leaned against his shoulder. "You cannot help the scheme of things. We are but actors to perform in a play on someone's great stage. What do we know of the ways of the world? Puppets. That is all we are."

Tears spilled from Tristen eyes. "Why do you still comfort me? You know what it is I have gone through and still you are there like an ever-faithful companion. Why, Dinas? What is it about me that you feel compelled to compassion?"

"Why can I not get a thing through your head?" Dinas chuckled sadly. "Foolish Tristen. You are my prince. My lord and master. What more must I know? I would die for you."

Tristen searched his eyes. "I cannot help but feel horribly guilty for that faith. When will you see me simply for what I am?"

That kind of talk made Dinas grow quick to anger. He felt like striking Tristen and making him stop the self-hatred. Would it never end? Dinas was sick to death of hearing it. "Come back to the feast. Lynette is waiting." Dinas stood and held out his hand.

Tristen shivered visibly. "I am terrified of the wedding night. I know I will be unable to go through with it."

Dinas urged Tristen to his feet, brushing off his cape.

"Dinas." Tristen prevented him from heading down the stairwell.

Hesitating and looking back at Tristen, Dinas sighed in the grip of those watery blue eyes. "No prince should feel the agony you do. If only I could erase the pain from your young face."

Tristen ran his fingers through Dinas' hair at either side of his head. "Help me. Help me become whole again. I yearn to be at peace. I feel unhealthy urges in me. I imagine doing things, awful things like I did back at Tenegar. I have dreams of...of..."

Dinas touched his fingers to Tristen's lips. He did not want to hear the dreams.

"I am ill. I need to sacrifice and beg for strength."

"Tomorrow we will appease the gods. Now you must go back to the feast and Lynette." He petted Tristen's hair.

"No. I will not go back." Tristen leaned forward and kissed him. They stood for a long moment, sharing their secret passion. Dinas felt shivers down his spine at the enthusiasm of Tristen's tongue darting inside his mouth.

"*You* are my true love," Tristen whispered.

Dinas couldn't help but feel the power that gave him. This man would one day be king. "And you are mine. But for now, Tristen, I will beg again. Play the game. Please. Bide your time until you are the ultimate power here. Then we can change the laws. Trust me."

Tristen held both Dinas' shoulders and gazed into his eyes. "You are the only one I do trust."

Dinas crushed Tristen against him, sucking at his mouth and tongue until they were going wild, dry humping for the friction and satisfaction.

Prince of Servitude

When Tristen returned he found Princess Lynette appearing dumbfounded. Dinas escorted him back into the hall, leaving Tristen standing in front of his princess before returning to his own table.

Princess Lynette said, "I do not understand your reaction. I thought surely you would be pleased to know the one guilty of atrocities was dead. Avenged. Why are you not happy?"

Tristen had a servant pour him more wine, avoiding answering her. Tristen noticed his mother hovering over him, agitated.

"I wonder, Tristen, why is Dinas the only one capable of consoling you?"

"Leave it, Mother." Tristen averted her eyes.

"I will not leave it. I worry more so because of the experiences you endured in Troyar."

His lover's taste still on his mind, Tristen once more pressed a full wine goblet to his lips. Even with his mother standing there, Tristen found his friend across the room and he and Dinas exchanged personal glances.

"Tristen," Queen Olympia chided when she realized who Tristen was looking at.

"Go away." Tristen sighed with relief when his mother walked off, only to catch Princess Lynette's suspicious gaze.

The wedding chamber was extravagantly decorated with feminine touches of lace and perfume. A fire emitted a warm yellow glow from the hearth, wine and sweet fruits, dried figs and apricots, were displayed on a silver platter. Tristen peeked around nervously as the servants removed his many layers of gold and velvet. His diadem was lifted off his head gently and his golden hair was combed. They bowed and left as Tristen stood in his leather tunic, leggings and boots, his sword at his side. When the servants had gone Tristen wandered the room, feeling sick to his stomach. A door opened soundlessly. He

raised his head to Princess Lynette in veils. A giggle of a maiden was heard, then the door was closed. They were left alone to stare awkwardly at each other. Tristen was the first to turn away. As Princess Lynette moved closer to him, he smelled her perfume and felt her warmth mix with his own.

She touched his shoulder. "Come." She held his hand and led him to the royal bed.

As if he were a tin soldier, Tristen moved stiffly and kept one hand on the hilt of his sword, like she was the enemy to be mistrusted and he might need his quick reactions. She paid his behavior no mind, sat Tristen down on the edge, and knelt before him and unlaced his boot.

He stared with a detached fascination, his mind on other things.

Upon removing his boots, she then reached for the lace of his leggings. Tristen flinched and twisted away.

Princess Lynette stood up and unfastened the veil at her shoulder. The material fell soundlessly to the floor. He tried not to look as her many layers of fabric cascaded to her feet.

When Princess Lynette was naked she reached out to Tristen and kissed his lips, then released him and crawled onto the bed behind him. "Tristen," she crooned, "come here."

No. Please no. I refuse to believe this is happening to me. He closed his eyes and shivered. "Lynette, I need more time. I am not whole." Tristen stood and faced her.

She dropped her hand to the covers and said, "I know, sweet Tristen, at least come lay next to me. That is all I ask."

Not even wanting to do that, Tristen groaned sadly and with great reluctance removed his sword from his hip, then crawled over the bed to her.

She caressed his face. "I love you deeply. You are my lord and my master. I will only love and obey you, only you."

He closed his eyes and remembered similar words from Dinas.

Prince of Servitude

The princess touched the skin of Tristen's neck, sliding her hand under the lacing of his tunic, caressing his rounded chest.

Tristen wanted to rest. He relaxed at the gentle massage and tried to unwind as she opened his tunic wide over his torso. He settled in, enjoying the soft rubbing, drifting off into sleepy forgetfulness.

Gently, Princess Lynette unlaced his leather leggings, stroking his pubic hair soothingly. The wine and her caressing brought Tristen under a spell. Princess Lynette spread apart all Tristen's garments until he was exposed, then she ran her hands from his chest to his knees.

Tristen's breathing deepened and he rested against the pillows. He blinked when he felt her hands on his soft cock, her nude body rubbing hungrily on his. She was too desperate and it was becoming uncomfortable. Infuriated and repulsed, Tristen twisted out of her reach. "Lynette, no. It is no good. Please."

"Let me try. Tristen, tell me what I need to do. I want you to love me."

He kept getting flashes of Telgras and the handsome guards of Troyar. Of male hands on him, his body being mounted by big strong men, and then the horrible image of King Telgras' head rolling off his lap. Tristen clenched his teeth and eyes at the agony.

Princess Lynette's hands began to feel like tentacles. She kept groping his cock, trying to persuade him. It was more than he could stand. Tristen growled and shoved her off.

She gazed at him like a puppy that has been kicked.

He inhaled to calm himself. "You must give me time. Please. It will be right in time, but I cannot do this yet."

She cried, "This is the night I have waited a lifetime for. A night that is supposed to be filled with magic and mystery, not fear and misery."

His patience tried, Tristen climbed off the bed and laced his clothing.

G.A. Hauser

“You cannot leave me,” she sobbed.

Tristen buckled his sword belt and pushed his hair back from his face. “Forgive me. I am ill in my mind. I cannot love you yet, my beautiful, pure bride.”

“But, what will I tell the queen?”

Knowing that would be a factor in his own miserable life, Tristen frowned and took his blade part way out of the scabbard. He ran his finger over the edge of the sword and sliced his skin, smearing the coverlet with a drop of blood. “There. You may tell her you have done your job.”

She burst into tears as he closed the door behind him.

Chapter Twenty-four

Tired, listless, and hopeless, Tristen stood in the apothecary's storehouse, picked out a jewel encrusted silver chalice in the torchlight and mixed a toxic brew. He assessed his intentions to end his life and decided it was best for all. "I am unfit for the kingdom. All this pain is a foolish waste of time."

"Sire?"

Caught, Tristen spun around in panic to a young servant at the doorway.

The boy seemed to sense something grave for he said, "Uh, Sire, Dinas has sent for you. He...he needs to see you urgently."

Tristen noticed the boy tremble in spasms of fear. It was illegal to lie to a noble, particularly the monarchy, and the boy could lose his head. Tristen lowered the chalice. "What is your name?"

"Jason, Sire."

"Jason, why do you tell me Dinas seeks me when you know he would never be so bold on my wedding night?"

The boy blushed to the ears and looked down at his feet awkwardly as he shivered. "It is the truth, Sire. I swear. You must go to him at once."

"Come here."

Jason looked up, fright written all over him.

With more force, Tristen gestured to a chair near a small

scarred wooden table. Jason sat down reluctantly. Tristen joined him, setting the chalice between them. "You are very young. How old? Twelve? Thirteen?"

Jason nodded, his eyes wide. "Twelve."

"Twelve." Tristen shook his head. "I feel hideously old. Old and foul. Yet, I am only eighteen. How could eighteen feel so evil?"

"You are not evil, my lord."

Instantly Tristen searched his eyes. "You do not know. I could tell you a tale. A tale of a young man bound in leather straps, seated in a garden." Tristen could see the scene precisely as he recalled it. "Naked...naked and bound was he while a maiden filled her bucket. She saw this prisoner and felt pity for him. She tried to set him free of his bonds. T'was pity that killed her. That and a red feathered arrow." Tristen paused, fingering the goblet as he spoke. "This prisoner then heard the pounding of hooves. Many a falling hoof pounding the garden in its path. He rose in fear. He tried to escape, yet he could not." He softened his voice. "The leather bindings bit him hard. He tumbled to the dirt with his knotted ankles."

The boy's eyes were shimmering as he listened, focusing on the Prince's face with unmatched intensity.

"The hooves grew louder, closer, until they were surrounding him on all sides. This poor prisoner was in fear of his life. But they did not want his life." Tristen heard the sound of his own voice echoing off the masonry and the many shelves lined with glass jars. Tristen lowered it to a whisper. "Soldiers. Soldiers from a foreign guard. Big, burly coarse men." Tristen licked his lips as his cock grew under his leggings. "They came upon this helpless prisoner, teasing him. He knew their intentions." Tristen felt his skin break out in dewy sweat. "He knew what they wanted of him and he did not fight. No, Jason. He did not fight. His hands were bound behind his back, his legs were parted and spread wide."

The young boy's eyes appeared watery and his hands

trembled.

“Then the men were all around him. They pinned him to the earth. He could see their sensuous grins.” Tristen’s eyes lost their focus. “They lay their hands on him. They pulled his legs wide and they took him. They hammered into his body with theirs and they took him.” Tristen closed his eyes and shivered with erotic chills. “Again and again and again.” Tristen ground his teeth and the muscles of his jaw tensed as he pushed his palm against his hardened length.

The boy flinched at each repetition.

“And when you would guess he was in agony and praying for death...instead he begged for more.” Tristen inhaled and backed up a sob in his throat. “He did not want it to end. The feel of them taking their pleasure inside him, the delicious vulgarity, the hot masculine scent and sweat, forever will he feel it.” Tristen crossed his legs as the yearning tore at him. “He cannot forget the pleasures of men. No wish, no sacrifice, no care can remove the desire for the seed that pumped into his body or cease the cravings of their deep voices and the scratching of their armor on his skin. He will want it eternally, I’m afraid, until his death.”

Jason gripped the table with both hands, clenching it.

Tristen turned to him slowly. “And you say that he is not evil. A wretched thing he has become, filthy and wretched. Yes. He has become this thing. This evil thing that craves men’s touch. There is no peace...no. There is one peace.” Tristen glimpsed the chalice.

The boy grabbed the chalice off the table. “No!”

“You dare to tell your prince, no?”

Jason’s breathing was loud and uneven, his hand was unsteady as it trembled under the chalice, the liquid sloshed side to side. “Dear Royal Prince,” he said, “you are not evil. Yes, you have cravings that are not allowed here, but you did not become one with your attackers. I cannot tell you how to forget this. It is impossible to forget. I can only say, do not do this

thing. Do not seek your own end. Brandywine cannot exist without you. I cannot exist.”

Tristen admired his attempt. “Oh, my young one, you can’t see the forest for the trees. I cannot be prince, nor can I beget an heir. There is no peace here for me.”

“Surely time and love can make you forget.”

“No. It is useless.”

As if he were doing it discreetly, Jason turned and poured the chalice into a swill bucket, then set it on a high shelf.

“You disobey me,” Tristen said, furious at the boy’s insolence.

Jason stared at Tristen in agony. “You are the prince we all love with the deepest devotion. How can I make you see that?” Jason walked around the table to be closer. “Prince Tristen, we need you. You are to be our next king. You have all of our love and our hearts. My mother and father talk so highly of you. Of how they are in awe that you have survived such a blow and have the will to continue to fight. You have won. My father said you have risen above your captors as a shining example of endurance.”

“You try, and I appreciate it.”

“Come. Come now with me.” Jason took his hand.

Though he was tired, Tristen attempted to find patience as he was dragged down the corridors. “Where, Jason, do you lead me?”

They ended up at Dinas’ door. “And how will this appease me?” Tristen sighed.

“You are always happy when you are with him.” Jason shrugged. “He will know how to make you happy once more.” Jason knocked before Tristen could stop him.

Dinas opened it, appearing freshly awakened from a deep slumber.

Jason tried to prevent Tristen from leaving, tugging on his

hand.

“Tristen,” Dinas whispered, “it’s your wedding night. What has passed? You need to be with Lynette.”

Jason announced, “I found him in the apothecary’s store room with a chalice filled with poison!”

Tristen smacked Jason’s face and glared at him. He shoved Jason hard against the wall. “How dare you betray your prince? You will die for this!”

Jason cowered and awaited his fate.

Dinas grabbed Tristen by the shoulder and forced him into his room, then turned to the boy. “Go on, that’s a good lad. Get lost.”

“Dinas,” Tristen protested, “you all are making me insane. Let me be.”

“Shut up and get over here. Trying to end your life?” Dinas embraced him. “What are you thinking?”

“I am thinking I cannot survive this nightmare.” Tristen wiped his damp eyes on Dinas’ shoulder.

“Hush. Come to bed.”

King Renelin tossed and turned in discomfort. He was nauseated from over-indulging, something he had done too many times at feasts. Standing unsteadily, he called to his guard. The man stationed outside his door came quickly and bowed.

“Send for Peridim. I am in need of some elixir to calm my belly. Tell him the usual one. It worked like a charm last time.”

The guard nodded as the king went to lie back on his bed.

Dinas sat Tristen on the bed and removed his boots for him.

“I could not pleasure my princess,” Tristen whispered.

Though he already knew what had happen, Dinas unlaced

Tristen's tunic and leggings for him. Earlier Princess Lynette had been to his door in tears. Dinas sent her away in haste lest anyone should catch them together on such a night. At this point Dinas cared not who found him with Tristen, assuming they all imagined they were platonic lovers. If they didn't, they were too dim to ever realize. But being seen with Lynette was a different matter.

"Tomorrow is another day. We shall face the challenges of it then." After they crawled into bed, Dinas lifted the blankets over them as Tristen snuggled around him. "Sleep, my fairest of princes. Sleep and may all your dreams be of peace."

Tristen drew him closer and closed his eyes.

Chapter Twenty-five

Sunlight crisp and bright traveled through the high slit of the window cut into the stone. It made its way silently down the rough wall and crept across the floor to the bed. Tristen moved lazily and treasured the warmth next to him. He admired Dinas' sleeping face, the beard growing coarse on his smooth skin, dark and masculine. Tristen touched his soft, long, brown hair and brushed it back from his eyes, kissing Dinas' lips.

At the sensation of Tristen's loving touch, Dinas shifted and groaned drowsily, then opened his eyes. Dinas smiled, sliding his hand down Tristen's side to his hip, hungry for his love.

A bell rang out from somewhere in the castle. It took a moment before they were roused from their passionate embrace.

Tristen wondered if they were being attacked at such an inconvenient hour. Just as he and Dinas were about to make love, there was a pounding at the door. Someone shouted for Dinas. He covered Tristen with the blankets and hurried to open it.

A guard looked pale and was breathless. "We must find the prince."

"Are we being attacked?" Dinas asked in fear.

"No, the king! It is the king!"

"What of the king?"

"He is dead! King Renelin is dead! Tristen is now our ruler.

Where is Tristen?"

From where he lay in hiding, Tristen could see the guard was noticeably shaken and sweat glimmered over his face. Tristen gasped in shock.

They both heard it and spun around. The guard stretched to see over Dinas' shoulder into the room. Dinas cleared his throat and coughed. "Sorry, I am overwhelmed at the news. Let me dress and I will help you find the prince." Dinas closed the door and rushed to the bed, pulling the coverlet down to see Tristen.

"What did he mean by 'dead'?" Tristen asked through a closing throat.

"Get dressed, Tristen. Now!" Dinas yanked him out of bed and helped him with his garments.

When Tristen arrived at his father's chambers he found his mother standing over his father's bed. The dead king was ashen white. Tristen moved closer, staring down at his father's still body.

"Where were you?"

Tristen hardly heard a word, sickened by his father's face as it slowly turned blue.

"You were not with your wife. Where were you?" the queen asked.

When Tristen still did not respond she grew infuriated. "You are now the King of Brandywine!" she yelled at him. "You are now responsible for a kingdom. Do you hear?"

Tristen was numb. He heard, yet he did not hear. *Would I look this way if I had died last night?* "What killed him?"

"Poison," she said without emotion.

He twisted to her abruptly. "You poisoned him?"

"Do not be so boldly stupid!" She grabbed him and scanned around to see if they were overheard by two guards stationed at the door. "His herbalist killed him."

"Peridim? But he loved Father," Tristen said. "He has

Prince of Servitude

known him since he was a little boy.”

“You did not answer my question.” She repeated, “Why, on your wedding night, were you not with the princess?”

In complete humiliation Tristen raised his eyes to the guards who were trying to disappear into the background. Tristen glared at her. “Dear Mother, shall we discuss private matters, in private?”

Tristen addressed the guard, “Send August to my chambers. I want an investigation of this death. Where is Peridim?”

The guards looked at one another sheepishly.

Tristen grew impatient. “Well?”

One said, “Peridim was dragged to the dungeon and quickly beheaded, Your Highness.”

The queen crossed her arms. “I had him put to death.”

“You what?” Tristen gasped. “Did you ask him if he was working alone? Did you ask him if he was paid to do it? If there is a plan to eliminate our whole family line?”

She looked away indignantly. “Do not be tiresome. He was the one with your father right before his death. The liquid is still in the chalice.”

Tristen turned his gaze to the chalice of silver on the table by the bed. He registered it as vaguely familiar, then exhaled in exhaustion.

“We shall have his funeral ceremony tomorrow. I’m having a bier built as we speak.”

“So good of you, Mother, to take things under control.” Tristen leveled his gaze at her.

Queen Olympia returned it with similar contempt, then softened and reached out for his arm. “Come, my beauty. Let us have our private chat.” The queen escorted Tristen out of the room and down the corridors. She entered her own chambers and dismissed the servants. After they had all left she checked around first, then faced Tristen boldly. “Where were you the

night of your wedding feast? I demand to know.”

“Demand? You demand of your new king?”

Her face became rigid with rage. “I demand from my son.”

With a great effort Tristen tried to give her back the same anger, but something inside of him broke. Defeated, he walked to her bed and sat on it heavily, rubbing his face.

She toyed with the ruby crystal that still adorned her neck, approached him and touched his hair.

With one arm Tristen pulled her close and rested his head against her hip.

She caressed his golden waves. “Beautiful Tristen, if this new bride displeases you, you can choose another.”

“No, it is not with her, Mother. It is with me.” He wiped his eyes on her gown, keeping his head pressed against her. “I...I could not perform like a proper husband.”

“Nonsense.”

“I fear the time I spent in Troyar has ruined me.”

“She is inexperienced. Maybe you should have a woman who can show you the art. You need to be loved like a king now, my beauty.” She coaxed his face up and they locked gazes. Using one of her veils, she dabbed at his tears as the liquid ran from them. “You need someone mature, someone who will show you how to fulfill a woman.” She caressed his face and smiled adoringly.

“No, that’s not it. I know the problem. I know all of them. Yet knowing them does not help rid me of them.”

“What? Tell me and I shall try to help you.” She kissed his forehead.

“I am not whole. No matter how I try to forget I cannot block out the things that happened to me. I am defiled, Mother, unclean by Brandywine’s strict standards.”

She rocked him and kissed him again. “You must forget these things.”

Prince of Servitude

“I cannot. I was trying to do what my own father has accomplished instead.” Tristen pictured the store room and Jason. “I was yearning for an end. I had—” He inhaled sharply.

The queen became startled and pushed Tristen back. “What is it?”

At a sudden realization Tristen felt the blood drain from his face.

Queen Olympia shook Tristen by his shoulders, making Tristen look into her eyes. “You are all right. You did not go through with this horrible thing. Imagine if you had. Brandywine would have no ruler. It would be a land without a king.”

“No, no, you do not understand. That chalice. That silver chalice. It was the very one I laced with hemlock. The apothecary, he must have seen it there and used it. My Lord! I have killed my own father!”

She covered Tristen’s mouth quickly and painfully, jerking him forward to hiss in his ear, “Never speak these words again. If even a whisper of them escapes these quarters, we are both doomed. Brandywine will be torn apart and in ruins. It will be invaded from all sides and taken over. Its people will be massacred, its lands raped and burned. Do you understand? I want to be certain you see the gravity of your position. You did not kill the king, nor will you ever utter the possibility to a soul. Not even Dinas. Do you hear?” She waited for Tristen to nod, then slowly released him.

Tristen was numb and stared into the room.

She looked down at him. “Forget all that came before this. Now you are king. After the burial ceremony we shall have your crowning. You need to rule with the same strength your father had, yet with more nobility and grace. He was too coarse for the people. He ruled through fear and intimidation. We shall rule this land differently.” Raising her proud profile to the tapestry on the wall of the king being crowned in a glory of surrounding gods, she grinned in triumph.

Sickness filled Tristen as he looked up at her. "We?" He exhaled a stressful breath for there was too much on his mind. Tristen stood and headed to the door. *How will I rule a kingdom with all this misery and guilt tied up in my head?*

"Where are you going?"

"To see August." Tristen opened the door.

"Come back here before nightfall."

He looked at her tiredly. "Why?"

"Just do as I say."

I will do nothing you say. Tristen closed the door and walked down the hall.

"Has Captain August been summoned?" Tristen asked the guard at his father's door.

"Yes, Your Highness, he is waiting in your chambers."

Tristen acknowledged the guard and returned to his own rooms.

August stood and bowed as Tristen entered. Tristen shut the door behind him and fingered the hilt of his sword.

"Your Majesty." August lowered his eyes.

"Our apothecary was killed in haste. Now we cannot question him." Tristen watched August's eyes. They were growing wearier with each meeting.

"The queen bid it so."

"I will say that it is finished. No plan was there to end the reign. I think surely it may have been accidental owing to the fact that Peridim was an old and trusted friend of my father. So an end to it there will be."

"Yes, Your Majesty."

Tristen walked to August and touched his shoulder. "I need you more than ever, my loyal friend and teacher. You are like a father to me as well. Please advise me always and help me follow in my father's oversized footsteps."

Prince of Servitude

August smiled. "You will be our finest ruler."

"I doubt the truth in that."

"Do not. You will see the soldiers and peasants alike kneel before you with love in their hearts and honor in their eyes."

Tristen felt his heart warm. He embraced August and then stepped back. "Ever at my side when I need you. I will see you are rewarded greatly."

"Thank you, Sire. Even though I will miss your father dearly, I see his son is one with the gods."

Tristen thanked him and watched him leave. A small ray of hope burned through all the darkness inside him.

Chapter Twenty-six

King Renelin was burned on a pyre and his ashes buried in a tomb of stone. His urn was covered in gold and silver and filled with loose precious gems and gold dust. The tomb was sealed and the Royal Guard marched to a large amphitheater for the coronation of the new king.

Tristen stood by, awaiting his cue as the assembly heard speeches of his praise. He inhaled and held his war helmet under his arm, wearing his suit of fine chain mail. Dinas was behind him, as was Tristen's wish, with August awaiting him at the throne. A circle of wizened advisors surrounded the dais, the queen mother and Queen Lynette sat in their places until Tristen entered, then the entire audience stood as Tristen marched in.

At first sight of him, the crowd of nobles and armed men went wild, cheering, stomping and shouting. The white marble stone and columned amphitheatre felt as if it would tumble down from the racket. Tristen walked to the throne and stood before it. The house fell into silence.

The booming voice of the kingdom's senior battle administrator was heard as he began to recite to Tristen his oath while he raised the crown over Tristen's head.

Tristen bowed and the gilded crown was placed on his glorious waves of gold. As he stood and faced the crowd, Tristen raised his sword in salute.

An explosive thunder ensued of, "LONG LIVE THE

KING!”

Tristen glanced back at Dinas and found him with tears standing in his eyes.

A banquet followed the coronation and the new king was brought gifts of brilliant gems and gold, rare flowers and spices, passion fruits and marble statues.

Tristen sat in his father’s throne and smiled in appreciation, his wife at his side, his mother standing behind him.

Ever wary of the wrapped gifts that were brought before him, Tristen turned away anything that resembled the right shape and size of a human head. His stomach was already unsteady with the idea of ruling before him. News would surely be out that King Renelin was dead and with an eighteen-year-old boy on the throne it may just tempt someone to battle.

The night grew long and Tristen grew weary. He stood and held out his arm for the queen. Lynette smiled and took Tristen’s elbow and they left the hall together.

Tristen brought Lynette to her door and left her to her maidens. Though Tristen knew she objected, Lynette did not dare ask Tristen tonight if he would return to her. She lowered her lashes and entered her room.

Alone, Tristen wandered to his chambers, feeling once again cold and isolated. When he turned a corner in the hall Tristen found three guards stationed at his door.

About to walk passed them without a thought, the men joyously congratulated their new king.

Immediately Tristen recognized their voices. “What trick is this?”

Helbros bowed, a wicked grin on his handsome face. “We are yours now, King Tristen.”

“Mine?”

Lucas said, “Mercenaries. You do not think we shall serve Queen Leda.” He turned up his nose in disgust.

Parmun said, "Troyar has erupted in civil war since she killed King Telgras."

"We serve you." Helbros dropped to his knees and kissed Tristen's hand.

"I'm dreaming." Tristen's cock went rigid.

"We're truly glad, Your Majesty, to be with you again. Where would we be now if you had not been crowned?" Helbros massaged Tristen's fingers. "I would not fight for your father. Not with his inhumane laws."

Lucas caressed Tristen's hair. "Now that you are king, will you change them?"

"Yes, King Tristen," Parmun said, "repeal your father's terrible laws."

"Change them?" Tristen brightened instantly. "Yes. I can change the laws. I can make my loving you legal."

"Yes. You can." Helbros sucked on Tristen's middle finger.

The heat of Helbros' mouth caused Tristen's cock to throb. "Come inside." Tristen stared into the faces of his handsome new Royal Guardsmen. "I'm just thankful to be able to serve you as your king."

"Let us serve each other," Lucas replied.

Helbros held Parmun back. "Watch the door. The laws are not changed yet."

"Why me?"

Tristen caressed Parmun gently. "Next time. I promise it shall be you who loves me first."

"Thank you, Your Highness." Parmun cupped Tristen's face and sucked at his lips and tongue hungrily.

Tristen moaned in desire and had to be coaxed away from Parmun's tantalizing tongue. Once in his chambers, Tristen dismissed Caine quickly before waving the two armored men in. Tristen removed his crown and ermine cloak himself, but Helbros and Lucas assisted him with the rest.

Prince of Servitude

When he was naked, Tristen stretched out in the plush layers of fur on his bed, raised his arms above his head and whimpered in bliss. It was cool in the stone room and his bare skin felt caressed by the warmth of the animal hides. "Take me."

Lucas knelt beside his bed. "Before, when you were prince, you could not obey your own desires. Now, as king, there is no other but yourself to please. No one with power like you have. We all know what you crave. Now, King Tristen the Fair, you can have us here and be free."

As Helbros bound Tristen's wrists, Tristen tried to think about the power he was given as king. It was inconceivable he could rewrite laws and enjoy this nightly.

"We are here any time you want us, beautiful Tristen." Helbros urged Tristen's thighs apart. "Don't be afraid to ask. I have a feeling any one of your Royal Guard would be honored to serve you this way." Helbros licked at Tristen's erect cock while Lucas kissed Tristen's cheek.

Instantly Tristen lit up with passion. "Yes."

"Yes," Lucas echoed softly.

"King Tristen the Fair." Helbros pushed one finger inside Tristen's ass. "Let me show you how much you are loved and desired by your men."

A small gasp escaped from Tristen's lips as Lucas ran his hands all over Tristen's naked body while Helbros tongue fucked him.

It sent Tristen reeling. Groaning in pleasure, he surrendered to Helbros, spreading his legs and arching his back in delight. "More."

Lucas opened a pouch that was attached to his waist. He handed Helbros a small jar. Helbros sat back and opened it. Tristen could not catch his breath as he waited.

Helbros smoothed slick cream on Tristen's rim making Tristen writhe on the bed. "Now," Tristen ordered.

“Yes, my King.” Helbros set the jar aside and positioned himself between Tristen’s thighs, the head of his cock against Tristen’s back passage.

As he was penetrated, Tristen’s skin caught fire and his cock pulsated and shot out a burst of pre-cum. Lucas made for Tristen’s mouth, tongue fucking it.

Keeping his arms over his head, loving the sense of being bound and helpless, Tristen couldn’t believe he was now free to love as he chose. By morning those old laws would be gone. Freedom. He was finally free to love.

“Ah, Tristen!” Helbros cried out as he came.

Helbros’ hot seed filling him, Tristen climaxed, jerking his hips upwards for the deepest penetration as Lucas sat back to stare.

Dinas was idle. He had left the feast soon after Tristen and was bored and lonely. He wondered if Tristen would seek him out, for he knew Tristen would not be with Lynette. Dinas headed for Tristen’s chambers. When he turned a corner in the hall, Dinas found the queen mother talking with one guard at Tristen’s door.

She spun around when she heard him. “Dinas?”

“Yes, Your Highness.”

“This guard will not summon Tristen.”

“Perhaps he is not inside his chambers.” Dinas couldn’t imagine Tristen bedding Lynette. Dinas tried to catch the guard’s gaze but the man was looking down at his feet.

The queen mother tried the door. “Then why is it locked?”

“Stand aside.” Dinas pushed the large guard.

“He wishes to be undisturbed.”

Dinas didn’t recognize this man and became concerned, after all, someone had just poisoned the old king. “I said, move,” Dinas ordered him. “Tristen?” Dinas pressed his ear to

Prince of Servitude

the door. He heard noises coming from within. “Tristen, are you all right?” Dinas panicked and dreaded someone murdering Tristen like they had his father. Dinas shook the handle frantically. “Open this at once!” Dinas commanded.

The door swung open from within and another large armed guard appeared.

Dinas tried to shove by him. “Where is the king?”

The big man blocked Dinas’ path. “Inside. The king wishes not to be disturbed.”

“Tristen!” the queen mother called. “Come here at once.”

The guards appeared unsettled.

The queen mother said, “Call to him.”

“I would rather not, Your Highness, I have my orders.” The guard swallowed nervously and bit his lip.

Dinas pushed forward once more. “This is absurd. What is going on? Tristen? Are you in there?” Dinas forcefully pushed the door open and another guard appeared, disheveled and pale. The three guards looked at each other in what appeared conspiracy.

“If something has happened to Tristen I shall execute you myself,” Dinas warned.

The queen mother exploded in anger. She shoved the door wider and both she and Dinas entered.

Dinas found Tristen trying to get dressed, seated on his bed as he fussed with his boots. Tristen jumped and stood up. His blue eyes seemed to turn an even paler shade in the shadows of the room.

Dinas stood with his mouth agape, never having dreamed Tristen would be bold enough to approach a Royal Guard for sex. They hadn’t even had the time to change the laws yet. Dinas was shocked and disappointed, not to mention, hotly jealous. He spun on his heels and stormed out of the room.

Tristen called after Dinas as he turned away, trying to stop him.

The queen mother halted Tristen with her hand on his chest. "You are not to leave this room until you have fulfilled your role as a man. Do you hear me, Tristen? What you have done is an act unfit for the ruler of Brandywine. You are to take your pleasure from Princess Lynette or be removed from the throne. I cannot believe it is I, who threatens you with this. I. The mother that raised you."

"That may have had something to do with it," Tristen mumbled.

She tensed in anger.

"Wait outside please," Tristen addressed the three guards. They bowed and obeyed.

"Sit." Tristen gestured for his mother to have a seat on a chair. She did reluctantly as he paced before her. "There are no more laws against sodomy in Brandywine."

As the queen mother geared up for an objection, Tristen shot her a warning glare.

"No. More. Laws." Tristen enunciated clearly. "No horrible imprisonment for men loving men, or women to love women for that matter."

Queen Mother Olympia snorted in disgust.

Tristen paused to meet her stare. "Am I to arrest you for treason, Mother?"

"What?"

"If you go against me or my laws it is treason. Isn't that yet another law of Brandywine?" When she didn't answer, Tristen said, "Brandywine is known for its abundant laws and prohibitions, aren't we, Mother. Do not do this, do not do that. All against human nature. I am fed up with it."

"How will you beget an heir?" She was obviously enraged.

"You let that be my problem. Go. Get out of my sight."

Prince of Servitude

Before she left his chambers Tristen added, “And do not poison anyone. I will be watching you. If one of my men die, so will you.”

She narrowed her eyes at him and stormed out.

Tristen took a moment to recover from the battle. He had someone else to comfort now. Someone who meant the world to him.

Dinas brooded in anger on the castle’s high battlement, gazing out at the distant fires of the army as they guarded Brandywine from attack.

“Dinas.”

He spun around to Tristen.

Tristen wasted no time and drew Dinas to his lips. Dinas melted at his touch. After a long moment of sucking tongues and grinding their hips against each other, Tristen parted to gaze into his eyes. “You once told me as king I could be the ruler I wanted to be.”

Dinas was lost on Tristen’s light eyes as he spoke.

“I finally understand why you were so determined to get me back to Brandywine and see me as king.”

“Yes, Tristen. This is why.”

“It is no longer illegal to love a man in this kingdom. That curse has been removed.”

Dinas exhaled in relief and combed his fingers through Tristen’s hair. “I am very glad, Your Highness.”

“You don’t call me that.” Tristen pressed his hard mound into Dinas’. “You are promoted as second in command.”

Dinas’ skin tingled in delight. “Yes, Tristen.”

Tristen caressed Dinas’ cheek. “It’s you I love. Never forget that.”

“Never.”

“You mean the world to me. You had faith in me, trusted me to come here and do what’s right.”

“I do. I will always have that faith.”

Tristen kissed him again and it sent Dinas’ body into meltdown it was so passionate. They exchanged whimpers of lovesickness, groping at one another as they tasted each others’ lips and tongues.

Tristen parted again to inhale deeply. “Come back to my chambers.”

“Yes, Tristen.” Dinas clasped Tristen’s hand when it found his, following Tristen to his room.

As they rounded a bend, Dinas found the same three men guarding Tristen’s chambers. He paused in reflex.

Tristen urged him on. “Dinas, these men were part of King Telgras’ Royal Guard when I was captive. Helbros, Lucas, and Parmun. They are sworn to my allegiance and I trust them with my life.”

Dinas studied their eyes carefully, trying to detect jealousy. There was nothing sinister in their expressions.

“Dinas is my second in command,” Tristen said, “Show him the same respect you show me.”

“Yes, Your Highness.” The men bowed.

Helbros opened the door for them. “Sleep well, King Tristen.”

Dinas followed Tristen into the room and began undressing, watching Tristen do the same. Once they were naked and cuddling in bed, Dinas pinned Tristen down under him. “I think the men of the army will prefer you as king.”

Tristen smiled as he stroked Dinas’ hair. “They are free to be themselves.”

“And so are we.” Dinas held Tristen’s jaw and kissed him.

Chapter Twenty-seven

In the old war chamber Tristen attended some business with his father's administration, weeding out those who were against him, excusing them from duty, and replacing them with young men who were in favor of Tristen's new code of conduct.

Tristen stood in front of the old parchment of laws, struck off the old, unforgiving rules and wrote in some amendments of his own. When he had finished, he said, "This is to be distributed among the army and kingdom. Along with the new laws bring gold and gems." Tristen stood tall. "Why is it we have a storeroom in our dungeon containing barrels of wealth and the villagers are without?"

No one answered.

Tristen shook his head. "Give everyone in Brandywine a weekly allowance. Offer gold to every ruler who has not accepted us as allies and to King Ator send a huge dowry for the gift of his daughter, Lynette."

"Yes, Your Highness."

Once he finished with his task, Tristen returned to his chamber. When he turned the corner of the long hallway, he found Dinas chuckling with Tristen's new Royal Guards. They spun around when they heard Tristen approach.

Lucas, Helbros, and Parmun bowed low as Dinas cupped behind Tristen's head and drew him into a kiss.

"Mm. I love my new kingdom." Tristen smiled.

“Time for pleasure.” Dinas winked at Helbros who opened the door for him.

All four men accompanied Tristen into his bedroom. Tristen was helped off with his cape by Lucas, laughing. “What have you in store for me?”

Dinas again exchanged an impish grin with the others. “It’s our secret.”

“Oh?” Tristen’s skin tingled in delight. “I like this game.”

“We shall see if you like it, Tristen. But it’s essential.”

“Essential?” Tristen was guided to his bed and urged to sit. Helbros removed Tristen’s boots and unlaced his leggings. “What do you mean, Dinas? Essential?”

“You shall see.” Dinas began stripping off his own clothing.

When Tristen and Dinas were naked, Parmun drew Tristen’s hands behind his back and tied them together.

“Yes.” Tristen shivered in anticipation.

Once he was bound, Tristen was helped to kneel on his bed. “What next?” Tristen asked Dinas.

Dinas produced a blindfold.

“Oh?” Tristen felt his skin go into a rush of gooseflesh at the sight. “Blinded?”

“Temporarily.” Dinas knelt behind Tristen and secured it.

“Is this so I will not know which of you is doing what?” Tristen began panting in excitement.

“Yes.”

As the mask was secured, Tristen listened more closely to the sound around him, trying to guess the game. Tristen knew it was Dinas behind him for Dinas was naked and keeping in contact with him the entire time.

Dinas slid his finger inside Tristen’s bottom. It was slick with oil and made Tristen’s cock throb in yearning. “My love. My dearest. Take me.”

Prince of Servitude

"I intend to." Dinas held onto Tristen's waist and began pressing his cock between the Tristen's thighs and into his ass.

Tristen thought he heard the door. "Who is leaving?"

"No one." Dinas thrust deeper.

"What did I hear?" Tristen tried to focus but soon the intensity of Dinas' cock inside him overtook his other senses.

The bed shifted. Tristen suddenly resented the blindfold for it prevented him from knowing which guard was going to service him.

"Tristen," Dinas said, hammering his length inside Tristen's body.

"My love." Tristen leaned against him, their sweat melding as one. Then something touched Tristen's cock. Tristen waited. It was tight and wet, but did not feel like a mouth. "Who is this?"

Helbros grabbed Tristen's jaw and kissed his lips, Tristen knew him by his scent and taste.

Hands raced all over Tristen's chest and low abdomen as Dinas began going into the throes of a climax.

The sense of disorientation still distracted Tristen. An aroma of perfume waft up his nose. About to ask what was happening again, Tristen's thoughts were knocked out of his head as the wet hole he was inside began to bring him satisfaction. Behind him, Dinas shot his cream into Tristen, then kept still, holding Tristen tight. Dinas' cock slowly softened and inched its way out of Tristen's ass. When Helbros tongue-fucked Tristen's mouth and Lucas purred sensually in Tristen's ear, urging Tristen to come, Tristen gave in and jammed his hips into the wetness, losing his seed.

Once he had climaxed, Tristen ordered, "Remove this blindfold now."

Dinas did, drawing it down from behind.

Tristen gasped to see Lynette lying naked on the bed, a satisfied smile on her lips.

“What have you done?” Tristen asked in surprise.

Dinas held onto Tristen, kissing Tristen’s neck while Helbros replied, “Brandywine needs an heir, King Tristen.”

Tristen spun around to each set of eyes and tried to comprehend the deed.

“My Lord,” Lynette said, “it was worth the wait.”

“Untie me.” Tristen caught his breath as he digested the ruse.

Dinas unlaced the leather that bound Tristen’s wrists.

“I do not know whether to be furious or grateful.” Tristen wiped the sweat from his brow.

“Be grateful,” Lynette replied.

Dinas embraced Tristen, rubbing his sticky cock against Tristen’s bottom. “Be grateful.”

Finally relenting, Tristen reclined on the bed with Dinas. “Yes. All right.”

Lynette was assisted in getting off the bed. Her maids were waiting for her to tidy her up and clothe her. “Til we meet again?” she teased Tristen.

“Again?”

“We have to see if it will take,” Dinas said.

Tristen waited for Lynette to leave the room. “That is all.” Tristen waved his hand.

Helbros, Lucas and Parmun smiled in reply, bowed and left.

“You tricked me.” Tristen leaned up to see Dinas’ eyes.

“We did what we had to do.”

Tristen rested his cheek on Dinas’ chest to listen to his heart while Dinas caressed his hair. “I hope it takes.”

“Me too.” Dinas chuckled.

Epilogue

Dinas inhaled the fresh air and gazed out over the castle wall. He was covered in gems, for the king had fulfilled his promise. Dinas didn't wear nearly as much as he was allowed to carry from the vault, but certainly enough to show all whose he was, indeed. Glancing back at his king as they both leaned over the high wall, Dinas tapped him as he found the party returning from the ceremony in the woods. They strained to see the midwife lifting a small bundle to him. "A boy, Your Majesty!" she called. "A boy with lovely golden hair!"

Tristen cried out in joy and embraced Dinas. "A son! Dinas, I have a son!"

Dinas grinned happily at him. "Long live King Tristen the Fair!"

Tristen gazed adoringly back at Dinas. "Long may he love." He smiled, grabbing Dinas' jaw to kiss him.

The End

About the Author

Award-winning author G. A. Hauser was born in Fair Lawn, New Jersey, USA, and attended university in New York City. She moved to Seattle, Washington where she worked as a patrol officer with the Seattle Police Department. In early 2000 G.A. moved to Hertfordshire, England, where she began her writing in earnest and published her first book, *In the Shadow of Alexander*. Now a full-time writer in Ohio, G.A. has written dozens of novels, including several bestsellers of gay fiction. For more information on other books by G.A., visit the author at her official website at: <http://www.authorgahauser.com>.

G.A. has won awards from All Romance eBooks for Best Novel 2007, *Secrets and Misdemeanors*, Best Author 2007. Best Novel 2008, *Mile High*, and Best Author 2008.

The G.A. Hauser Collection

Available Now

Single Titles

A Question of Sex

For Love and Money

The Kiss

Naked Dragon

Secrets and Misdemeanors

Capital Games

Giving Up the Ghost

To Have and To Hostage

Love you, Loveday

The Boy Next Door

When Adam Met Jack

Exposure

The Vampire and the Man-eater

Murphy's Hero

Mark Antonious deMontford

Calling Dr. Love

The Action Series

Acting Naughty

Playing Dirty

Getting it in the End

Behaving Badly

Dripping Hot

Men in Motion Series

Mile High

Cruising

Driving Hard

Leather Boys

Coming Soon

Single Titles

The Wedding Planner

Double Trouble

Going Deep

In The Dark and What Should Never Be, Erotic Short Stories

The Rape of St. Peter

Rescue Series

Man to Man

Two In Two Out

Top Men

Other G.A. Hauser Titles

Pirates, Phaze

Miller's Tale, Phaze

Vampire Nights, Phaze

Teacher's Pet, Phaze

In the Shadow of Alexander, Publish America

The Rise and Fall of the Sacred Band of Thebes, Publish America

The Physician and the Actor, Publish America

G.A. Hauser
Writing as Amanda Winters

Sister Moonshine

Nothing Like Romance

Silent Reign